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Guatemala: Rebels Meet With University, Labor, Employer Organization Representatives In Mexico

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 23, representatives of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) and of university, labor, employer and civic organizations met in Metepec (100 km. southeast of Mexico City) to discuss means toward ending the civil war. The meetings, scheduled to continue until Oct. 29, were organized by the National Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations, under a program set up early this year in Oslo, Norway. The Metepec encounter is the fourth and last before opening direct peace negotiations between the rebels and the government. Oct. 23: In statements to reporters in Metepec, URNG commander Pablo Monsanto said historical structural causes of the conflict must be dealt with in order to achieve peace. He added that these problems are more serious at present than 30 years ago when the insurrection began. Monsanto said, "The presidential elections are not the ideal mechanism to resolve our people's most serious problems...Guatemala needs to prepare the foundations of a just and lasting peace, real democratization of society, and national reconciliation." Rosalina Tuyuc, representative of several popular organizations, said: "We asked the government, the army, the insurgency, and the employers' association to stop the violence that has left 40,000 widows and over 100,000 orphans throughout the country...We do not want Guatemala to end up with no men." Meanwhile, in Guatemala City, Jorge Briz, president of the Finance, Industrial and Commerce Associations Committee (CACIF), called on the rebels to disarm, terminate military actions, and participate in the nation's political institutions. Oct. 25: Participants released a joint statement calling for a National Constitutional Assembly aimed at elaborating necessary reforms to eliminate institutions and legislation obstructing peace. The statement said that in addition to ending armed conflict, "legitimate institutions must be created, and all repressive apparatuses and legislation must be dismantled." UN observer Francesc Vendrell said that after a recess on Friday, the rebel delegates would resume talks with employer organization and university representatives. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 10/23/90; AFP, 10/23/90, 10/25/90)

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