



Restoration of the National Police Archive Project

Report of New Developments

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos
-PDH-



December 2006

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Archives Project

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Guatemala, December 2006.

1. Background

As a result of several decades of violence and confrontation, especially during the 36 years that the internal armed conflict lasted, Guatemala lived a critical situation of social structure divergence and disintegration. Therefore, the national reconciliation is still one of the most pressing tasks as part of the foundation to be able to build a true democracy in our country. And that process of reconciliation – or conciliation, in some cases – is based on the grounds of recognizing and observing the right to have memory, truth and justice.

The *Proyecto de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (REMHI)* [Restoration of the Historical Memory Project] and the *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH)* [Comission for the Historical Clarification] work have provided priceless contributions in the long way traveled to find restoration of the historical memory, knowing the truth about what happened during the almost four decades that the internal armed conflict went on, and creating the conditions so that people responsible for these aberrant crimes are brought before a court of law. However, both REMHI and CEH have been denied access to any important archive or document source by the Guatemalan government. This prohibition to access public information forced both instances, which are vital for establishing peace, to be built mainly over the testimony of surviving victims, victims' relatives, community members and associates of all kinds of organizations.

That fact strengthens the importance of the findings made by the *Institución del Procurador de los Derechos Humanos (IPDH)* [Ombudsman Institution] on the Policía Nacional Historical Archives and the exertion of a great effort to achieve its restoration and organization to make it available to State institutions, researches who are interested and citizens who would like to exercise their right to know the truth. The IPDH objective is to make a fundamental and effective contribution to the process of national reconciliation in Guatemala by preserving millions of documents of the historical archives through different processes, as well as organize, describe, digitalize and preserve them in adequate conditions.

2. First Stage

In July 2005, personnel from the *Institución del Procurador de los Derechos Humanos (IPDH)* became aware of the existence of an substantial archive of Policía Nacional (PN) and Policía Nacional Civil (PNC) documents. Given the magnitude and quality of the archive, as well as the importance of this finding, the IPDH started an investigation on human rights and requested a court order authorizing unrestricted and indefinite access to the archive.

The IPDH committed itself to preserve, organize and make digital back ups of the information contained in the historical archives of the Policía Nacional, as a contribution to the recovery of historical and political memory of the country, and to have references and solid information for investigating human rights violations.

2.1 Extent of the Archive

Experts from many countries have concurred that the historical archive of the *Policía Nacional de Guatemala* is the biggest collection in its type in Latin America. The IPDH prepared a general inventory and manually measured the linear meters of bundles and packages of documents stacked up in the different locations. More than 8,000 linear meters of document piles have been counted; eight kilometers of packages, each with hundreds or thousands of folios. Later, after the processes of inventory and measurement, we reach the conclusion that those locations store no less than 80 million folios of documents, including official letters, orders, police news reports, plans, research files, radiograms, police background checks, formal complaints, identification card files and all sorts of administrative records of the extinct Policía Nacional. The oldest record found so far is dated 1882, and the documents go up to 1997 when the Policía Nacional duties ceased.

PhD. Sergio Morales, Ombudsman, instructed the IPDH Department deputies to investigate within their jurisdiction whether there were archives corresponding to the time the PN was operating. This led to the identification of 30 minor archives, two in the capital and the rest in different towns and cities.

2.2 Legal Support

The Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala assigns the legal obligation of investigating any possible violation to the individual and collective constitutional rights to the Ombudsman. For that end, it enables the Ombudsman to access any State office or document source that can supply relevant information. Therefore, the Ombudsman's investigating actions on the PN Historical Archive are fully authorized. However, to legally strengthen its work, the Ombudsman filed petitions

in civil and penal courts. On July 12, 2005, the Third Civil Court of First Instance Judge issued a resolution in which “the Ombudsman and the people designated by him are authorized to examine the places and documents found in the archives and offices of the *Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional* [National Police Historical Archive].”

Later, on September 30, 2005, the same court, established as the Court of Appeals, ruled: “this provisional appeal is granted so that the General Director of the *Policía Nacional Civil* abstains from moving the National Police Historical Archives from its current location and it is guaranteed, without any restriction whatsoever, that the Ombudsman, and the people designated by him, have access to the aforementioned location and the documents stored there; and that the Director of said institution coordinates with the Ombudsman any administrative decision that refers to the preservation or moving of the documents that compose the Historical Archive of the National Police.”

On December 13, 2005, the Fifth Penal Court of First Instance resolved to “declare the closure of the sites where the Historical Archive of the National Police is located; appoint the PNC officer in charge of the Archive as the repository; appoint as experts the historians proposed by the Ombudsman, carry out the inventory of priority documents and the action of information search, as well as request to the *Policía Nacional Civil* Director to provide the necessary elements to protect the facilities where such Archive is located.”

In addition, on December 15, 2005, the same court resolved to “notify the closure of the sites where the National Police Historical Archive is located to the *Ministerio de Gobernación* [Department of the Interior] as the authority above the *Policía Nacional Civil* so that it appoints a suitable representative to collaborate with the intrinsic activities of the Archive; notify the *Archivo General de Centro América* about the measured ordered, so that it appoints a representative to collaborate with the intrinsic activities of the Archive and to safeguard the documents located in it.”

The real importance of the Archive can only be understood in the context of what was established by the Peace Accords and the commitments that the Republic of Guatemala undertook accordingly. The Accord for the establishment of *la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico de las Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos (CEH)* [Commission for the Historical Clarification of Human Right Violations] subscribed by the parties in Oslo on June 1994, recognized that “our country’s contemporary history registers serious violent acts, disrespect for the fundamental rights of the individual and the suffering of people linked to the armed conflict.” It also recognizes that “Guatemalan people are entitled to know the truth about those events whose clarification will contribute to ensure that those sad and painful pages of history do not happen again and that the democracy process in the country is strengthened.” Three months before, in the Global Accord on Human Rights, signed in March 1994,

the parties had stated “we should act with determination against impunity. The Government shall not encourage the adoption of legislative or any other order of measures oriented to hinder the indictment and appropriate sanctions of those responsible for violating human rights.”

Nevertheless, as mentioned before, for the fulfillment of its mission the CEH did not have access, except in very few instances, to official document sources that would allow it to carry out its investigation and analysis. In most cases, as it is stated in volumen XII of the “Informe Guatemala Memoria del Silencio” [Guatemala Report, the Memory of Silence] (pages 31 through 195) the different state offices denied the existence of fundamental archives or document sources that would have made it possible to investigate potential human rights violations. That was the case of the *Ministerio de Gobernación* and the *Dirección de la PNC* during the time the CEH acted. That is why it is possible to affirm that by carrying out the judicial order that allows the IPDH unrestricted access to the Archive and making it easier to investigate human rights, the Government of the Republic has the opportunity to play a role in the recovery of historical memory and effectively contribute to the national reconciliation and help citizens access the information.

2.3 Objective of the Restoration of the Policía Nacional Archives Project

The main objective of the Project is to have an organized, available and accessible Historical Archive of the National Police for the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches, the researchers and citizens interested in this topic, through modern reference methods which will influence the strengthening of the IPDH and institutions in the Justice Sector and civil society, in their capability of analyzing and investigating violations to human rights, using information system tools (databases, digital images, etc.). Also, the democratic institutionalization will be strengthened through the correction of an irregularity that has been maintained through the years: not complying with the State obligation to guarantee the constitutional right of access to public information.

The Project, as it supports the historical clarification, contributes to the creation process of the basic conditions for peace and reconciliation. Also, the Project contributes to promote democratic governability by facilitating access to information regarding human right violations during the armed conflict and strengthening IPDH, institutions in the Justice Sector and the Civil Society in their capability to analyze and investigate such cases.

2.4 Needs and Problems:

a) Physical Conditions:

The abandonment of buildings, left half built since 1982, ruined a great deal of documents. Leaks and water filtrations on the roof and floor or several facilities created the ideal environment for the infestation of all sorts of fungus, besides the bat, rodent and insect plagues that caused great destruction. Combined with the lack of doors and windows and the appalling state of electrical installation, those factors increased the existing risks.

It is especially relevant the finding and recovery of a huge mountain of papers, practically abandoned and exposed to the elements, which turned out to be thousands of identification card files.

In view of the general conditions of carelessness and abandonment in which the Archive facilities were found (extreme humidity, plagues and inadequate infrastructure) and the huge historical value that those documents have; immediately after finding them, the IPDH started diverse processes to guarantee its conservation, organization, description and digitalization.

Additional to the described deterioration, there were problems resulting from the absence of proper protection and the lack of direct and peripheral security to guarantee the integrity of the documents. The conditions of half-built structures and the lack of doors and windows in several rooms, opened the possibility that any intruder could enter from the street directly toward the rooms where the files were located. This situation moved the Ombudsman to assign, from the first moment on, security guards from the IPDH to permanently watch the storage rooms, in accord with the PNC personnel who was in charge of the Historical Archive.

Constant glitches in the voltage and short circuits that could occur due to the extreme deterioration of the wires could generate irreparable damages to computer equipment and scanners used in the digitalization of documents. To solve this situation, IPDH has performed several repairing jobs, the expansion of the electrical network and voltage regulators have been installed to protect electronic equipment.

2.5 Advances in the First Stage:

a) Recovery and conservation:

The main achievements in regards the recovery of documents were reached on December 2005, with the transfer of around six million folios to the central archive on zone 6, coming from 30 PN archives that were stored in 30 Police stations and Precincts of different Departments and municipalities. The important role performed

by the Department Deputies deserves special recognition. Thanks to the commitment and effort of women and men who are part of these offices, the Archive now has numerous minute books, reports and near six million folios of important documents. Taking into consideration the state of abandonment in which these papers were found, we can assert that without this contribution from the deputies, these documents would have been lost for ever.

The harmful actions of plagues and the destruction due to humidity has been reduced considerably through fumigation, waterproofing, repairs, installations of door and windows, cleaning work and setting up shelves. During the first months, working jointly with the PNC personnel who is in charge of the Archive, some emergency measures were taken to protect the documents that were most exposed to water filtrations and the appropriate archival techniques were applied to dry the dossiers and bundles already damaged by the humidity.

Before starting the digitalization of documents defined as priority, cataloged by corresponding year and PN structure, the PDH worked with the PNC personnel to clean, prepare and organize the documents. For such activity, at the initial stage, the criteria for organizing documents established through the year by officers and agents in charge of the Archive were followed meticulously. At the same time, the legal custody chain has been taken care of permanently by the PNC personnel. Towards the end of the first stage, near one million folios had been cleaned and prepared applying the corresponding archival techniques, and placed on carton boxes awaiting the digitalization work. Between November 2005 and February 2006, six teams of three people each were established (two by the IPDH and one by the PNC); these teams jumped into the activities of cleaning and organizing the documents from the years 80 to 86.

b) Security:

To improve security, the PDH started a series of jobs such as closing access doors and putting bars and metallic grilles on the building that was used before as an explosive storage by the PNC.

c) Digital imaging:

With the support of Human Rights organizations, on December 2005 the first scanners and computers were received, as a loan, to digitalize documents from 1980 to 1985 that had been cleaned and organized by the aforementioned teams. This activity was carried out as a provisional measure until the human and technical resources needed were available to start the massive digitalization of documents.

d) Investigation about the Policia Nacional structure evolution:

During the first stage, the reconstruction of the National Police institutional structure evolution throughout the 20th Century was carried out. Through a first scientific investigation work within the records of the PN Historical Archive and other sources (Library of the Congress, General Archive of Central America, the Periodicals Library, etc.) a preliminary document was drafted establishing the fundamental parameters of the historical evolutions of the Guatemalan police. Such document allows understanding the logic behind the different PN structures, the way they worked and the sense in which they evolved. This first report is called to work as a sort of compass to guide the work of the PDH when searching within millions of documents contained in the Historical Archive.

e) Support of the international community and Human Rights organizations:

With the support of various analysts from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) the necessary documents were outlined to start the financial management (project document, general budget, operating annual plan, profiles of people to be hired, timetable, etc.). Through a cooperation agreement between the IPDH and UNDP, this program of the United Nations will manage the financial resources of the project, as well as advise the IPDH on the accounting and administrative aspects of it.

Since the beginning of this effort, in July of 2005, the IPDH values and recognizes the contribution and commitment demonstrated by Human Rights organizations. It is especially outstanding the effort and dedication volunteered by the colleagues from Human Rights organizations to this project; who alongside with the IPDH personnel made it possible to reach the achievements during this first stage.

f) Consultants:

In the last quarter of 2005, we had a one-week visit from PhD. Trudy Huskamp Peterson, an international expert archivist specialized in handling police files. In November 2005, Dr. Peterson presented a first document with conclusions and recommendations, which started a process of consultancy and permanent support. During the same period, Argentinean experts Ana Cacopardo and Ingrid Jaschek visited us; they are responsible for the *Archivo del Departamento de Inteligencia de la Policia de la Provincia de Buenos Aires* [Intelligence Department of the Buenos Aires Police Archive]. After a week of recognition and evaluation of the PN Archives, they presented a report with a series of recommendations that complement Dr. Peterson's advice.

Such reports enrich the conclusions and recommendations outlined on July 2005 by Ms. Carla Ericastilla from the Archivo General de Centroamérica [Central America General Archive]. It is a complete and profound document that provided us with valuable elements from historical, archival, political and legal perspectives. From an archival point of view, it coincides with the fundamentals of Dr. Peterson's report and recommendations.

3. Second Stage

On the IPDH strategy, polished during the second quarter of 2006, three big factors are closely combined and complemented: the archival, information systems and the investigative factors. In the plans prepared by the Institution, the priority documents correspond to the years between 1960 and 1996, time of the armed conflict that was the object of the CEH research. Within this 36-year period, the IPDH focuses on the qualitative investigation of the 11 years from 1975 through 1985, which according to all known investigations encompasses the larger number of human rights violations.

Thanks to the technical and financial support of the international community, particularly the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland and the administrative support of UNDP; in March 2006, the IPDH entered the second stage of the Restoration of the Policía Nacional Archives Project, with a work plan for 2006, and a team of 109 people.

From that moment on, the established strategy started off from the combination and complement of seven fundamental components: **safeguard, preserve, organize, describe, digitalize, analyze** and **protect**. Based on the qualified advice at the IPDH disposal, in each one of the processes the fundamental criteria on the archival science and techniques have been applied, following the internationally accepted regulations.

Safeguard: it is performed through the planned and supervised application of a series of safety measures, combined with the permanent surveillance 24 hours a day, and the installation and use of technical security resources. It also encompasses the physical safeguard of the documents, through periodical fumigations and repairs to avoid water filtrations and humidity, repair of electrical installations and placing fire extinguishers to prevent fires.

Preservation: it is ensured through the cleanliness of the documents, applying specific archival techniques to free them from all sorts of infestations, metallic objects that rust and destroy the paper, and humidity that permanently damages them. The aforementioned fumigations are also part of the preservation.

Organization: it is carried out, starting on the second stage, through the accurate identification of *Fondos, sub fondos*, series, type of document and issue date, applying the International Standard Archival Description ISAD(G).

Description: the main goal of archival description is to identify and explain the context and content of the documents to make them accessible. As it has been said before, the IPDH team has adopted the ISAD(G) regulations issued by the Standard Archival Description Committee of the International Council of Archives and the Codes for Country Name Representation ISO 3166.

Digitalization: scanning the documents influences in a very important way the archival and investigative objectives. Once the documents are digitalized, both image and content are preserved forever, and the archival record is saved from any contingency, especially if that information is located in various servers locally and remotely. At the same time, digitalized documents are accessible to any kind of investigation, without endangering the originals that are kept in the archive.

Analysis: it refers to the quantitative and qualitative investigation carried out by the IPDH to identify and document possible violations to human rights. One of the main contributions the IPDH gives through this project stems from building the concept that indivisibly links archival science with human rights investigation.

Protection: it encompasses the collection of measures to maintain and ensure the archival records in conditions that guarantee durability through the years and at the same time are accessible to all sorts of researchers. By integrating the concepts of protection and accessibility, in the long term, the IPDH purpose is to set the foundation to make the PN Historical Archive, and the buildings that house it, a Memorial Center.

2.2 Advances in the Second Stage

As it has already been indicated, during the eight months that the second stage lasted, from March 1st through October 31, 2006, the IPDH kept having the support of diverse Human Rights organizations in Guatemala, other specialized institutions and related entities from various countries. The institution invested its own human and financial resources, and it also had substantial resources provided by Human Rights organizations in Guatemala, the German Service (DED) and the Governments of Sweden, Switzerland and the *Generalitat* from *Catalunya*. This allowed IPDH to achieve, among others, the following results during this time:

a) Recovery and preservation of documents

One of the most important achievements is that even at this time it is working in the recovery of hundreds of thousands of card files – issued by the *Gabinete de Identificación de la Policía Nacional [National Police Identification Cabinet]* – that the IPDH found discarded as garbage, without any control or responsibility from the PNC personnels assigned to the Historical Archive. Towards the end of the second stage, the IPDH had managed to recover, clean and organize near 300,000 records of different sorts: identity cards registry, driver licenses registry, people booked under common crime charges, people booked on political charges, and post mortem registry.

Also, several thousands of documents and files issued by the *Gabinete de Identificación de la PN* were recovered. The classification and systematization of the post mortem, political charges and ideological affiliation registry files were given priority.

b) Archival Organization

In March, the IPDH increased the number of cleaning and document organizing teams to eleven. The priority was given to documents from the *Dirección General de la PN* [General Office of the National Police] from 1979 through 1985 (seven teams), the *Segundo Cuerpo* [Second Police Station in the Capital city] and *Comando 6* (1 team), the *Cuarto Cuerpo* [Fourth Police Station in the Capital city] (1 team), card files from the *Gabinete de Identificación* (1 team) and the Jefatura Departamental de Quetzaltenango [Quetzaltenango Department Headquarters] (1 team).

Later on, another two teams were created, one for cleaning and organizing Partes de Novedades [police news reports] filed by the *Dirección General de la PN* and another to perform the same task with the Libros [books], among others, Control, Minute, and acknowledgment books. During the whole activity the legal custody chain was kept by the PNC personnel.

During the Project's first stage, document arrangement was performed applying the empirical criteria used for the last 25 years by the PN assigned personnel up until 1997, and by the PNC personnel from that date until now. Those criteria and traditional procedures were useful and allowed to have a logical organization and certain order for the physical location of documents. They prevented the chaos that would have further damage the Archive. However, in many cases it did not observe the principle of provenance, and above all, with the purpose of organizing documents in chronological order, files or dossiers organized and kept together by the original archivist were separated.

In the second stage, with the advice and support of Dr. Trudy Peterson, the principle of provenance was gradually incorporated and meticulously applied to organize and describe the documents by *Fondo, sub fondo, Series* and document type, using the ISAD(G) elements. This procedure allows establishing a Reference Code, which is a system that makes it possible to identify in a unique way the description unit and to establish the link to the description that it represents. To this end, the Codes for Country Name Representation ISO 3166 have also been adopted.

Through training activities, based on international regulations, the archival criteria have been unified between the IPDH and the PNC personnel responsible for the Archive.

Until October 2006, more than two million cards and folios had been cleaned and organized applying the corresponding archival techniques; these documents were then placed on carton boxes and were ready for digitalization. More than 2,000 books were also cleaned and organized. Toward the end of the second stage, the work was reorganized and nine teams were established for Archival and Description; each was assigned a Fondo defined as priority. This information will be further discussed on the third stage perspectives.

c) Advice and training

In joint activities with the PNC personnel, the IPDH team has had training on the basic archival criteria and document cleaning and preservation techniques. In parallel and with a vision toward the future, several training workshops were given for 62 PNC specialists, who are in charge of handling the institution files on different Police Stations in the country.

During this period, two kinds of training activities were performed. On one hand, basic archival technique workshops were carried out; on the other, training workshops for knowing and handling the evolution of the Guatemalan National Police institutional structure evolution throughout the 20th century also took place.

As mentioned before, the initial support of the Washington National Security Archives allowed us to have Dr. Trudy Peterson who, with the financial support of the Government of Switzerland, became a permanent advisor to the IPDH in order to carry out the Project from a specialized archival point of view. Thanks to this support we were able to have Dr. Peterson's presence, support and personal advice for a week each month.

For the special field of quantitative investigation, since May the IPDH relies on the advice of Benetech Group, headed by Dr. Patrick Ball; they are international experts in applying statistical and computer science in human rights research.

d) Research on the evolution of PN structures

Through a scientific research within the records of the PN Historical Archive and other document sources, the evolution of the PN institutional structure throughout the 20th century has been rebuilt. It is a valuable document that identifies the main parameters of the historical development of the Guatemalan Police institution, regarding the different strategies of the State, the legislations that has given legal foundation to it, and its territory coverage in the different periods of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The document being prepared allows us to understand the logic followed to create the different PN structures, the way these worked and were managed and the way in which they evolved. This report has been used as a compass to lead the searching work performed by the IPDH, within the millions of documents that are part of the Historical Archive.

e) Document Digitalization

Once the technical difficulties related to the selection of scanning machines, acquisition of computer equipment, adapting the software, renewing the electrical installation and training the personnel were overcome; the Ombudsman inaugurated the scanning work on August 21, 2006. Simultaneously, six teams started working: one with a special machine for books, and five for card files and folios with automatic machines that have a flat base to digitalize damaged documents.

The initial scanning process was subject to the advancement in the organization and description process already indicated. Once the cleaning, organization and description processes concluded on a certain Fondo, sub Fondo or document series, these files were placed on labeled carton boxes with the reference code and moved to the scanning area for its digitalization. Depending on the preservation of each folio, this was scanned semi-automatically or on the flat base of the scanner. The books are digitalized with a special scanner.

Through the use of software developed by our programmer team, each scanned folio is digitally identified with a unique code that facilitates its retrieval. Digital images are stored on a central server and automatically transferred to a remote server that acts as a security back up. By the end of October 2006, 300,000 folios had been digitalized.

f) Quantitative Research

Two quantitative studies based on random samples were carried out with the specialized advice of Benetech Group. For the first one, a random sample was chosen from the total amount of Archive documents to get statistical data regarding the type of documents, provenance, corresponding years and general references to some content. The second study was executed based on a random sample focused on the documents that were being cleaned, organized and described by the teams in charge of years 1979 through 1985, Second and Fourth Police Stations in the capital city and Quetzaltenango Department Headquarter.

In September, a bigger study started based on a random sample that will have 25,000 documents, from the years that the armed conflict in

Guatemala went on between 1960 and 1996. That period of years that coincides with the period researched and analyzed by the Commission of the Historical Clarification, was established with the objective, among others, of being able to do cross reference with the conclusions stated on the report "Memoria del Silencio" published by the CEH on February 1999. This bigger study that is gradually moving forward processing successive samples of 300 documents each should be finished by the third quarter of 2007. The study will allow drawing very important statistical conclusions regarding National Police structures, operating policies, patterns on proceedings and chain of command during this 36-year period.

All the qualitative research process thoroughly follows the internationally accepted scientific, information system and statistical procedures. The professional operation of such tools and mechanisms, will allow the dismissal of any suggestion that there has been biased or tendentious procedures from the Recovery of the National Police Historical Archive Project.

g) Qualitative Research

During the final months of the Project's second stage, a global research strategy was developed, the corresponding plans were made and the specific structures that started working on the third stage were created. The inner core of the strategy resides on an integral concept around which the whole project revolves: researching possible human rights violations and the unbreakable link between archival work and research.

That is precisely one of the major contributions that the IPDH is giving through this project. Taking into consideration the singularity of the Historical National Police Archive – due to its importance, the long historical period it covers and the quality of information it contains – it is fundamental to design and apply the concept of the indissoluble integration of archival work and research; both made more powerful through the use of informational system tools. These concepts are further discussed on the third stage perspectives.

h) Security

Besides keeping and strengthening the IPDH security personnel, the institution has invested important resources to place metal doors, grilles and glass on the windows that were most exposed. Also, walls were built to close the most dangerous entrances and metallic grilles and gates were placed to prevent unauthorized personnel from entering. Three sentry boxes were built to safeguard security personnel during the uninterrupted surveillance shifts.

Fire extinguishers were serviced and all the IPDH personnel assigned to the Project was trained on the use of them.

In the last few months of the second stage, motion detection lights and video cameras, to tape everyone who passed through the doors and access routes throughout the day and night, were installed. Those actions substantially improved preventive security measures.

i) *International community and Human Rights Organizations support*

The implementation process of the preparatory assistance signed in January continued with the support of several UNDP advisers, which allowed hiring personnel and initiate the process to acquire goods and equipment that were needed. At the same time, the general planning continued to be prepared – Project Document, Operating Annual Plan, general budget, timetable, etc., which will be signed jointly with the State Department in January 2007.

Besides having the financial support from the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland; in October, Dr. Sergio Morales, Guatemala's Ombudsman, signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Generalitat de Catalunya which was the foundation for the financial support given through the Catalan Cooperation Agency, within the same procedure of UNDP administration.

Also, cooperation agreements were signed with the German Service (DED), with the Human Rights Organizations convergence and with the Center for Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences (CAFCA). In January 2007, a specific agreement is expected to be signed with the Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG) [Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation], but there has been mutual collaboration throughout 2006.

During the second stage, there was effective communication and coordination with Human Right organizations that are committed to support this effort: CALDH, GAM, SEDEM, CIIDH, Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales [Institute for Comparative Studies on Penal Science], Movimiento Nacional de Derechos Humanos [National Human Rights Movement], ODHAG and Asociación Memoria, Verdad y Justicia [Memory, Truth and Justice Association].

j) *Establishment of the National Consultative Council*

On August 24, the National Consultative Council was established. Nineteen Guatemalan public figures are part of it, among historians, lawyers, journalists, sociologists, psychologists, one bishop and other distinguished citizens. The main purpose of this entity is to advise the IPDH and the Project Director on different

actions to be taken to ensure, in the medium and long run the organization of a Historical Archive that has legal certainty, technical and managerial sustainability and the accessibility to conduct investigations.

As a Project management self-criticism, it is recognized that one of the main shortcomings is the deficient communication with the members of the National Consultative Council after its establishment. Given the importance that it has for the Project that the council fulfills its role, it is expected that the council's operation will be a priority starting on January 2007.

The establishment of an International Consultative Council is also being worked on. It will be integrated by experts responsible for major archival projects in different countries and other personalities internationally known for their work defending Human Rights. The main job of this entity will be giving advice to the IPDH and to the Project management regarding actions that link the Recovery of the National Police Archive Project to other global initiatives related to the preservation of archives, recovery of historical memory, search of the truth about repressive regimes and the search of justice for the victims.

The integration of the International Consultative Council was expected to be completed in October, 2006. However, due to the accumulation of tasks corresponding to the second stage it was necessary to reschedule such event for the first quarter of 2007.

4. Third Stage Start

The third stage of the Restoration of the National Police Historical Archives Project started on November 1st, 2006, based on the experience, capabilities and resources gathered during the first and second stages. The new stage will last until July 2007 approximately.

This stage has, among others, the main components indicated below:

- a. Refining the strategy in which the essentially investigative nature of the project, which is centered on identification and documentation of possible Human Rights violations, within an integral concept of the unbreakable link between archival work, information systems and research.
- b. Developing action plans for the following 10 months, with goals, timetables and handbooks to assign responsibilities to each one of the teams.
- c. Recruitment, hiring and training of new personnel to create different teams on each working area. The third stage started with a general structure of 150 people in November, 2006, which will increased to 200 people in January 2007.
- d. Developing an organization chart that locales with precision the specific roles of each working team, at the same time it would show the complementary relation in all areas and fields of responsibility.
- e. Performing a new general inventory of all documents deposited on each of the storages, areas and rooms of the Archive, registering the corresponding code, including the wall number and the container in which the documents are kept. This was the way we established, on a more technical manner, that the Archive has 7,900 linear meters of packages or document bundles that represent approximately 80 million folios. Based on that information, the Master Location Register – MLR – was completed and updated. Also, procedures were outlined and forms that should be filled out when a document is moved were designed. The use of these procedures and those forms, that the PNC personnel in charge of the Archive uses and signs, ensures that the chain of custody is kept. The MLR is the starting point for all the processes that the project performs within the Archive.
- f. Creating a Training Center to convey information permanently, systematically and in a planned manner; offer training in different work specialties, training

on handling the research criteria and instruction to achieve higher levels of job efficiency and efficacy.

- g. Establishing nine teams for "Archival and Description", in charge of cleaning, organizing and describing the documents, following the international rules stated on ISAD(G). Documents are classified by *Fondos*, sub *Fondos* and document series, assigned specifically to each team. Since the archival work is carried out at the same time as the research filtering, people responsible for Archival and Description are also part of the general research team.
- h. Design, construction and operation of databases and other information system tools needed for this new stage in the project development.
- i. Assemble the teams in charge of the qualitative research, people responsible for the random sample studies, designating and assigning duties to coordinators, coders and data entry people. Determining sample data importance with Benetech Group advice and using MLR to establish random sample points. To guarantee the quality of jobs performed by these teams and the application of the established technical regulations, "coder quality control" exercises are performed periodically using internationally accepted procedures.
- j. Establish seven qualitative research teams in charge of working on structures, documents of the priority *fondos*, databases and cases. All of them should be gathered following the general research strategy; they should observe the responsibilities, procedures and deadlines stated in the handbooks, to fulfill each part of the action plans. The researchers who are part of those work teams are part of the general research teams.
- k. Design and approve the structure and contents of the general reports about the new development the Recovery of National Police Archive Project has had; which should be publicly presented by the Ombudsman in the middle of 2007. Having clear goals allows us to define short term objectives, draw action plans and timetables, to describe on those reports.

5. Conclusions

The Ombudsman can proudly present a favorable balance of the work performed by the Recovery of National Police Historical Archive Project up until December 2006; complying with the constitutional requirement and judicial resolutions that backed him up. The process has been particularly complex due to the nature and importance of this unique and irreplaceable archive, and the challenges and risks it entails. Such process has not been exempt from errors, but in general, we have had the ability to quickly identify them to apply the necessary corrections.

The strategy is clearly defined, and the project organization and structure are solid and complete. The necessary conditions to reach short term goals have been achieved and the basis for moving the process towards medium and long term objectives are set.

The Project will carry out its fourth stage between August and December 2007, which should be distinguished for connecting the achievements and results reached up to that time with the goals established for the next five years. This will allow ensuring continuity and coherence in the efforts that have to be exerted to achieve the planned objectives.

Such objectives can be grouped into five main spheres:

- a) Continue advancing in the process of document preservation, organization, description and protection.
- b) Continue the quantitative and qualitative processes, geared toward the strengthening of the rights Guatemalan people have to recover historical memory, know the truth and achieve justice.
- c) Create regulations and establish mechanisms and conditions to gradually make the National Police Historical Archive available to interested researchers.
- d) Achieve the needed legal certainty and institutional stability, from the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches to ensure the Archive integrity as historical and cultural heritage of Guatemalan people.
- e) Turn the Historical Archive, the buildings that encompass it and the land that surrounds it into a Memorial Center where other related archives and sources of information can be deposited so current and new generations can learn and ponder about the bloody and dark periods of recent Guatemalan history. This will be a great contribution to the national reconciliation process and to the

development of a citizen conscience that acts of this nature should be allowed
"never again".

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OMBUDMAN'S OFFICE