

**Question for written answer E-007357/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Guatemala: former dictator's genocide conviction overturned

On 20 May 2013, the Constitutional Court of Guatemala overturned the long-awaited verdict that convicted Efraín Ríos Montt of genocide and crimes against humanity, claiming that there were errors in the judicial procedure. As a result, the trial, which has been postponed until April 2014, will not retain any of the witness accounts and arguments made after 19 April, that is to say, none of the courageous testimonies describing the horror of systematic rape, torture, murder, starvation and forced displacement, nor the final sentence that the previous court had ordered.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed his concern for the legal rights of Guatemalans and has underlined the 'state's obligation to prosecute those responsible for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity'.

Considering the interest the VP/HR has previously expressed in this case (statement of 18 April 2013) and the commitment to respect for human rights underlined in Article 1 of the Association Agreement signed between Central America and the European Union, does the VP/HR not think that the EU should question the Guatemalan authorities on the unreasonable delay in this judicial procedure?

Moreover, the evidence provided by the United States' National Security Archives implicating Otto Pérez Molina, Guatemala's president, in the military scorched-earth campaigns directed by Efraín Ríos Montt in the 1980s¹ casts doubt on the independence of this trial from politics. Can the VP/HR look further into this and question Guatemala on the lack of priority apparently given to this major trial, given that human rights and crimes against humanity are concerned?

¹ <http://nsarchive.wordpress.com/2011/11/14/otto-perez-molina-guatemalan-president-elect-with-%E2%80%9Cblood-on-his-hands%E2%80%99D/>