

## GUATEMALA

### Military parade canceled due to protests by human rights groups

**June 9, 2008:** Orlando Blanco, the president of the Secretariat for Peace, announced that the **Guatemalan government would cancel the annual public military parade** to be held on June 30, 2008 in conjunction with the Day of the Military **at the request of groups of victims affected by the internal armed conflict.** Instead, the military would carry out its parade within the confines of the Mariscal Zavala military base. Colonel Jorge Ortega, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense, said that the army made the decision in order to cut back on costs. The human rights group Sons and Daughters for Identity, Justice and Against Forgetting and Silence (H.I.J.O.S), one of the organizations that demanded the cancellation of the public parade, said that **the celebration of the Day of the Military affirms the message that societal militarization and impunity for past crimes in Guatemala are acceptable.**