

# Coping with Oppression in Canada, Guatemala, Ethiopia,

By [J. B. Gerald](#)

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Region: [Canada](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

In-depth Report: [CRIMINALIZE WAR](#)

*Canada: in August 2015 the CBC reported the results of a study from Statistics Canada showing risk of avoidable death for First Nations peoples twice that (in some cases five times that) of non-natives.[1] On January 15th, 2016, it featured a plea by the Ontario First Nations Regional Chief, Isadore Day, that Canadians deal with the fact of inadequate health care for aboriginal peoples.[2] The CBC notes that according to the Ministry of Health TB rates are five times the general population for First Nations people, and fifty times the general population for the Inuit.*

If verifiable these disastrous figures would show something of an improvement. In [2009](#) Night's Lantern reported UNICEF's findings that noted the tuberculosis rate among Canadian aboriginal people was 90 times the national average for the years 2004 to 2006. In [2013](#) Night's Lantern noted news reports of the rate of Inuit tuberculosis as 186 times that of native born non-aboriginals. Sources of reliable information concerning damages to Canadian First Nations were intentionally removed by the Harper government in 2012 when the Conservative government de-funded the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO). Studies linking TB rates to Canada's poverty levels are also not easily available.

Lack of transparency raises issues of the government's enduring intentions. Historically both disease and lack of adequate health care have been used as a weapon. To my understanding, aboriginal communities of North Western Ontario do not have resident doctors. The CBC noted last October that 10 First Nations in Ontario's North West have gone without safe tap water for ten years, while citing a Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine report of "dramatic increase in invasive disease." [3] The recent rate of sepsis and pneumonia is estimated as about 20 times that of Calgary. The rate of rheumatic fever is reported as 75 times higher than Canada's general population. [4] The statistics are so far outside the norm that a continuing lack of normalization implies intent by the government and calls into force Article II b and c of the [Convention on Genocide](#). Despite occasional highly placed political appointments, a [genocide warning](#) for Canadian Aboriginal people remains in effect.

Guatemala: the Ríos Montt defense team continues to use legal technicalities and evasion to avoid his re-trial on charges of genocide. Initially convicted of genocide in 2013 the verdict was nullified by non-standard judicial procedures which required a set back of the trial to a previous date, then followed by postponement after postponement. Intended once again for trial, the case was once again temporarily postponed January 11th. Prosecution and witnesses remain prepared to testify again. [5] Concurrently the legal system has arrested 18 military officers on January 6th for crimes against humanity and their part in the destruction of Mayan villagers during the country's open war against the people.

Extraordinary about the recent indictments is the power of those indicted, their high rank and known closeness to their U.S. protectors / handlers who aren't immune to eventual prosecution. 12 of the officers were trained by the U.S. School of the Americas.[6]

Allan Nairn describes the arrests as the "beginning of a Nuremberg trial-type process" except applied by the local people; he notes the arrests would have been impossible without massive support for reform shown by the people's uprising against the former president. He recognizes in the extremes of the Guatemalan military's crimes and torture the contemporary acts of ISIS. [7] Challenges to impunity aren't limited to Guatemala. On January 6th in El Salvador, the government acceded to Spain's request for the extradition of 17 former soldiers including officers of the military's High Command, all involved in the 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter (previous). Ralph McGehee's 1999 archive CIA Support of Death Squads at Serendipidy includes material relevant to the war crimes in both [Guatemala](#) and [El Salvador](#). [Background](#).

Ethiopia: the Ethiopian government continues to enjoy U.S. favour as it sacrifices the security of its peoples to corporate uses. Severe oppression of Ogadeni and the Oromo peoples, continues. The booming economy and its development are powered by Ethiopia's tactical and military uses to the U.S. and the coining of oppressed groups' resources. Curiously, Addis Ababa is the seat of the African Union. In recent elections of May 2015, the ruling party for 25 years met no effective opposition.[8] while opposition areas and groups were frightened or in places denied the voting process (UNPO).[9]

The government's attempt to take land rights within Oromo territory outside Addis Ababa was met on the streets with resistance resulting in the death of 140 Oromo protesters and arrests of Oromo leaders, activists, students, and journalists. The essentially nonviolent student protests were successful and a stronger resistance begins to cohere. Government plans for expansion had to be dropped. Journalists are banned from regions challenged by separatist groups which are labeled "terrorist." These have recognized that resources of both Oromo and Ogaden peoples among other minorities are coined to the profit of the government, creating humanitarian crises. The Ogadeni basin is divided into concession blocks for foreign corporate resource development of natural gas deposits. Government opposition press releases reveal no change in the government's tactics since Night's Lantern's [genocide warnings](#) of 2010 and 2011 which are suggested reading for background. Current estimates of internal displacement in this oasis of corporate capitalism reach 413,400 (OZY).[10]

*John Bart Gerald writes the suppressed news pages of [nightslantern.ca](#), a website concerned with prevention of genocide.*

Notes:

1. "First Nations adults more than twice as likely to die from avoidable causes," Aug. 19, 2015, CBC News.
2. "First Nations leaders cite deplorable health conditions, urge action," Kristy Kikup The Canadian Press, Jan. 15, 2016, CBC News.
3. "Bad water in First Nations leads to high rate of invasive infection, doctor says," Jody Porter, Oct. 26, 2015, CBC News.

4. "Rheumatic fever rates in some Ontario First Nations 75 times higher than rest of Canada," Jody Porter, Oct. 22, 2015, CBC News.
5. "Genocide trial for Guatemala ex-dictator Rios Montt suspended," Jan. 11, 2016, Reuters.
6. "Guatemala Arrests 14 Ex-Military Officials Linked to Genocide," Jan. 6, 2016, Telesur; "New Moves on Old Crimes in El Salvador and Guatemala," Kevin Clarke, Jan. 7, 2016, The National Catholic Review; "Guatemala ex-military officials held over massacres," Jan. 7, 2016, BBC News; "Guatemalan authorities arrest SOA-trained officers for massacres, disappearances," Linda Cooper James Hodge, Jan. 11, 2016, National Catholic Reporter.
7. "18 Guatemalan Ex-Military Leaders Arrested for Crimes Against Humanity During U.S.-Backed Dirty War," Amy Goodman /Allan Nairn, Jan.8, 2016, Democracy Now!; "'CIA Death Squad,'" Allan Nairn, April 17, 1995, The Nation.
8. "US official praises Ethiopian 'democracy,' rest of world begs to differ," Mohammed Ademo, April 18, 2015, Al Jazeera.
9. "Ethiopian journalists worry after editor flees," IBT staff, Nov. 24, 2015, International Business Times; "Ogaden: Killing and Destruction of Communities along Somalia Border," June 1, 2015, UNPO; "Ethiopian Election 2015: Is Democracy Prosperous or Destitute?" HPLHA Press release, June 28, 2015, Ayyaantuu News;
10. "The Secret War in Ogaden," Laura Secorun Palet, Nov. 4, 2015, OZY; "Ogaden: Community Expresses Support to Oromo People," Press release, Jan. 7, 2016, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

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