



## Physical Anthropology Section – 2006

### H67 Children's Traumas Caused During the Civil War in Guatemala

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about the different perimortem traumas in subadult skeletons.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by revealing to the international community the violations against children during the civil war in Guatemala.

During the civil war in Guatemala, children suffered in a cruel way the violation of their essential human rights. Their right to live was affected by arbitrary executions, death of the unborn, neonates, and death as a result of forced displacement and forced disappearance. The right to physical and psychological integrity was violated by acts of torture and sexual violation. Their right to individual liberty was affected through the illegal privation of liberty and forced servitude.

According to data registered by the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission (CEH) "18% of the total of violations to human rights (against victims of known age) was performed against children" (4,249 out of 23,313). This means that at least one out of five victims is under age. Of the total of victims with known age, children comprise 20% of the people killed by arbitrary execution; 14% of victims of torture or otherwise cruel, inhumane, and denigrating treatment; 11% of victims of forced disappearance; 16% of the deprived of their liberty; and 27% of the sexually violated.

Even though these cold numbers and the horror of civil war in Guatemala are known, there still exists unresolved issues that are products of war such as: children separated from their families after witnessing acts of extreme cruelty against their loved ones; children found alive after massacres or confrontations; children lost during forced displacement or left in the custody of people or institutions; and children deprived of their fundamental human rights, including the right to have an identity, a name and to have a family free from illicit interference.

The forced movement of juveniles from their ethnic group to others, especially after massacres to indigenous communities, causes a loss of identity and affects the children's cultural rights. At the same time, it affects the collective rights of the ethnic group by impeding biological and cultural reproduction of the group.

During more than 13 years the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropological Foundation (FAFG) has performed more than 500 forensic anthropological investigations. In each one of them testimonies are collected and bone evidence that unveil the cruel violations of fundamental and specific human rights that children have suffered. In this report, the authors will show violations to human rights of children using specific cases as well as general data that FAFG obtained through forensic anthropological investigations.

Finally, it will be stated how, after the peace accords signature, the culture of violence borne of the civil war, still affects this most vulnerable group of children.

#### **Children, Massacre, Trauma**