

3.3 Northern Triangle of Central America: brief description by country

3.3.1 Guatemala

Guatemala has a population of 14,713,763 as of 2011⁸. Given the organized crime's territorial appropriation of some areas of the country, high levels of violence have been generated, as well as the forced displacement of people. The departments with the highest levels of violence in 2011, according to the National Civil Police, are Guatemala, Escuintla, Jutiapa, Quetzaltenango, Zacapa, Santa Rosa, Chiquimula, El Petén, Suchitepéquez, Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, Izabal and San Marcos. A problem to note occurs in relation to the expropriation of lands that historically have been the property of the aborigine peoples and their communities. Sources consulted which specialize in the defence of human rights in Guatemala state that several private security companies that carry out evictions are related to organized crime structures, affecting the indigenous and ladino population. Some sources consulted refer to the existence of "narco territories" or "narco communities" which are strategically located in the zones of land expropriation, leading to forced displacement within and outside the country. OC forcibly recruits the population, mainly youths and minors, to form part of the criminal groups which operate within the aforementioned "narco territories or narco communities" and outside them in other areas of the country at high risk of violence and human rights violations⁹.

Recent studies in Guatemala¹⁰ state that the *Los Zetas* cartel is the main OC group that operates in the country. The sources describe the existence of franchises of the *Los Zetas* cartel; local criminal groups that work directly with them and many of whose members belong to armed groups with a major military formation (i.e. *Los Kaibiles*). The current perception of OC in Guatemala is very different from that of the home grown drug traffickers in that their violent way of operating and their direct effect on the general population, including that in the very communities in which they operate. Some governmental authorities are being controlled, threatened and killed by organized crime, mainly in the legal area: judges, prosecutors, ombudsmen and mayors.

It has been determined that the **pattern of forced displacement** in Guatemala occurs in the following manner: first, zones of origin of displacement appropriated by organized crime as "narco territories", affecting the population by means of two options: forced recruitment or leaving the territories; second, displacement to the interior of the country in search of new areas or territories, identification by OC agents of forcibly displaced persons, especially witnesses to crimes and those who have denounced organized crime to the appropriate public authorities; and third, external forced displacement, mainly to North America.

Interviews with State authorities showed the recognition of a climate of insecurity and infiltration by OC in some State institutions. It is recognised that the situation of insecurity and violence affects thousands of citizens and that there are territories that are unsafe even for the State authorities themselves. They recognize that the lack of denunciation or its withdrawal of there because of threats from OC lead to impunity and make access to national protection precarious.

⁸ National Institute of Statistics (INE), Guatemala. Census Projections 2002.

⁹ Guatemala, annual homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants (UNDP, 2011: 48

¹⁰ International Crisis Group (2011). Guatemala: Drug Trafficking and Violence. Latin America Report No. 39 – 11 October 2011.

Table 3 Guatemala: Main Risk Zones and Zones of OC Expulsion				
Department	Population and homicide rates 2010 ¹¹	Risk zones of OC	Zones where OC has generated forcible displacements	Indicators of displacement
Guatemala	Population: 3.103.685 Homicides: 2.423 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 78.1	Guatemala City (Zonas 1, 5, 6, 7, 12, 18), Fraijanes, Villa Canales, San Miguel Petapa, Amatitlán, Villanueva, Santa Catarina Pinula, Mixco, San José Pinula, Chinautla, Palencia, San Pedro Sacapetéquez, San José de Golfo, San Pedro Ayampuc, San Raimundo, San Juan Sacatepéquez, Churranchó.	Municipality of Guatemala, Municipality of Mixco: Carolingia community (Zone 6) Municipality of Villanueva: Ciudad del Sol.	Presence and control by the Mara 18 in the community of Carolingia, and the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-18) in Ciudad del Sol, Villanueva ¹² .
Escuintla	Population: 685.830 Homicides: 534 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 77.9	Ixtapa, San José de Escuintla, La Democracia, Nueva Concepción, Escuintla.	Municipality of Escuintla.	High numbers of deportees from the US and Mexico ¹³ .
Chiquimula	Population: 362.826 Homicides: 282 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 77.7	Chiquimula, Quetzaltepeque, Esquipulas.		
Zacapa	Population: 218.510 Homicides: 166 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 76	Cabañas, Zacapa, La Unión.		
Izabal	Population: 403.256 Homicides: 258 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 64	Livingstone, Morales, Puerto Barrios.		
El Petén	Population: 613.693 Homicides: 366 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 59.6	La Libertad, Melchor de Mencos, Dolores, San Luis, Sayaxch, El Naranjo.	Municipalities: La Libertad, Sayaxch, Melchor de Mencos, Dolores, Poptún.	Executive Decree of State of Siege in El Petén ¹⁴ .
Jutiapa	Population: 428.462 Homicides: 233 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 54.4	El Progreso, Jutiapa, Santa Catarina, Asunción, Aguablanca, Zapotitlán.	Municipality of Jutiapa.	High numbers of deportees from the USA and Mexico ¹⁶ .
Suchitepéquez	Population: 504.267 Homicides: 166 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 32.9	Suchitepéquez	Municipality of Mazatenango	High numbers of deportees from the USA and Mexico ¹⁶ .
Quetzaltenango	Population: 771.674 Homicides: 180 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 23.3	La Esperanza, Quetzaltenango, Coatepeque.	Municipality of Quetzaltenango, Municipality of Coatepeque.	High numbers of deportees from the USA and Mexico ¹⁶ .
San Marcos	Population: 995.742 Homicides: 165 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 16.6	San Marcos	Municipality of Tacaná, Municipio Tajumulco y Municipality of Malacatán.	High numbers of deportees from the USA and Mexico ¹⁶ .
Huehuetenango	Population: 1.114.389 Homicides: 177 Homicides per 100,000 inhabitants: 15.9	Huehuetenango, Nentón.	Municipality of Huehuetenango, Municipality of Nentón, Municipality of Soloma, Municipality of La Democracia, Municipality of La Libertad	High numbers of deportees from the USA and Mexico ¹⁶ .

¹¹ Statistics referred to in reports of World Bank (2011), UNDP (2010) and UNODC (2009).

¹² Castañón, Mariela (2008). *Pandillas en Guatemala, cáncer social*. Diario La Hora. 18 October 2008, Guatemala.

¹³ National Institute of Migration-Center for Migration Studies/ National Population Council/El Colegio de la Frontera Norte / Secretaría de Gobernación / Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores / Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social. (2011). *Encuesta sobre migración en la Frontera Sur de México*.

¹⁴ Mendoza, Carlos (2011). *¿Por qué El Petén y no el Departamento de Guatemala?* Central American Business Intelligence.

