

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Verveer, Melanne S <VerveerMS@state.gov>
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To: H

Guatemala has made more progress than I anticipated --- not that they don't have enormous challenges still to confront. It has one of the worst records of femicide and violence against women anywhere in the world exacerbated by the vestiges of the civil war, gang and narco power struggles, impunity and machismo. However, the combination of a strong female vp who has the confidence of the president, an extraordinary female AG held over from the previous administration (at the urging of the international community) and an impressive group of women, including the president, on the Supreme Ct have joined forces to attack the rampant violence and especially femicide and gbv. What they have achieved is heartening -- from implementing and enforcing the laws, establishing specialized courts -- including a new 24 hour court for gbv --, prosecuting large numbers of cases and giving hope to so many women that they can now get justice in Guatemala (which is exactly what many survivors told me). The AG acknowledged that their efforts in prosecuting GBV, war crimes and big corruption cases would not be possible w/o all the help from US --- for a range of needs covering ballistics, forensics, legal cooperation and so much more. They confront herculean challenges but if they can keep going, despite all the obstacles, they will give Guatemala a new image and the people there a better life.

I was thinking that with the International Day to mark VAW at the end of Nov and Human Rights Day on Dec 10, maybe you can mark these days with a State Dept event and honor the Guatemalan women officials who have demonstrated great courage and commitment to protecting human rights and prosecuting perpetrators of violence. It would give them invaluable support and validate their efforts. Besides, they all told me, in separate meetings --- what an inspiration you are to them.

I was also thinking -- in light of human rights day -- that as you prepare to leave State, you could once again stress "women's rights as human rights" at this time when violence against women from Malala's plight to the beheading in Aghanistan to attacks on women's rights in Arab spring countries seems like a global epidemic.

When I showed up for my first meeting which was with the VP, I was told the President wanted to join the meeting. He wanted to relate what they were doing on GBV, trafficking, women's economic empowerment, etc. It too was a hopeful sign.

Vital Voices has a vibrant chapter in Guatemala which is doing great work with indigenous women in design, training and markets to grow their incomes. They are finally getting good attention from the business leaders. I also saw Annabella De Leon (who is in the VV play "Seven." She is no longer in Congress because the VP asked her to take on the job of recorder of propertles which has its share of corruption, so annabella's working with prosecutors in that arena and continuing her battle against corruption. I also went to Norma Cruz's center for survivors of GBV. It is a remarkable place. Your giving her the IWOC award has validated her leadership in significant ways and she remains very grateful. Needless to say, the message from all of these women was "Please tell Hillary she keeps us going."

Also, I learned that former president Arzu who was in power during your 1998 trip is now mayor of Gatemala City, which has some of the cleanest streets I've seen anywhere!

I know you're going to Haiti on Monday. You may remember that years ago when you went to Haiti, you met with a group of Haitian women who told you that after your speech at the VV conference in Uruguay, they decided to form a new NGO "women in democracy." Well, they are still going strong - one of the most effective groups in Haiti and

strongly connected to VV. I understand they have a place in the exhibition hall you will tour. Hopefully, you can give them an extra minute or two.

Sorry this is so long but I'm leaving Guatemala realistic but buoyed, thanks to some great women who got law degrees and now find themselves in positions where they can make a huge difference.

I saw CVC on BBC this morning from Nigeria. She did well and spoke lovingly about her mom.