“We believe in a Guatemala that is more, prosperous, safer and with more solidarity.”
La confianza de nuestros clientes nos hace ser reconocidos nuevamente como el Banco del Año 2014 en Guatemala por las tres revistas financieras internacionales más importantes: Euromoney, The Banker y Global Finance.

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1 PIZZA GRANDE DE 1 INGREDIENTE + COSTILLITAS O ALITAS + CHEESY PAPOTAS + HELADO 1/2 LITRO

por sólo Q134

PROMOCION POR TIEMPO LIMITADO, NO APLICA CON OTRAS PROMOCIONES.

Creemos en el VALOR del AHORRO.

Creemos en nuestra familia ¡GUATEMALA!
This magazine your hold before you delves into one of the biggest development issues related to security and justice in Guatemala. Extortions are one of the most lamentable crimes that occur in our country. A crime that in many cases they take more than a political will to fight, for it is closely related to impunity and the lack of reporting culture in the country.

An analysis of the numbers of the current Government’s administration demonstrates that, on average, between 16.1 and 20.5 extortion reports have been received on a daily basis. Because of this, the focus of this edition of “Let’s Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate), far from showing the actions that have not been implemented to fight this crime, focuses more on understanding the problem and finding mechanisms that are supportive through the Coalition for Security (Coalición por la Seguridad), in different processes like the campaign “I Don’t Pay, I Report” and other applications that are being worked on, alongside the Public Ministry and the Ministry of Interior.

In this manner, we do not only see a problem, but rather a possible solution that will enable us to begin strengthening the Fiscal Office against Extortions, a first step in working alongside authorities while also attempting that the Law for the Penitentiary Regimen (Ley del Régimen Penitenciario), which establishes in Article 33 all prohibited objects inside of jail centers, which includes cell phones, which are prohibited in prisons. Even though, this law is often meaningless, as it fails to include the consequences of not complying with its regulations.

In the year of 2014 alone, more than two thousand cellphones and 1,400 chips were seized from jails, which is evidence of the lack of controls in penitentiary centers in controlling what objects are brought into jails. This is pointed out in one of the sections of the magazine, so we invite you to read for greater detail, and to better understand the severity of the issue.

Lastly, we recognize that the country is going through a crisis that can become a huge opportunity, if the necessary initiatives to establish actions to reduce corruption and strengthen institutions are approved. This is one of the most important pillars of the “Let’s Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate) initiative, additionally to being the theme of the 2015 edition of the National Business Forum (Encuentro Nacional de Empresarios, ENADE 2015).

We hope this issue is of your liking and please, do not forget to connect with us through social media. We love receiving reviews and comments in order to maintain a dynamic communication.
The Hidden Costs of Violence and Extortions in Guatemala

By: Carmen Lucia Saigüero, General Manager at Mejoremos Guate.

In the middle of the afternoon, two armed young men walk into a store. Upon entering, they point a gun at the owner’s five-year old daughter and demanded he turn over everything. The owner did not hesitate. In a few seconds, the criminal’s walked out, like it was nothing, with about five hundred quetzals in their pockets.

The store owner indicated that he had been a previous victim of robberies, but never one with so much violence. This store was located next to my family’s office and as a matter of fact, this incident happened just one hour prior to when I visited the store.

The consequences were visible, the store never opened again, the owner decided that it was not worth putting his family at risk, so he closed his business and moved. This is a common occurrence, as often these small business owners live where they work. In these cases, the impact of extortions is not only economic but also social.

It is a shame that things like this happen all over the country. There are some statistics of reports made to the Police that indicate that a high percentage of small and medium businesses closed due to insecurity. Many could not afford extortions, which is what delinquents call “floor rights” or “right to pass”, which frequently are applied by gangs or groups that are linked to drug trafficking. Others were not able to survive due to constant robberies. Authorities recognize that the problem is serious and we know that they are trying to find viable solutions.

Extortions affect competitiveness and productivity in the country, due to high levels of insecurity, and it is because of this that the Coalition for Security (Coalición por la Seguridad) is working with authorities from the Ministry of Interior and Division Against Extortions of the National Civil Police, in strengthening their capacity to more effectively prevent these kind of crimes that so deeply affects small, medium and large businesses. Extortions are a problem at a national level, but these indexes increase in those municipalities where there are high indexes of drug trafficking activities.

There are a variety of business that are affected by extortions like neighborhood stores, pharmacies, distribution channels of beverages, gas stations, public transit, amongst others; and is extremely expensive. When business can, they hire private security to protect their delivery vehicles, and thus prevent robberies; other choose to install cameras and alarm systems and hire insurance against robberies, which with each passing day becomes more and more expensive. All of these costs are then transferred to consumers. At the end, as citizens we are victimized twice, because we are victims of violence and we are victims of the cost of insecurity.

Even though the situation the country is currently going through is regrettable as there are gangs that extortionate citizens and cartels that execute extortions from inside of jails, business men and women think the situation is going to get better and they have keep on working to fight this crime, even though there are high risks to their lives and their integrity, as well as the lives of those who work for their businesses. With entrepreneurs like Guatemalans, who are resilient and undefeatable, it is possible to eliminate the threat of extortions.

There can only be a guaranteed positive result in the fight against extortions in Guatemala if there continues to be an open and concrete collaboration between the government, business owners, and the civil society.

There are some statistics of reports made to the Police that indicate that a high percentage of small and medium businesses closed due to insecurity.
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Currently Juan Pablo is the Coordinator for Multi sector affairs at the 2020 foundation, supporting the Technical Alliance for Legislative Support (Alianza Técnica de Apoyo al Legislativo -ATAL-) which is part of the “Lets Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate) program. Juan Pablo has experience in the area of private-public alliances, legislation and international development. He is a political analyst and columnist. He has been a representative for Guatemala before the United Nation’s Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), member of the Experts Committee for the follow-up Mechanisms for the Inter American Convention against Corruption of the Organization for American States (MESICIC) and Expert for Guatemala before the United Nation’s Convention Against Corruption. As a complement to his academic studies, he has various diplomas on the subjects of Citizen Formation, Contemporary International Policies, Economics and Political Leadership and Strategic Entrepreneurship, amongst others.

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She was raised and studies law in Switzerland. She works as an Investigator at CIEN and is an expert in the subject of Jails. She has studies about the Penitentiary Systems and about minors who are in penitentiary centers. She also supports the implementation of violence prevention programs for young adults in marginal areas. She is working towards a Guatemala that is less violent and has more opportunities for young adults.
MEJORES FAMILIAS ES
HÍGIE NE

"Gracias al programa Mejores Familias, las casas están nítidas."

*Marta Lidia Girón aprendió en el programa Mejores Familias, que ambientes sanos y limpios son importantes en los hogares y comunidades.
LET’S BE ALERT ABOUT SAFETY
By: Pedro Cruz, Engineer

At this time, I would like to reference an initiative that is supported by several institutions, organizations and businesses that have been working hard to channel additional efforts towards the reporting of criminal activity through the page: www.alertos.org

ALERTOS.ORG is a user-friendly technological tool that allows citizens to anonymously report criminal activity or threats against their safety or surroundings, from anywhere though different platforms:

- Text Messages: 7762
- Call Center: 1504
- Email: reporte@alertos.org
- Facebook: AlertosGt
- Twitter: @alertos
- Hashtag: #Alertos

This platform is designed to make it easier for citizens who want to collaborate by reporting criminal activities (the only information that is asked for is where, when, what and how a crime happened). It is important to note that the webpage is fed by citizen’s reports (without registering the place, phone number of email from where the report was made), by newspaper reports that are posted on each news-reporting platform’s web pages and by messages that different institutions provide (like tweets from firemen, transit officers and security institutions).

Anyone or any institution that checks the web page can see the amount of crimes (statistics), places (general map) and dates (search periods), classified as: assault, assault in a motorcycle, armed attack, extortion, homicide, robbery in a house, vehicle robbery, kidnapping, drug deal, rape or domestic violence.

Before this project was launched, a pilot test called “Safety for our Community”, during 2012 and 2013 in the municipality of Villa Nueva, one that is considered one of the most violent municipalities in the country. The results for the implementation of the platform were very positive; it is enough evidence to simply mention the apprehensions for driving a stolen vehicle that was possible through the digital platform, where police agents were informed that a vehicle was stolen and thus, were able to arrest the criminals.

Another good example of the success of the “Safety for our Community” platform was that fact that when a call was received that someone was being shot in a market, Police Officers initiated a persecution of a suspect that was trying to run away. Minutes later he was apprehended. Theses success cases show that the ALERT-SFOC tool can be helpful for all Guatemalans, and as more citizens become comfortable with reporting crimes, authorities will no longer be able to say that they were not aware of these criminal activities, to avoid taking concrete actions to solve them.

The efforts of LET’S BE ALERT (ALERTOS) permanently require authorities who are committed to trying harder every day, citizens that are committed to sharing information with authorities and thus, strengthen institutions in the country. On the other hand, media outlets’ commitment can be summarized to informing and instructing the population, by telling the general public about this tool.

“Authorities will no longer be able to say that they were not aware of these criminal activities, to avoid taking concrete actions.”
Todos los envases de CBC son 100% reciclables.
Separando los envases de los desechos orgánicos contribuyes a su reciclaje.

Contribuimos a un mundo mejor
Currently, insecurity perceptions in the country are rising, and violence is exemplified in different ways, one of them being extortions.

According to official data from the National Civil Police (2014), the majority of extortion cases that are reported are gang related, and they are coming from both inside and outside of jails all across the country. This phenomenon is not new; recent history shows that “gangs have been redefined, increasing internal cohesion, strengthening their organization and positioning more powerful and politically capable leaders. In this sense, imprisonment of a large amount of gang members has forced them to review the way gangs work and this way, new leaders plan the crimes from inside of jails, but it is gang members who are free who receive the orders and execute them”.¹

A study from 2006 establishes that extortions represented 16.3% of gang’s criminal activities. Today, with official data from the National Civil Police and from special units within the Ministry of Interior, it is estimated that extortions represent 30% of gang’s criminal activity. This increase shows that, in essence, this act constitutes as one of their main daily income sources.

How can we reduce this percentage?

Gangs have become an urban subculture, coming from street socialization with thought influence from conventional social interactions, whether it be at home, school or norms, wrapped in a pseudo institution. It is a phenomenon that, itself, surges from the absence of social solidarity bonds (Sampó, 2013)

There are different efforts working on how to combat delinquents and violence in the streets, but how can we prevent and battle delinquency that is generated from inside of jails? How can we avoid the formation of criminals in the penal system? How can we make sure that once a sentence is served, a criminal will not commit another crime? The most common method is social rehabilitation, but the final goal is to achieve not only social reintegration but also labor restoration.

Historically, the first notions that we have about the terminology “social reintegration” come from documents from the end of the XVIII century, when, hand in hand with the industrialization processes, prisons become institutions of punishment and criminal sanctions. It is in these times when preoccupation about what to do with people who have been deprived of liberty in terms of humanitarianism and the risk they represent for society and for order and safety start. (Sampó, 2013)

The process of social reintegration implies, in a certain matter, the recuperation of an individual, or readapting them to life within society, coming from a place where they were deprived of freedom or socially marginalized. Nevertheless, even if the objective of the process of social reintegration is the same for all, treatments can vary according to the main reason as to why someone was incarcerated (additionally to other factors like age, family, profession, etc.). In Guatemala, the population has not valued social reintegration of those who have been deprived of freedom. In Guatemalan society, there is a tendency to ignore this part of the population that, just like everyone else, is human capital and a productive force for the State.

On the other hand, the Government does not have the necessary social reintegration programs to satisfy the demands of prisoners and accomplish the ideal objectives in a reintegration process. Additionally, we do not have the mechanisms to verify if current treatments are effective or not, mainly because it is an effect that one can only perceive after 5 or 10 years.

As part of the Guatemalan legal framework, one of the main goals of the Penitentiary System is to provide those who have been deprived of their freedom favorable conditions for their reintegration into society, at the same time, authorities are forced to design and develop social rehabilitation programs and activities for personal development for those who have been deprived of freedom. If you reflect on the subject itself, it implies aspects like access to jobs within prisons, and the implementation of a progressive regimen. It does not however include the concept of social and labor reintegration of prisoners at the end of their sentence.

In the year 2013, the Center for Economic and Social Investigations CIEN (Centro de Investigaciones Economicas y Sociales, CIEN), published an investigation paper where rehabilitation programs in the penitentiary system were referenced. The main conclusion that can be extracted is that the subject itself has been in complete abandonment by government authorities. On the other hand, it is established that activities that are done in each prison center, follow an internal dynamic and not a formal Penitentiary System Policy. At the same time, it is important to mention that there is not adequate infrastructure or an efficient normative frame that guarantees adequate behavior from prisoners, or the order mechanisms and controls that can contribute to a healthy environment inside of prison centers.

**Why are rehabilitation and social reinsertion programs important?**

Any one deserves a second chance to do things right. These processes allow for this to be a possibility, the main objective being to implement processes that help change mentalities toward being someone who is focused on respecting the law, transmitting respectful, responsible and protective attitudes. Additionally, the developments of solidarity bonds are promoted, which are essential to soften these people’s way of thinking and their hearts. Social reintegration should offer more than what a gang has to offer, and at the same time, it should offer an improvement in the quality of life of people.

Of all gang members that it is estimated are in Guatemala, it is believed that 1,026 of them are inside of prison centers. In the year 2006, a large effort was initiated to combat this phenomenon, inside and outside of prisons, with the final objective of reducing extortion crimes and assault to public transportation. The initiative was know as “Plan Challenge 100”, where the goal was to re integrate 100 gang members into the workforce of the country. Anyhow, the initiative was not sustainable through time. Up until now, there have been no other efforts that look to offer an alternative to the gang life; the current efforts are aimed at ending extortions and returning what was taken from victims. Nevertheless, the problem is not being combated at its roots.

Even it is true that gangs are not the only cause of extortions in the country, their incidence in the subject is what is relevant. And while a strategy to capture those who are guilty is implemented or more severe measures are implemented inside of jails to avoid order to be given from the inside, gangs are still recruiting young adults as members. At the end, it is a never-ending cycle, even if criminals are apprehended, new ones are being formed, and at the same time, the penitentiary system’s infrastructure is not sustainable.

Combating and preventing delinquency that surges from jail centers should be one of the main objectives of social rehabilitation programs of the penitentiary system, so that through these, a successful reintegration into Guatemalan society is achieved, mainly those individuals that have been or are in a gang. It is necessary that the subject be tackled from a social point of view and a more human approach.

At a regional level, there are examples of countries like El Salvador and Honduras, where there have been initiatives from gangs of wanting to reintegrate into society, and as a positive effect a peace truce was reached and violence has decreased. Anyhow, in these countries, citizens have increased their trust in government institutions, mainly because they have shown response capacity before social needs and this has allowed from solidarity bonds to form at a countrywide level.

In Guatemala, it is easier to promote and take advantage of the government’s weakness and live off of that, that to work hard and contribute to a better country, without conflicts or violence. Gangs are a product of a lack of governance, instability and lack of social conditions to lead a dignified life.

The consequences of their actions are not justified, but their condition in itself is a derivative of the history and conjunction of the country. In the last few years, the focus has been to combat, however it should be from a special prevention standpoint that looks to eliminate, but to reintegrate socially for the long term.

**For this to happen the country must initiate a process of institutional strengthening that allows for prosperity conditions, as well as access to basic social services that generate an improvement in people’s quality of life.**

En NaturAceites hemos unido esfuerzos con varias instituciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales con el objetivo de alcanzar mayores beneficios y oportunidades para nuestras comunidades de influencia. Esta actividad ha tenido un impacto positivo en las áreas de salud, educación e infraestructura de la región contribuyendo al desarrollo del país.
YO NO PAGO, YO DENUNCIO

1574 CENTRO DE LLAMADAS CONTRA LA EXTORSIÓN
Will blocking cellphone signals in prisons contribute to reduce extortions?

By Corinne Dedik

The phone rings and when you pick it up, it is someone you do not know, who is intimidating you and is demanding a large sum of money in exchange of not going through with several threats.

Almost 50,000 reports of extortions have been registered in the last ten years before the Public Ministry, 8,413 just last years. Of all of the reports that have been filed, 16% were passed on to the Judicial Branch. A total of about 5% of the reports ended with a sentence, a majority with a guilty verdict.

Reports of extortions contrast with the common perception that the transportation industry is the most affected by this crime, due to the fact that 70% of reports for extortion are to homes, 23% to businesses and 6% to transportation. Nevertheless this data only reflects information from those extortions that are reported, which does not necessarily accurately reflect the reality of this crime, due to the fact that the actual number is unknown, all those extortions that are not reported.

Because there is not clear picture of the extortion phenomenon in the country, it is difficult to work on effective solutions to deal with the problem. In fact, different institutions that are fighting extortions do not agree on a diagnosis. The division within the National Civil Police that is in charge of extortions claims 80% of extortions come from jail centers, while the Public Ministry claims it is a smaller number, while the General Direction of the Penitentiary System (Dirección General del Sistema Penitenciario) claims it is less than 5%.

It is public knowledge that many calls come from jail centers, some to complete extortions, and some to plan, coordinate or follow through with other crimes. It is indignant, due to the fact that people who are denied liberty should follow the rules of prison centers and should be strictly supervised. This implies that prisoners should not be able to make as many phone calls as they want and without any measures of control by the institution; they should not even have cellphones.

The Law for the Penitentiary Regimen (Ley del Régimen Penitenciario) states in Article 33 all objects that are forbidden inside of correctional centers, where cell phones are included. Nevertheless, the same law does not dictate the consequences of not following this rule, which makes it worthless.

At this time, there have been three attempts at stopping phone calls from jail centers. The first was with the purchase of cell phone signal blockers for 11 jail centers. The Penitentiary System purchased them in 2007 and there is still a legal suit to be dealt with, because the machinery did not meet technical specifications to eliminate cellphone service.
The second attempt was when the Law for Mobile Terminal, in the year 2013. Even though the law prohibits bringing in and having cellphones inside of jail centers, not only for those who are deprived of freedom but also for the staff and any person that goes into the jails, the amount of requisitions done last year is clear evidence that this law has not been implemented. Only in the year 2014 more than two thousand cellphones and more than 1,400 chips were confiscated. The Penitenciary System does not have the capacity to exercise strict control of people and merchandise that is introduced into jail centers, including its own personnel. Corruption has comfortably settled in all levels and corners of these institutions.

Only in the year 2014 more than two thousand cellphones and more than 1,400 chips were confiscated.

Companies claimed that they had done what the law demanded. There is a lot of contradicting information, little to no transparency in how the situation was dealt with. Meanwhile, the Superintendency of Telecommunications, the institutions that is responsible of ticketing companies that do not comply with the blockings, is silent.

Days and weeks go by and extortions continue to come from jails. During the month of January, the police received the same number of reports of extortions than the monthly average for last year.

Requisitions continue in jails, where cellphones and chips are continuously confiscated, over and over again. Meanwhile, two other monitoring of cellphone signal blockings were done, without revealing the results. Apparently, things are the same with or without laws.

We need to understand two things. First, it is not clear where extortions are coming from. It probably goes beyond calls that come from jails. A complete reform of the jails system is needed, more than blocking cellphone signals, in addition to eliminating telecommunications from penitentiary centers and achieving stricter control over those who have been deprived of liberty.

Information on what percentages of all extortions come from jails will be confirmed when laws are finally complied with and telephone signals are completely blocked in the entire perimeter of jails.

Secondly, we need to have more clarity on the extortion phenomenon to take specific actions that are effective and allow for citizens to regain confidence in institutions in charge of safety and justice. The general climate of fear that we currently live in, added to the lack of confidence in authorities are the best conditions for the extortion crime to continue expanding as fast as it did in the past years.

Days and weeks go by and extortions continue to come from jails.

There were high expectations, citizens hoped that by eliminating telephone signal service, those who have been deprived of liberty cannot continue to make calls and extortions would be reduced. But that is not what happened. After the first monitoring of signal service, the Ministry of Interior revealed that the blocking of cell phone signal was not completely effective, only about 75%. On the other hand, the General Fiscal said that there was absolutely no blocking and that calls from jails persisted.
LA SEGURIDAD CIUDADANA SE LOGRA PROMOVIENDO EL DESARROLLO RESPONSABLE

En el mundo moderno existe una ampliación del campo de acción e influencia de las organizaciones. Actualmente, las empresas se incorporan en la sociedad no solo como agentes económicos activos, sino también como agentes sociales de cambio. Dentro de un contexto de globalización, inseguridad y grandes retos sociales, las empresas constituyen los grandes pilares del desarrollo económico de los países y son importantes promotores del desarrollo social a través de su participación en alianzas multisectoriales.

En Pantaleon, asumimos con entusiasmo esta responsabilidad y trabajamos para aportar al desarrollo sostenible de Guatemala. Ser una empresa socialmente responsable significa para nosotros promover una mejor calidad de vida de nuestros colaboradores y sus familias, así como de las comunidades donde operamos.

En nuestro pilar estratégico de Desarrollo Responsable, uno de nuestros ejes más importantes es el comunitario que implementa actividades como:

1. ESCUELA DE LIDERAZGO COMUNITARIO:
   Los líderes de los Cocodes juegan un papel importante en el fomento del bienestar social de sus comunidades. Contar con las aptitudes necesarias para trasladar la voluntad de la población hacia proyectos y programas de desarrollo requiere una formación integral, que los capacite para responder a las demandas e intereses de sus comunidades. En este sentido, al finalizar el año 2015, 150 líderes de comunidades rurales de la Costa Sur, obtendrán el Diplomado de Liderazgo Comunitario para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Comunidades.

2. PROGRAMA DE VISITAS “UN DÍA EN PANTALEÓN”:
   Como parte de la política de puertas abiertas, contamos con un programa de visitas a nuestras operaciones para que nuestras comunidades, las autoridades locales y nacionales y demás públicos de interés, puedan tener una plataforma de comunicación directa y de ambas vías con Pantaleón. Durante la Zafra 13-14 más de 400 representantes de autoridades locales, entidades gubernamentales, empresas y organizaciones comunitarias (Cocodes) visitaron nuestras operaciones.

3. ALIANZAS PARA EL DESARROLLO:
   Como empresa, creemos que las alianzas público-privadas orientadas al desarrollo constituyen un pilar fundamental para la atención de los grandes retos sociales que afronta Guatemala. Solo a través de la unificación de esfuerzos y capacidades se puede lograr dar una respuesta sostenible a los espacios donde las políticas públicas no llegan. Aliados con entidades gubernamentales y empresariales hemos desarrollado proyectos de infraestructura, salud y educación que benefician a más de 1,500 personas directamente.

Cumplimos nuestro propósito de promover el desarrollo transformando recursos responsablemente.
Taking into account the general crisis the country is going through, due to corruption that has been enrooted for years in the government, it is more than necessary to have strong institutions that have systems that allow for them to function correctly. This urgency for change cannot be postponed, it has caused citizens to speak up and demand radical changes that allow for a system that works and eliminates legal loopholes that open the door for corruption and above all, impunity.

Institutional strengthening has to be more than superficial changes, like the current political culture is used to. It definitely has to be real and thorough changes, focused in various government institutions, and not only in the Superintendence for Tributary Administration (Superintendencia de Administración Tributaria, SAT), because it is the scandal that is currently on the spotlight.

There are several reforms to different laws that need to be approved immediately, like:

- Reform the Superintendence’s Organic law
- Reform to the State’s Hiring Law
- Reform to the Public Ministry’s law to strengthen the Prosecution against Corruption
- Reform to the Judicial Career, Reform to the Civil Service Law
- Reform to Electoral and Political Parties law
- Reform to the Legislative Organism’s Organic law, among others.
We are living a great moment as a country; today citizenship is very actively involved and even if just for a moment, each person has put their individual ideologies, social status and historic resentments on the side. We have a population that is not willing to quit on their country, and this situation means a higher commitment for the next governing president and their team, because they have to be aware of the problems that are causing so much harm and they need to have concrete proposals on how to fix them. Citizens will not give them time or believe in demagogic offers.

This opportunity is in our hands; Guatemalans need to exercise their right to choose this upcoming September 6th. But we cannot vote for “the least bad option” but we must vote for the best option. But, how do we know who the best option is? To determine this, we should definitely study each candidate’s proposal, their government plans and verify their experience in public administration and verify that, in general, they alongside with their team are good people.

As citizens, it is not an easy situation, but those who want to direct our country should have it even more complicated. The candidate who invests the most, or the one who has the most publicity and even worse, the one who gives away the most “souvenirs” to the rural areas of the country cannot win this election.

Each sector must continue working united, follow up what we started and not stop at simple protests. Institutions need to do their job and Congress needs to approve laws and reforms that are in accordance with what the population and experts demand.

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**This opportunity is in our hands; Guatemalans need to exercise their right to choose this upcoming September 6th.**

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**Su preferencia por nosotros es lo que hace posible nuestros logros**

Citi le brinda la solidez, el asesoramiento y la experiencia necesaria para sus soluciones financieras en la región y en el mundo entero, con acceso a una base de recursos globales que abarca más de 1,000 ciudades en 160 países y jurisdicciones.

Por eso, este año Citi recibió el premio al Mejor Banco de Inversión en Centroamérica en los Premios a la Excelencia de Euromoney.

Además, fue galardonado en las siguientes categorías:

- Mejor Banco de Inversión en Latinoamérica
- Mejor Banco de Inversión en el Caribe
- Mejor Flow House en Latinoamérica
- Mejor Casa de Deudas en Latinoamérica

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What are we up against?

In a country where only 69.87% of the victims report crimes to the authorities, understanding the phenomenon of extortions, is highly complicated. Adding to this, the fact that our selected samples does nor accurately represent an incident that everyday affects more and more people in our country.

If we take the period between December 2011 and December 2014 as a reference, the inter-annual rate of extortions per 100,000 inhabitants was reduced in the first months of the current government’s administration, but since March of 2013, there is an evident growth tendency in data gathered by any of multiple available sources.

Using population size as a reference and in accordance with the Public Ministry’s numbers, the extortion rate decreased between December 2011 and December 2014, going from 56.38 to 53.22 extortions per 100,000 inhabitants.

Contradictory, if we take the National Civil Police data, during the same period of time the number of extortions per 100,000 inhabitants increased from 40.62 to 42.65. If you evaluate the crime based on raw numbers, according to both sources, there has been an increase in the number of extortion reports that have been processed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Daily Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Ministry</td>
<td>6,513</td>
<td>7,553</td>
<td>8,413</td>
<td>22,479</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Civil Police</td>
<td>5,268</td>
<td>5,583</td>
<td>6,741</td>
<td>17,592</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only between 2013 and 2014 does the Public Ministry show an increase of 11.39% in the number of extortion reports, while the National Civil Police shows an increase of 20.64%. During the current government’s management, there is a record for an average of 16.1 and 20.5 daily extortion reports, depending on which source is used as a reference.

WHERE ARE EXTORTIONS CASES REGISTERED?

Using as a reference the desegregation prepared by the National Civil Police, according to extortion cases that they take care of, 51.91% of extortions are concentrated in 11 municipalities (all with more than 100 cases registered in 2014), Guatemala being the municipality that spearheads this list, with 1,525 cases (24.1%) in total. If we expend this analysis only slightly, 80.17% of all
extortions are concentrated in only 61 municipalities (all with more than 20 extortion cases registered in 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Towns that registered more than 100 extortion reports in 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala (Guatemala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retalhuleu (Guatemala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the total cases analyzed, 58.3% of victims claimed to be individuals who were victims of extortions in a personal matter or at their homes, 29.09% of victims were identified as businesses and 9.02% were identified as those working in transportation (urban, suburban and heavy transportation), while 3.59% of victims were taxis, “tuc-tuc’s” or educational centers. Additionally, analyzing the information allowed us to identify which methods are used.

![Chart showing the percentage of victims by method]

- 79.32% of reported cases claimed that they were extorted via a telephone call
- 9.38% reported being extorted verbally through a personal encounter
- 7.72% reported that the method used was an anonymous written message, either by hand or typed
- 3.58% reported the use of other methods, which included text messages, social media and emailing

The evidence demonstrates that this crime is mostly conducted indirectly, though the use of phone calls that allow the criminal to avoid direct contact between the criminal and the victim. To this, we can add a recurrent call where logistics of extortions are agreed upon, using threats and personal information about the victim, which is used to increase fear in victims.

**HOW MUCH MONEY ARE EXTORTIONISTS ASKING FOR?**

Information included in the case files we had access to, in most cases includes the amount of money extortionist ask for and the form of payment and if it was only one payment or a recurrent payment, either daily, weekly, by-weekly or monthly.

In 91.2% of cases, extortions were demanded as a single payment, in which victims had to deposit money into an account in the financial system (we did not have access to information about what banks were used to for these deposits). 8.8% of cases implied an initial payment and the rest as recurring payments.
Q.225.11 millions  
(total demanded per year)

- **91.2% Single Payment**  
  Q12,000 per extortion  
  (Range of Q2,000 to Q5.5 millions each year)

- **8.8% Recurring Payment**  
  (daily, weekly, monthly)  
  Q26,000 per extortion  
  (Range of Q1,600 to Q2.1 millions each year)

Combining all of the information that included single payments, alongside a calculation of what it would have meant for victims to pay the extortion during the whole year; through the recurring payment modality, we can estimate that extortionist manage a “business” that represents about Q 225.11 million annually or 29.2 million dollars (it is important to note that the payment is not always completed and that information we had access to was only the amounts that were demanded; according to the National Civil Police, only about 10% of reported extortions are paid).

A simple average of what is asked for each time provides a number close to Q 42,300 per victim. Nevertheless, this amount is not an accurate representation, due to the variation scale of the amounts that are demanded, which ranges from Q100 to Q5.5 millions. If we focus on the most common amount demanded, a “typical” extortion can be rounded to about Q12,000 as a single payment or Q26,000 as a recurring payment.

Which ever way you look at it, the amount demanded has a significant impact on victim’s economies, one which is worsen when a single victim is subject to several extortions, either by the same person or by different extortionists.

WHAT MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO FACE THIS PLAGUE?

So far in 2015, extortions have been mildly reduced in comparison to the same period for 2014, which can be a preliminary sign that the measures implemented are having an effect.

According to data presented by the Public Ministry up until March 20th, 2015, 1,045 reports of extortions have been registered, the state of Guatemala being the state with the largest amount of reports at 467, followed by Quetzaltenango with 62 and Suchitepéquez with 60. These numbers suggest that 13 extortions happen daily, where last year, during the same period the number was closer to 19.

The chart shown below shows the amount of reports received for cases of extortion at the Public Ministry during the first trimester of every year, describing history since 2011. (For 2015, number included is from January 1st until March 20th)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>1,948</td>
<td>1,710</td>
<td>1,693</td>
<td>1,045*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Average</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anyhow, when analyzing capacity to process those files that have been presented before the Public Ministry, effectiveness rates are far from promising. Using as a reference the number of convictions based on reports processed at the Public Ministry throughout the year, the following chart shows the rate of effectiveness for extortion cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>4.31%</td>
<td>4.06%</td>
<td>3.43%</td>
<td>1.69%</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only have effectiveness rates declined, but also when analyzing the amount of convictions from total complaints filed, for the period from 2011 to 2014, total Effectiveness Rates are 2.95%. Although a lack of conviction is not a direct reference of greater impunity, it is worrisome that there are so many files that have not been processed and that these keep accumulating every year.

Talking about the data presented above, it is important to reflect on two points:

- When analyzing raw numbers, one can think that a decrease in the number of reports means a decrease in the amount of times a crime happened. Nevertheless, taking into account the fact that only 30.1% of victims in Guatemala report crimes to competent authorities, you cannot castoff that what is decreasing is the number of people who report the crime.

- On the other hand, what should trigger drastic measures are low effectiveness rates that are a reflection on the Public Ministry’s administration. Independently from the number of extortions and the number of complaints filed, it is necessary to expedite the processing of files.

Before this reality, the inauguration of the Prosecution Section Against Extortions, comes has a positive outcome. This division has a team of prosecutors and investigators that have been, and will continue to be trained in special investigation mechanisms to follow up on extortion cases.

At the same time, the creation of a crisis room and manuals for the treatment of victims strengthen capacity to better follow up on reports filed. Lastly, the creation of the landline 1574 to report extortions and the launching of an app for mobile phones is a significant advance on directly combating extortions.
WHAT SHOULD WE TAKE INTO ACCOUNT?

Even with the modest development that we start to see, it is still necessary to allocate resources, personnel and software to those instances that follow up on the subject, not only within the Public Ministry but also to those institutions that support and help deal with the issue, like the Anti-kidnapping and Anti-Extortion Command inside of the National Civil Police, reinforcing the acoustics laboratory and providing the National Institute of Forensic Sciences (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses, INACIF) with forensics informatics and identifying a way in which specialized courts within the corrective system can be created so that extortion cases are dealt with within the Judicial Branch.

It is important to stress that according to the Victimization and Safety Perception Survey from 2013, 46.8% of those interviewed reported that extortion is one of the main activities that currently jeopardize their individual safety.

For this reason, it is crucial to be able to count with additional information that allow us to better understand this phenomenon, deepening the impact that extortions have on specific sectors that might not be included in those who actually report the crime, like it is true for big companies, to give a specific example.

For the time being, due to the relevance that this has for the population, we call upon authorities to continuously provide the most current information that they have on extortions and implore citizens to continue reporting on the crime.

As these two conditions improve, the increase in information will permit us to better identify the policies that will allow us to fight delinquents and prevent any further attacks on the patrimony and lives of Guatemala.

During the current government’s management, there is a record for an average of 16.1 and 20.5 daily extortion reports.
ENFRENTAMOS 2 OPCIONES:
celebrar y darnos palmadas en la espalda
o
regresar a trabajar en las cosas que queremos mejorar.

Elegimos la última.
Extortions have become a crime that affects thousands of citizens, of all social and economic strata. This crime has had significant growth in the past years, extending to a national level, creating a sense of insecurity amongst people.

According to the Public Ministry’s statistics, there has been an increase in reports for extortions in the last two years. In the year 2013, 7,196 reports for extortions were received, while in 2014 8,083 reports were received, at a national level.

Authorities determined that all of the reforms to Article 261 in the Criminal Code, where extortions are identified as a crime, motivated people to report this crime, because before the reforms, there were impediments that did not allow for this crime to be criminally prosecuted.

When facing this reality, creating a culture that takes preventive measures and reports crimes in order to deal with this criminal occurrence, has become a priority for all institutions involved in dealing with security and justice.

Because of this, the General Fiscal and Head of the Public Ministry, Thelma Aldana Hernández, announced that on July 12th of the current year, a Prosecution Section against Extortions was to be inaugurated, where multidisciplinary teams will be integrated, to tackle extortions, as well as dealing with violent deaths, and money laundering, using special investigation methods.

This Prosecution Office was created through agreement 04-2014 on September 17th, and it should have the competencies to promote investigation and criminal persecution against extortions, which are considered in Article 261 of the Criminal Code, Congressional Decree 17-73.

- **TYPES OF EXTORTIONS**
  The methods used by gang members to extort people are wide-ranging:
  - Phone calls from inside of jail centers
  - Text messages
  - Anonymous messages
  - Hand written letters
  - Cellphones deliveries.

  all through which they provide victims with bank account numbers so those affected can deposit money.
Investigators have identified other cases where victims have received phone calls from abroad. In this modality, extortionists pretend to be family members that are traveling to Guatemala. They ask for a deposit, though remittances to Mexico, claiming that they have been victimized by Immigration authorities that are demanding cash money in order for them to get through the border.

Without a doubt though, the most common method used to extorticate at a national level is through phone calls.

This is due to the fact that those affected are vulnerable to picking up the phone and starting a conversation, where extortionists take advantage of the situation and get information about the person they are talking to, and instill fear.

On a daily basis, gang members and delinquents, who are dedicated to extortions, find a way to modify their techniques to commit this crime. These changes are due to the fact that citizens are being easily intimidated, without any preventive measures to identify if the threat they are receiving has a basis or if it is simply a ruse that allows extortionist to threaten and intimidate victims claiming that they will damage their family members and thus, make victims panic.

*It is necessary for families and business groups, as well as citizens in general, take preventive security measures to avoid being a victim to extortions.*

**IT WILL BE EXPANDED**

To move forward, reinforcing the work of the Prosecution Office and obtaining positive results that the population demands, the Public Ministry has opened a reporting center against extortions, that will be answered at this institution’s office, available when calling 1574.

*Calls will be analyzed and monitored by capable personnel, and they will be classified and followed up on immediately.*

Combating extortions also requires the effective use of technology, which is why the Public Ministry will put an application called “ReportPM” (DenunciasMP) at citizens’ disposal to download onto their cellphones.

This system will allow for the creation of a data base that is feed by all the phone numbers that are reported as extortions, and when the user receives a call from one of these numbers, it will be detected and alert the user that the phone call is a crime.

Download the app from your Android cellphone for free from the Google Play store.

**MORE OFFICES**

The hope is that by the end of the year 2015, the Public Ministry will have coverage in different rural areas of the country with this service, opening six agencies that would operate in Quetzaltenango, Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango and Alta Verapaz, all areas where, according to the institution’s statistics, have the largest incidences of extortions, after Guatemala.

*These agencies would be coordinated from the Prosecution Office Against Extortions, whose headquarters are located in the Guatemala City, with the objective of detecting, investigating and dismantling criminal structures that operate at a national level.*

28
POR MEDIO DE SU BRAZO SOCIAL, FUNDACIÓN CASTILLO CÓRDOVA HA CREADO UN MODELO DE DESARROLLO COMUNITARIO, INTEGRAL, REPLICABLE Y AUTOSOSTENIBLE, CON LA FIRME PROPUESTA DE CERRAR EL CÍRCULO DE LA POBREZA EN LA MICROCUENCA TZUNUNÁ

Se han beneficiado a más de nueve mil habitantes; y con el cual se está disminuyendo drásticamente los indicadores de pobreza, analfabetismo y desnutrición. Para lograrlo se ha implementado un programa con énfasis en cinco ejes de acción:

CONFIRMAMOS EL FIRME COMPROMISO CON EL DESARROLLO DE NUESTRA GENTE

CREEMOS, CONFIAMOS E INVERTIMOS EN GUATEMALA
As part of the initiative “Let’s Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate), the Alliance for Nutrition (Alianza por la Nutrición) publicly presented the results of their monitoring efforts for the implementation of the actions of the “1,000 days of Opportunity Window” (Ventana de los Mil Días de Oportunidad, V1000D), as a follow up to the commitments of the National Human Development Agreement, NHDA (Acuerdo Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, ANDH), signed during the 2013 edition of the National Business Forum (Encuentro Nacional de Empresarios, ENADE). In the NHDA, a series of minimal standards were agreed upon, which aim to improve conditions for development in Guatemala, especially through the prevention of the negative effects that Chronic Malnutrition can cause in kids. Currently Chronic Malnutrition affects 49.8% of boys and girls under the age of five in Guatemala.

The Foundation for the Development of Guatemala (Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala – FUNDESA) organized a high profile panel: What are we doing to improve the country’s competitiveness? The event’s objective was to show the actions on which each ministry has been working on to positively incide in betting the competitiveness, which is the only way that inclusive economic growth can be generated.
Presentation: Plan for the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle of Central America

The Foundation for the Development of Guatemala and the Coordinating Committee for Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations CACIF, organized the presentation of the Plan for the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle of Central America. The event’s objective was to inform about the basic guidelines of the plan and explaining in detail the implications of this plan, as well as the challenges and its impact in the country’s development.

Citizen Congress Against Corruption

Presentation of the Local Competitiveness Index and the Competitiveness Roundtable in San Pedro, Carchá

The Foundation for the Development of Guatemala FUNDESA, launched a Local Competitiveness Roundtable in San Pedro, Carchá and as a first result presented the Local Competitiveness Index. Since January, Alta Verapaz has been the stage for a series of workshops about economic development, civic education, citizen participation, technical training and support to productive sectors.

Good Practices Workshop on the Prevention of the Consuption of Mycotoxins that affect Human Health

The Alliance for Nutrition (Alianza por la Nutrición), a initiative of Mejoremos Guate (Let’s Improve Guate) and United Nation’s Global Food Program in Guatemala, had a: “Good Practices for the prevention of the consumption of Mycotoxins that affect Human Health” workshop, whose target was technical and professional men and women, from different organizations, companies and non-profits.
Luncheon with European Union Ambassadors

On Monday April 30th, a luncheon with diplomats stationed in Guatemala was held in order to present the “Let’s Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate) platform and the improvements in each axis.
On Thursday April 23, Carmen Salguero, General Manager of Let’s Improve Guate (Mejoremos Guate) and Jorge Benavides, Investigator of FUNDESA, had the opportunity to eat lunch at the offices of the American Society / Council of the Americas (AS/COA) in New York, with ambassador Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of United Nation’s World Food Program (WFP). During this event, progress made with the Alliance for Nutrition (Alianza por la Nutrición) on combating Chronic Malnutrition in Guatemala was presented and the WFP confirmed their willingness to support the “Let’s Improve Guate” (Mejoremos Guate) initiative.
The Intercultural Commission, whose members include both business leaders and indigenous leaders, had a simultaneous parallel event during the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on Friday April 24th, 2015. The event’s objective was to present different collaborations that happen between businessmen and women and indigenous leaders thanks to the Intercultural Commission, where an inclusive development agenda is built.

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AgroAmerica

for being a company that makes a significant impact on the fight against poverty.

Amongst 413 proposals from around the world evaluated by Unilever, AgroAmerica was awarded with a Big Tick for its project “Refacción Escolar Nutritiva”, (Nutritious School Snack), which not only contributes to reduce malnutrition, but also to improve the academic performance of children in the South Coast and South West of Guatemala.
¡Te esperamos!

Vista Hermosa

Las Americas

una experiencia llena de vida.

Mas Luqueres Para Vivir
Blocking Cellphone Signals in Penitentiary Centers

By: Mario Bosos - Police consultant against Extortions.

The abandoned “jails issue” is still valid. One of the goals of the Penitentiary System is to “maintain the custody and security of the inmates who are in safeguarded from society, with the specific prohibition of any radio communication devices and/or cellular telephones.”¹ If this law were abided, we would be writing a different story.

In our country, Guatemala, it seems that important historical issues, that should be corrected imminently to achieve social equilibrium, are unimportant. What dispositions are being defined to fix the “jails issue”? The creation of legislation, political will of the current government, social conscience of institutions and organized sectors, as well as others, with the hope of advancing towards finding a solution for this issue.

Previously, we have bet on the approval and promulgation of laws to fix the “jails issue”. In the year 2013, the “Law for Terminal Mobile Equipment” where “the use and possession of mobile phones and any type of technology that uses a SIM card, Micro SIM card or any other type of mobile communication equipment is prohibited in all centers that limit freedom, jails, correctional facilities and penitentiary centers, both for underage and of age offenders”.²

“From one mobile phone and one SIM card, up to 6 thousand traffics have been generated in a period of 30 days.”

Recently, Decree Number 12-2014 was approved. In this document, it is mentioned that “Local network operators for mobile telephones in the Republic of Guatemala must implement technical solutions so that, from preventive prison centers, centers for the completion of sentences and specialized centers for sanctions that deprive freedom for adolescents that are in conflict with the law, cannot generate mobile telecommunications traffic”.³

The conscious and mandatory abiding of these legal instruments will minimally fix the insecurity problem in our country. However that minimum, is one of the reasons that our society is perceived so negatively: extortions and intimidating exactions.⁴

These illicit activities are generated through mobile devices: cellular telephones that are converted into criminal instruments. People who have been deprived of liberty and are in jail make the majority of extortion calls.

It is important to consider that in our country’s current market, there are more than 22 million mobile phones, where 90% are prepaid, which means that they are not registered, even though the above mentioned law exists.

Furthermore, what is most shocking is that within that commercial spectrum, it is a minimum amount of mobile phones that generate an exorbitant amount of extortive calls. The institutions in charge of criminal investigation and criminal prosecution, through different telephone analysis, reflect this conclusion due to the fact that from one mobile phone and one SIM card, up to six thousand traffics have been generated in a period of 30 days.

Therefore, the solution is on the table: to improve our country we need to “connect responsibilities, political will, social awareness in the commercial sectors and the articulation of citizen’s efforts towards the fiscalization of compliance with the law”. These responsible and joint actions, a bureaucracy-filled and robust State that currently prevails will have to make room for a legal yet to this day weak State that we have forgotten about.

“… 22 million mobile phones, where 90% are prepaid, which means that they are not registered.”

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¹ - Artículo 3, inciso a) y Artículo 33, inciso f) del Decreto Número 33-2006, Ley del Hogar Penitenciario.
² - Artículo 6, del Artículo 1, Decreto Número 8-2011, Ley de Equipos Terminales Móviles.
³ - Artículo 3, Decreto Número 12-2014, Ley de Control de las Telecomunicaciones Móviles en Centros de Privación de Libertad y Fortalecimiento de la Infraestructura para Transmisión de Datos.
The criminal phenomenon of extortions
Its characteristics transcend borders
By: Phillip Chocla - Director of the Section for Public Affairs at CACIF

The crime of extortion has become one of the crimes that affect Guatemalans the most, following homicides. This is one of the conclusions that we can extract from the study published in November 2014 by the National Center for Economic Investigation (CIEN), “Understanding the Extortion Phenomenon in Guatemala”.

From the year 2008 until now, a clear increasing tendency has been noticeable in this particular phenomenon, despite the current quantification limitations. The fact that few victims report the crime; the lack of coordination between data managed by the National Civil Police and the Public Ministry and the absence of victimization polls, makes it impossible to accurately dimension the extortion phenomenon.

Nevertheless, taking into account the analysis generated by CIEN and other studies published by other investigation centers, both regionally and continentaly, it is possible to identify some tendencies regarding this illicit activity.

First, the increase in extortions is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to Guatemala. All you have to do is review the Insight Crime (http://es.insightcrime.org/component/tags/tag/248-extension) file to find out that in México, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia this illicit activity is just as common. At a large scale, the characteristics of this phenomenon are similar: the majority of extortions come from detention centers that are scarcely monitored by authorities; the majority of extortions are perpetuated by criminal structures derived from gangs or drug dealing groups. Although, in Guatemala and Colombia, the rise in extortions has also generated the development of criminal structures of a smaller scale, with a smaller fire capacity, who take advantage of the psychosis generated by those extortions that are perpetuated by the larger, more violent gangs and drug dealing groups.

Second, the segmentation of victims is also common. Business men and public transit drivers are the main victims of this kind of crime in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, which are all countries who have anarchic transportation systems that do not rely on pre-paid services. The second segment that is the most affected is that of homes, through random calls or access to phone numbers though the phone books.

The third segment is that of businesses who have distribution channels in areas with a large presence of gangs or drug dealing groups.

Even so, in Mexico and Colombia, this phenomenon also has particular characteristics. In the northern areas, drug dealing groups and people-trafficking structures extort and extort their own families of Central Americans that are migrating to the United States. Meanwhile, in Colombia, some factions of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, FARC) have begun substituting kidnappings as an income source with extortions of people and businesses.

A third factor is that this mutation can be explained from an economic perspective. Unlike, than kidnapping and robbing, extortions requires less resources and less exposure of the criminal agent. Additionally, in Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia, the sanction for this crime is not extremely sever. Thus, the cost of committing this crime is less than the aforementioned crimes. On the other hand, the development of economic models of criminal structures (massive extortions to homes, transportation or businesses) generates a higher level of income than other crimes. An analysis like this, about the favorable cost-benefit relationship for criminal actors is repeated in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia.

“A fourth characteristic that is common in México and the northern triangle of Central America is the victim’s general fear of reporting these crimes. According to Insight Crime, this is because there is a propensity of lack of trust in authorities. However this is also a consequence of the “extortions to scale” model perpetuated by gangs. By focusing on “small extortions (an average of $35 per home, per month), criminal structures bet that victims prefer to pay the extortion than to take the risk of reporting the crime to structures that are not trustworthy. Due to the fact that this is a common problem in the geographical area, solutions can also be shared. Colombia implemented a stricter model of penitentiary control, to attack the origin of a large part of these crimes. The majority of countries have implemented reporting centers with anonymous numbers to gather criminal intelligence. The coordination between police forces and prosecutors is also a recipe that would help combat these crimes. But without informative and preventive campaigns for citizens, and without any efforts to identify the “money routes”, any institutional efforts will be insufficient.”

The majority of extortions come from detention centers that are scarcely monitored by authorities.
Acción Joven transforma vidas

Fundación Paz para la Educación y la Cultura con el apoyo de la Agencia de los Estados Unidos de América para el Desarrollo Internacional, USAID ejecuta el Programa Acción Joven, una iniciativa de empleabilidad juvenil, dentro de una estrategia dirigida a reducir la vulnerabilidad de los jóvenes ante la violencia.

Este programa beneficia actualmente a 600 adolescentes y adultos jóvenes de 14 a 21 años, como una iniciativa de prevención de violencia en los municipios de Guatemala y Villa Nueva. De esta cuenta, los jóvenes podrán obtener una certificación técnica avalada por INTECAP y Fundación C.A. en 8 especialidades: reparación de computadoras, diseño en computación para nuevos medios, organización de eventos sociales, floristería, belleza, electricidad, cocina, panadería y repostería.

La subvención que otorga USAID a Fundación Paz, permite a la juventud guatemalteca tener acceso a alternativas de empleo viables y a su vez, disminuye su posible involucramiento en actividades al margen de la ley. Por ello Fundación Paz busca alianzas con empresas para crear oportunidades de trabajo para los jóvenes becados.

Si quieres conocer más de este programa o ser una de las empresas transformadoras comunícate con Miriam Poyón a miriam.poyon@fundacionpaiz.org.gt o bien al 2464 4545 ext. 4563
“Building a Guatemala that is more prosperous, safer and with more solidarity.”