



# CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES REFUGEE

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## SPECIAL ISSUE ON CENTRAL AMERICA

### Refugees and Peace in Central America

As this edition of *Refugee* goes to press, news reports from Central America confirm the important gains which have been achieved through efforts to bring peace and democracy to the region. At the same time, there is much to be deeply concerned about. Violence continues at an intense level in some pockets and at a low level over wider areas. The peace process remains fragile. Democratic practices are spreading but remain weak and not fully tested in several countries. Many underlying tensions in civil society are unresolved. Particularly worrisome is the fact that the economies of the region are in very bad condition, in part due to the widespread destruction brought about by civil war.

The papers gathered together here recognize the challenges and risks which must be faced, yet they stress the positive side of current developments. They draw attention to the end of refugee flight from the region and to the growing return of asylees and displaced people. They point out that the self-organized return movement has a two-sided character: it contributes to peace just as it depends on peace for its success. Particular attention is given to

the strengths to be found in the return communities and among their international supporters.

The lead article by Brian Egan and Alan Simmons provides an overview of peace, development and repatria-

tion issues in the extremely diverse countries of Central America. This paper and the other articles in the issue all give more attention to the two countries—El Salvador and Guatemala—which experienced the greatest

#### Contents:

Refugees and Peace in Central America <i>Alan Simmons</i> .....	1
Refugees and the Prospects for Peace and Development in Central America <i>Brian Egan and Alan Simmons</i> .....	4
<b>The Troubled Road to Repatriation in Central America:</b>	
Lessons Learned by Refugees in Exile <i>Tanya Basok</i> .....	11
<b>The Imagined Return Community of Guatemalan Refugees</b>	
<i>Finn Stepputat</i> .....	13
<b>The Voices of Women:</b>	
A New Force Shaping the Guatemalan Return <i>Frances Arbour</i> ..	16
Youths and the Guatemalan Return Process <i>Linda Geggie</i> .....	18
<b>Community Development, Peace and Canadian Bilateral Aid</b>	
in El Salvador <i>Lisa Kowalchuk and Liisa L. North</i> .....	21
<b>Canadian Consortia Supports Guatemalan Return</b>	
<i>Barbara Zerter</i> .....	25
<b>Project Accompaniment: A Canadian Response</b> <i>Beth Abbott</i> .....	26
<b>Power, Conflict and the Environment: Recent Literature</b>	
<i>Barry S. Levitt</i> .....	27
<b>Book Reviews</b>	
On Flight and Exile <i>W. George Lovell</i> .....	28
On State Violence in Guatemala <i>Lisa Kowalchuk</i> .....	30

