

Guatemala

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, treats

<p>STRENGTHS</p>	<p>Although no substantive progress has been made in terms of the statutory framework, the existing one on freedom of expression and access to public information has been preserved and defended, which, in a context of authoritarian regression, can be assessed positively. The Human Rights Ombudsman and the Constitutional Court of Guatemala have defended free speech in the face of attempts by the Congress of the Republic and the Executive to curtail said right. There are journalists who, in spite of the risk at which they perform their duties, have not given in to pressure and persist in their endeavor of monitoring public officials and reporting on social issues.</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p>	<p>Guatemala is experiencing a growing wave of violence that particularly affects journalists and has worsened, initially in the wake of elections and subsequently amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Another weakness is the climate of tension and the different attempts by the Executive to silence the work of the press, especially that of journalists who monitor the activity of senior officials. Restrictions by institutions on access to public information under the guise of the pandemic to delay or deny disclosure of information, are actions that imply an outright restriction on the right of citizens to be informed and an obstacle to the work of the press.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>The pandemic crisis and restrictions on freedom of expression and public information fuel greater citizen support for the work of the media and journalists and an overwhelming outcry from civil society so that public authorities will stop violating the aforementioned fundamental rights. Unity in the concerned professional association has gained momentum.</p>
<p>THREATS</p>	<p>The growing weakening of human rights institutions and the authoritarian regression that began a few years ago have been exacerbated after 2017 by the "covenant of the corrupt" – term describing a set of actions by the political elite to avoid being investigated – extending its damaging influence to all decision-making areas.</p>

