

New Guatemalan President begins 100-Day Plan

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

Global Research, January 19, 2008

[Prensa Latina](#) 18 January 2008

With the launching of a rural development project and special operations, the new Guatemalan government started a 100-day plan against poverty and insecurity gripping the country.

The program will cost 1.2 billion quetzals (about \$158 million) and is a response to the people's most urgent needs and to improve quality of life, President Alvaro Colom stated.

Three days after assuming power, Colom traveled to Ixcán, one of the poorest and most affected zones by the 36-year internal armed conflict, where he announced the delivery of funds to cooperatives for several projects.

The government also predicts the creation of a rural development council, the extension of services like education and health to distant zones, and the concession of resources so poor mothers can send their sons to school.

As for security, over 500 police agents started operations in high crime areas of this capital to eliminate drug and weapon shipments and people trade.

National Police Civil spokesman Faustino Sanchez said that vigilance and detentions are consequences of accusations against citizens dedicated to extortions and assaults to urban buses.

In his inauguration speech Monday, President Colom announced a raging war against the Mafias and organized crime, and promised starting a process of change to a social-democratic government that fights poverty, oriented to those with less opportunities.

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