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## **Guatemalan Peace Talk Round Focuses On Human Rights**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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On Oct. 21-23, government and rebel representatives met in Mexico City for a round of peace talks focusing on the issue of human rights. The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) negotiating team was headed by Pablo Monsanto, and the government delegation, by Presidency General Secretary Manuel Conde. Catholic Bishop Rodolfo Quezada Toruno, president of the National Reconciliation Commission, served as mediator and Francesc Vendrell participated as UN observer. Oct. 21: Conde denied the existence of "officially sanctioned repressive forces or clandestine mechanisms which violate human rights." He asserted that President Jorge Serrano did not hide rights violations. Oct. 22: Bishop Quezada said that while both sides demonstrated good will in terms of the negotiations process, a human rights accord would not be concluded at during the present round of talks. According to Quezada, "We are seeking a comprehensive peace accord, not a series of partial agreements. [What is needed is an accord] which establishes a stable basis for genuine human rights monitoring in Guatemala." Quezada said neither side wanted non-verifiable, "empty political accords." Nor, he added, should peace be understood as mere implementation of a cease-fire. Oct. 23: Conde and Monsanto concurred that the talks had been positive, and emphasized the complexity of the human rights issues they seek to address. The independent Guatemalan Human Rights Commission (CDHG) condemned violations of fundamental human rights and demanded the "immediate and unconditional end to repression." (Basic data from EFE, 10/21-23/91; AFP, 10/22/91, 10/23/91)

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