Situation Analysis
The political context in Guatemala fundamentally and irrevocably changed on April 16, 2015 when Guatemala’s Attorney General ordered the arrest of a number of high ranking public officials for participation in a customs tax evasion scheme La Línea. Over a period of months, a host of additional senior officials, including the country’s sitting president and vice president, and private sector entrepreneurs were arrested for various crimes of corruption and tax evasion. These arrests marked a political change in the country, and underpinned an era of growing, active and vocal outrage over national level corruption and elite impunity. The accompanying mass protests brought about a new and more diverse coalition of civil society forces that has demanded action on key legal reforms, including those related to elections, anti-corruption, and the judiciary. Having campaigned on principles of honesty, integrity, and transparency, President Jimmy Morales’ administration has contributed to the momentum of change by supporting national-level transparency initiatives like the Open Government Partnership and prioritizing anti-corruption efforts through the reform of public financial management and tax administration. These efforts, coupled with the new coalition for reform and the continued prosecution of high-level corruption cases by the United Nation’s Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG), Guatemala’s High Impact Courts, and the Attorney General, have set Guatemala on a path to meaningfully address important challenges like citizen insecurity, widespread corruption, and poor public service delivery.

While Guatemala’s homicide rate has steadily declined over the past nine years, citizen insecurity and violent conflict remain a challenge, especially among Guatemala’s poorest communities. Guatemala is a transit country for the trafficking of humans, drugs, arms and contraband. As other drug routes are disrupted, traffickers take advantage of the country’s geographic proximity to Mexico and land routes to the United States. Additionally, transnational youth gangs like Mara Salvatrucha 13 and Barrio 18 have a strong presence in the country’s urban centers and are responsible for a significant share of Guatemala’s homicides and other violent crime.

A recent survey found that 54% of Guatemalans believe insecurity is the most significant problem facing the country. However, unlike its Northern Triangle neighbors, Honduras and El Salvador, the homicide rate has been steadily dropping since 2009. Though Guatemala still has one of the world’s highest homicide rates, it has dropped from a peak of 46.5 in 2009 to 26.6 by June 2017 - a 43% decrease.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of the biggest challenges facing Guatemala and perpetrators rarely face trial. Over the past five years, 3,577 women have been murdered in Guatemala, a country ranked as having the highest number of femicides in the region. Domestic violence has become a push factor for women and children

1 Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Council of Ministers of Women’s Affairs of Central America (COMMCA)
migrating to the US. In 2016, 60,000 complaints for violence against women were filed in the Public Ministry at the national level, making it one of the most reported crimes in Guatemala.

While insecurity is a driving factor of migration from the Northern Triangle, the 2016 International Organization for Migration Migration and Remittances Survey, found that 91.1% of Guatemalans migrated for economic reasons—with 56.8% looking to find a job, and 32.9% to increase their incomes.

Achieving accountable and inclusive governance has been a challenge for Guatemala. With one of the lowest tax collection rates in the hemisphere (10.8%)\(^2\), social spending levels are also abysmally low. Inclusion of marginalized communities has long been an issue, characterized by systemic exclusion of indigenous populations. Unresolved social conflict impedes economic and social development in communities that need it the most. Widespread corruption across all levels of government reduces legitimacy and impedes much-needed social spending.

**USAID Response**

Following a wave of migration to the United States by tens of thousands of unaccompanied children (UAC) in 2014, USAID/Guatemala, through its democracy and governance programs, is addressing the lack of social, educational, and economic opportunity as well as insecurity, the main underlying causes of migration from Guatemala. USAID’s Democracy and Governance Office supports Government of Guatemala (GOG) and civil society efforts in two main areas: (1) greater security and justice for the country’s citizens; and (2) improved accountable governance and social inclusion.

**Citizen Security:**

Specifically, USAID seeks to reduce levels of violence in target communities facing high crime rates and strengthen the prosecution and adjudication of crime. USAID does this by addressing crime and violence at the community-level, while also working closely with Guatemala’s Attorney General’s office (Public Ministry) and the judiciary to investigate and prosecute crime.

USAID has worked closely with the Public Ministry to establish specialized prosecutor’s offices.

- With USAID’s support, the Public Ministry established the Specialized Prosecutors Office against Extortion in 2015. USAID has supported the office with a new case management model developed hand-in-hand with prosecutors, advanced investigative models for extortion cases, and improved inter-agency coordination. As a way to prevent the centralization of its work in the capital city, USAID is supporting the Public Ministry to establish six regional anti-extortion offices to increase the geographic reach of its anti-extortion work. All offices will be fully operational by FY 2018. To achieve success, the Prosecutor’s Office against Extortion and the National Civil Police implemented integrated investigation and case-linking models that include special wiretapping methods, witness statements, criminal analysis, field investigations, monitoring and surveillance analysis, and profiles of the accused from the National Institute of Forensic Science (INACIF) and the National Registry of Persons (RENAP). USAID’s Security and Justice Sector Reform project has provided the long-term support that has led to the development and implementation of these successful models.

- USAID supported the establishment in 2015 of a new Specialized Prosecutor’s Office Against Corruption, working with the Public Ministry to develop new models for case management and investigation. The new Prosecutor’s Office has already opened several high-profile cases targeting mayors, municipal officials,

\(^2\) World Development Indicators 2016.
officials within the tax authorities, police officials, as well as private sector actors. Strengthening this prosecutor’s office complements CICIG’s initiatives in Guatemala.

• USAID is supporting the Public Ministry to develop juvenile justice, trafficking-in-persons (TIP) and GBV case management modules and protocols to improve registration and services to victims. Building off the existing modules, by FY 2018, USAID will expand the model to other parts of the country to increase the country's TIP and GBV response.

In close cooperation with Guatemala’s security and justice sector institutions, USAID has established new types of courts to meet specific needs of Guatemalans within the judicial sector.

• USAID established and continues to support a 24-hour court model under which judges are available 24 hours a day to comply with Guatemala’s constitutional mandate to present a detainee to a judge within six hours of arrest. These courts also allow prosecutors to request court orders for wiretapping and search warrants around the clock. USAID helped launch and supports a specialized 24-hour court for cases of violence against women and sexual exploitation to ensure victims receive the assistance they need and strengthen criminal investigation by using scientific evidence. In total there are eight 24-hour courts.

• USAID supported the GOG in establishing a high impact court model to provide greater security for Guatemala’s justice sector personnel and enable the conclusion of the most risky cases involving gangs, narco-trafficking, transitional justice and high-level official corruption that in the past would not have made it through the justice system. USAID established these courts in 2009 and has supported their expansion based on caseloads. In December 2016, the fifth high impact court was inaugurated in Quetzaltenango. Additional high impact courts will be opened in FY 2018.

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• USAID, along with other USG and NGO actors, has been supporting Guatemala’s first court dedicated to prosecuting crimes related to pilfering ancient artifacts, illegal timber trade, and wildlife trafficking in Peten. USAID has sought to highlight emblematic cases (i.e., environmental crimes with connections to broader criminal activity) and bring them to high impact courts.

• Most recently, USAID supported the Supreme Court in the establishment of a Pluripersonal Criminal Court where minor felonies with sentences of up to five years are tried. This new court relieves pressure from the over-burdened First Instance Criminal courts.

USAID is supporting efforts that promote accountability and good governance of institutions that work on security and justice issues.

• Since 2006, USAID has supported the establishment and strengthening of INACIF that has contributed to the reduction of impunity by replacing the dependence on witness testimony with scientific evidence. USAID supported international standard certification for the ballistics, toxicology and genetic laboratories.

• To complement security and justice sector reform efforts, USAID has worked with the Ministry of Governance to propose a new Organic Law for the Police which includes processes and procedures from recruitment through retirement with a clearly define police career path.

• On March 8, 2017 a fire broke out in a government child protection shelter in which 41 girls were killed. This incident clearly demonstrated the need to reform the child protection system in Guatemala as well as the juvenile detention centers which have also been denounced for human rights violations. In response, USAID is supporting the Government of Guatemala for the definition of new child protection and juvenile justice models, including the implementation of alternatives to institutionalization.

• The U.S. Government, through its Agency for International Development, USAID, began providing assistance to El Refugio and its Amor sin Fronteras shelter in 2012. In February 2018, USAID signed a direct grant to continue efforts in combating trafficking in persons and providing protection and services to victims. The purpose of the grant is to support and ensure the sustainability of ongoing work to protect and provide services to victims of trafficking in persons -TIP- and to prevent human trafficking in Guatemala. The grant allows El Refugio to ensure provision of a comprehensive care package for girls who survived trafficking. The package includes temporary housing, food, clothing, medical care, counseling,
psychosocial support, formal and vocational education, life skills training, reintegration, and legal support. To date, El Refugio de la Niñez has trained more than 8,000 youth, parents and community leaders on trafficking awareness and prevention tools. The total estimated amount of the grant is $2.2 million and will expire on February 2021.

USAID works to decrease the vulnerability of at-risk communities to gangs and organized crime, improve trust between police and communities, and increase civic responsibility through community and municipal crime and violence prevention activities.

- USAID implements primary and secondary violence prevention activities and strengthens community cohesion by creating community violence prevention committees, offering after-school activities (including technical trades), improving reading skills to promote school retention, and offering alternative education services for out-of-school youth.

- USAID supports central, departmental and municipal levels of government to develop violence prevention policies and strengthen evidence-based decision making through analytical tools. These activities include support for municipal and departmental violence prevention plans, data gathering and analysis tools, support for Guatemala’s pilot departmental citizen security observatory, and capacity building for institutions to conduct impact evaluations on pilot projects.

- USAID helps improve governance, service delivery, and living conditions through the provision of equipment and technical assistance to municipalities most at-risk of violent crime to improve overall citizen trust in local governance institutions and the services they provide. USAID provides capacity building assistance to community-based organizations, and seed funding for municipal infrastructure rehabilitation, or small-scale construction. USAID implements these efforts where other USAID-funded violence prevention activities take place.

Governance and Inclusion:

USAID seeks to improve governance of key public institutions and increase citizen participation in government functions and oversight. To achieve this, USAID has focused on providing local, municipal and national institutions support, as well as engaging with civil society efforts to promote accountable governance and combat corruption.

- USAID provides technical assistance and funding to Guatemalan civil society organizations (CSOs) to implement oversight and advocacy activities focused on governmental accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption efforts. These grants also help build the organizational capacity of CSOs to sustain their activities. USAID also provides support to a network of CSOs and the GOG to advance the Open Government Partnership, a collaboration between GOG ministries and citizens that promotes transparent and accountable governance.

- USAID is providing assistance to 29 municipalities in the Western Highlands in support of the Mission’s strategy to reducing poverty and chronic malnutrition. USAID strengthens targeted municipalities to foster more responsive, inclusive, and effective socio-economic development; increase revenue; respond to citizen concerns related to violence and security, food insecurity and global climate change; and manage public resources in a participatory and financially sound manner.

- USAID works with diverse populations living in some of the Western Highland’s most marginalized communities—including women, indigenous, youth and people with disabilities—to strengthen local organizations, develop robust community development plans, and implement projects that respond to the needs prioritized by communities. Community members are empowered to sustain and build upon the improvements to their communities through continued participation in civic organizations. Recognizing the critical, yet often untapped, resources that the private and public sectors can contribute to community development, USAID seeks to leverage $50 million in new investments through a community development fund. This investment mechanism will bring together both Guatemalan and international actors to partner in innovative, community-prioritized development projects.

Major Results & Accomplishments

- **Reduced levels of violence** – USAID’s Violence Prevention Project (2011-2014) supported the establishment of a number of community violence prevention commissions to promote violence prevention
activities. According to an independent impact evaluation, the project achieved great successes in reducing crime and violence in treatment community: extortions decreased 43%, thefts decreased 27%, sale of drugs decreased 50%, and perception of insecurity decreased 22%. Using this empirical evidence, USAID expanded its community-based violence prevention model to additional areas with high crime and violence rates in the Department of Guatemala, departments in the Western Highlands, and select departments along the border with El Salvador and Honduras.

- **Increased effectiveness of the Public Ministry** – USAID support has implemented new investigation and case management models in the Specialized Prosecutors’ Offices for Extortion and Anti-Corruption. The number of final verdicts in extortion cases went from 26 in 2015 to 180 so far in 2017. The number of people found guilty of extortion jumped from 41 to 293, and the number of search warrants issued related to extortion cases significantly expanded from 122 to 1,038. The Public Ministry collaborated with the National Police on a large-scale anti-extortion operation in the departments of Guatemala, Escuintla, Huehuetenango, Suchitepéquez, Chimaltenango and Quetzaltenango that yielded 69 arrests and confiscated almost one million quetzals (estimated $136,000), 400 munitions, 21 firearms, 19 cell phones, four motorcycles, six cars, and five bags of cocaine. The operation helped dismantle components of the Crazy Gangster and Vatos Locos criminal structures of the Barrio 18 gang. One-hundred and sixty arrest warrants were issued and charges were levied against those arrested, including attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, extortion, illicit association, and acts of intimidation. Linked to this operation, additional charges will be filed against 20 people who are already serving sentences.

- **Increased efficiency of Guatemalan courts** – The 24-Hour Courts have reduced the number of cases dismissed for lack of merit from 77% to less than 15%. In 2013, the Pluripersonal Court resolved 4,342 cases, representing an increase of over 400%, dramatically improving system efficiency. Similarly, USAID’s support to high-impact courts allowed the justice sector to address high-risk cases involving narco-trafficking, high-level corruption, and crimes against life using high-level security and technology equipment to protect judges, victims and witnesses.

- **Responding to gender-based violence** – In 2013, USAID supported 18,451 women victims of violence, including domestic violence, through the implementation of key legislation and successful operation of the specialized 24-Hour Court for Violence against Women and Sexual Exploitation.

- **Preventing trafficking in persons** – USAID strengthens the government’s capacity to detect, prevent, and prosecute TIP. USAID works with the Public Ministry’s TIP unit as well as with government- and CSO-led TIP victim shelters.

- **Improved municipal accountability to citizens** – USAID has advanced citizen oversight and public dialogue in the Western Highlands by strengthening CSOs and the municipal consultative bodies, such as community development councils (COCODEs) and municipal development councils (COMUDEs), to fully represent citizen needs. As a part of these efforts, USAID created a smartphone transparency app that enables real-time access to public expenditures and provides citizens a platform to communicate directly with the municipal government. USAID also launched citizen charters to establish commitment and understanding of public service delivery between citizens and local government.

- **Transformed youth leadership** – USAID engages youth by increasing their participation in municipal planning. USAID helped establish a youth network in the Western Highlands which increases youth

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4 For the full Impact Evaluation Report, please visit the following link: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/carsi-study.php](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/carsi-study.php)
engagement and leadership in municipal governance. The network was created after successful municipal Youth Congresses which provided a mechanism for youth to share their concerns, ideas, and expectations with local authorities. A number of congress participants have been appointed to significant positions of leadership, such as Municipal Youth Office Coordinators.

- **Increased partnership between citizens and government** – USAID assisted the GOG and civil society to launch renewed efforts for the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in May, 2016. The process demonstrated a meaningful partnership between civil society and GOG to increase transparency and accountability at the national level. The Morales administration has committed to OGP as a presidential initiative, and is working to increase collaborative, participatory, and transparent governance throughout the executive branch. Through OGP, for the first time, citizens have a mechanism to interact with government in a constructive and responsible manner, while continuing to oversee the government. While OGP is focused on executive branch, its effect also reached Congress, which developed the first ever Open Parliament Action Plan in collaboration with civil society organizations which aims to increase transparency and accountability in the legislative branch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Implementing Partner</th>
<th>Implementation Period</th>
<th>Total Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convivimos</td>
<td>Mercy Corps</td>
<td>June 12, 2015 – June 11, 2020</td>
<td>$40 million</td>
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<td>Security and Justice Sector Reform</td>
<td>Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc.</td>
<td>August 16, 2012 – August 16, 2018</td>
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<td>Youth and Gender Justice</td>
<td>Chemonics</td>
<td>May 20, 2016 – February 7, 2021</td>
<td>$37.4 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Roots</td>
<td>World Vision</td>
<td>December 15, 2016 - December 14, 2021</td>
<td>$40 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Municipal Governance</td>
<td>Tetra Tech</td>
<td>January 27, 2017 - September 24, 2021</td>
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<td>Communities Leading Development</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services (CRS)</td>
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<td>$50 million</td>
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<td>Nexos Locales</td>
<td>Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)</td>
<td>June 23, 2014 - June 19, 2019</td>
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<td>Growing in Peace</td>
<td>Asociación La Alianza (ALA)</td>
<td>March 9, 2017- April 30, 2018</td>
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<td>Citizen Security Partnership Program</td>
<td>IEPADES</td>
<td>June 16, 2017 - June 15, 2019</td>
<td>$614,580</td>
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<td>Protecting victims, providing services and preventing human trafficking in Guatemala.</td>
<td>El Refugio de la Niñez</td>
<td>February 15, 2018- February 14, 2021</td>
<td>$2,146,693</td>
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<td>Harnessing Emerging Political Leadership for an Accountable Guatemala (EPL)</td>
<td>International Research &amp; Exchanges Board (IREX)</td>
<td>August 8, 2017 – August 6, 2022</td>
<td>$35 million</td>
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