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Timeline: Guatemala

VIDEO AND AUDIO NEWS

2003: Oscar Berger elected as president

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Overview, political leaders, the media

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Most popular now, in detail

1981 - Around 11,000 people are killed by death squads and soldiers in response to growing anti-government guerrilla activity.

1982 - General Efraín Ríos Montt gains power following military coup.



2003 November - Presidential elections go to second round. Former military leader Efraín Ríos Montt trails in third place, accepts defeat.

2003 December - Conservative businessman Oscar Berger - a former mayor of Guatemala City - wins presidential election in second round.



Remembering the war dead at Guatemala City's peace monument

Guatemala - along with Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras - agrees on free-trade agreement with US.

2004 May - Former military leader Efraín Ríos Montt placed under house arrest.

2004 May/June - Major cuts to the army; bases are closed and 10,000 soldiers are retired.

2004 July - \$3.5 million in damages paid to victims of civil war. Move follows state's formal admissions of guilt in several well-known human rights crimes.

2004 September - Deadly clashes as police try to evict around 600 squatters from private farm. Eleven people are killed.

2004 December - UN mission, set up to monitor post-civil war peace process, winds up. But UN says Guatemala still suffers from crime, social injustice, human rights violations.



Sugar cane is one of Guatemala's most abundant resources

2005 March - Government ratifies Central American free trade deal with US amid street protests in capital.

Storm deaths

2005 October - Hundreds of people are killed as Tropical Storm Stan sweeps through, triggering landslides and floods.

2005 November - Guatemala's leading anti-drugs investigator is arrested in the US on charges of drug trafficking.

2006 July - A Spanish judge issues a warrant for the arrest of former military leader Efraín Ríos Montt and other former officials over atrocities committed during the civil war.

2006 December - Government and the UN agree to create a commission - to be known as the CICIG - to identify and dismantle powerful clandestine armed groups.

2007 February - Three El Salvador politicians and their driver are murdered near Guatemala City. The trio were members of the Central American Parliament, based in the capital.

2007 May - Guatemala ratifies an international adoption treaty, committing to make sure babies aren't bought or stolen.

2007 July - Amnesty International urges the government to ratify the CICIG as a first step towards tackling the culture of impunity it says has contributed to Guatemala's soaring murder rate.

2007 August - International election monitors say they are worried about the high murder rate among political candidates and activists in the run-up to the 9 September polls.

2007 November - Álvaro Colom of the center-left National Unity of Hope Party wins presidential elections with nearly 53 percent of the vote.

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