Quiet Genocide
Guatemala 1981-1983

Quiet Genocide reviews the legal and historical case that genocide occurred in Guatemala in 1981-1983. It includes the full text of the genocide section of a United Nations sponsored Commission on Historical Clarification in Guatemala (CEH), brokered by the UN. In its final report, the CEH rigorously reviewed abuses throughout the whole country. However, the memory of the Guatemalan dirty war, which predated the genocide and continued for over a decade of the heightened killing, has rapidly faded from international awareness.

The book renders a historical picture of the 1948 Genocide Convention and its unique status in international law. It reminds readers of the difficulty of preventing and punishing genocide as illustrated by the ongoing tragedy of Darfur; and discusses the evolution of international and hybrid tribunals to prosecute genocide along with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Then, it sketches a brief history of Guatemala with a focus on genocide.

By translating the genocide argument of the CEH into English and framing it in a lively, accessible way, this volume recovers the past, sets the record straight, and promotes accountability. This exploratory effort provides insight into the world of transitional justice and truth commissions, and valuable insights about how to engage with the question of genocide in the future. These findings shed light on a crucial and dark chapter of trans-American Cold War history, and will thus be of interest not only to scholars focused on Guatemala, but also on Central America and even more broadly, on the Cold War.

Etelle Higonnet has been a researcher for Human Rights Watch, the general project coordinator and Research Fellow at the International Human Rights Law Institute at De Paul University, and has worked in war crimes tribunals in Cambodia and Sierra Leone, as well as other human rights NGOs around the world. She is a graduate of Yale Law School. The Genocide Studies Program at Yale University, of which this is a project, conducts research, seminars and conferences on comparative, interdisciplinary, and policy issues relating to the phenomenon of genocide.

ISBN: 978-1-4128-0796-8 (cloth) 2009 257 pp. $49.95/£44.95/$C59.95

To order online, go to www.transactionpub.com. To call/e-mail customer service about orders, or to find out about special sales discounts, see below:

I would like to order _______ copies of Quiet Genocide at $49.95 each

Name (Please Print)

Address

City/State/Zip

E-mail Address Phone #

Method of payment:

Payment enclosed (check or money order)

I prefer to pay by credit card: Visa Master Card AmEx Discover (U.S. Only)

Account number: Exp. Date: Telephone:

Signature: (order cannot be processed without signature)

Mail or Fax this order form to:

Transaction Publishers
Raritan Center
300 McGaw Drive
Edison, NJ 08837, USA
Fax: (732) 748-9801
or order by phone
(888) 999-6778 (toll-free in U.S.)
or online at
www.transactionpub.com

Subtotal:

Add US $7.00 shipping/handling for one book;

US $1.50 for each additional book:

NJ residents add 7% sales tax on total:

TOTAL ENCLOSED:

Available at bookstores and from the publisher at www.transactionpub.com or call toll-free (888) 999-6778 (in the US)
The genocide of Guatemala’s Mayan people was not a simple killing, nor an unintended side-effect of war. Rather, the genocide grew out of a project to destroy a millennial culture, an entire civilization, within the framework of a counterinsurgency campaign. The project failed, but the damage it did was inestimable. In fact, 83% of all victims of atrocities were Mayan. Attacks destroyed family roles. They undermined or even shattered cultural identity through physical elimination of men, women and children, particularly older women in communities, who played the key role of oral transmission of ancient traditions. Add to all this the inability to mourn lost loved ones and practice rituals of shared grief in peace and solidarity, the impossibility of following traditional norms that had long preserved cultural unity, and the need to adapt to harsh realities imposed by force and terror. This painful past of atrocity has been particularly destructive of notions of harmony and balance so crucial to Guatemala’s indigenous peoples. Moreover, this past is one that the Maya People of Guatemala must face and resolve in the days ahead. This is why we understand the immense value of initiatives such as this book, which broadcasts a reality that deserves to be known by the international community. This undertaking is of great value.

—Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Prize Winner

CONTRIBUTORS

GREG GRANDIN

BLAZ GUTIERREZ
Development Officer for Umam Documentation and Research, a Lebanese cultural and human rights archive.

ETELLE HIGONNET
Analysis Director of the Iraq History Project, a human rights documentation initiative that has gathered close to 10,000 testimonies from victims around Iraq.

BEN KIERNAN (Sponsor)
Ben Kiernan is the A. Whitney Griswold Professor of History at Yale University, and founding Director of Yale’s Cambodian Genocide Program and Genocide Studies Program.

JUAN MÉNDEZ

MARCIE MERSKY
Director of the Access to Justice Program funded by the Soros Foundation-Guatemala and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

DANIEL ROTHENBERG
Deputy Executive Director at the International Human Rights Law Institute, DePaul University College of Law.