

Schools for Chiapas Zapatista Timeline

Sources: *Enlace Zapatista*, *eZln.org*, *El Kilombo Intergaláctico*, *Global Exchange*, *Chiapas Support Committee*, *Kiptik, casa collective*, *La Jornada*, *Building Bridges in Chiapas Project*, *Schools for Chiapas*.

KEY DATES 10 – 20 – 30 years.

1983 Formation of the EZLN

1993/4 Uprising in Chiapas, January 1st.

2003 Autonomous Municipalities launched

2012/13 40,000+ Zapatistas march into five towns in Chiapas, the biggest public demonstration to date.

Relevant Historical Background.

Pre-Columbian era (300-900 CE): Mayans settle in the area we call Chiapas, Mexico

250: The Mayan civilization, centered in the Yucatán peninsula, becomes one of the most dominant of the region's groups, reaching its peak around the sixth century A.D., during the Classic period of Mesoamerican history. The Maya excelled at pottery, hieroglyph writing, calendar-making and mathematics, and left an astonishing amount of great architecture.

1519-21: Spanish conquistadors led by Hernán Cortés oversee the conquest of the Aztecs and Maya – 500 years of domination and exploitation begins.

1528: Spanish conquistador Captain Diego Mazariegos arrives in Chiapas, declares himself first Lieutenant Governor of Chiapas (1528 – 1529), and settles in *Villa Real de Chiapa* (later renamed San Cristóbal de las Casas).

Late 1500s: More than half of the Mayan population killed by disease and repression.

1712: Spanish tribute demands along with crop failures create an indigenous Tzeltal uprising in Chiapas – Spaniards brutally put it down.

1810: September, 16. Father Manuel Hidalgo calls for Mexican Independence from Spain in “El Grito de Dolores”, and this becomes Mexican Independence day. War of Independence ensues, and Spanish are defeated.

1824: Chiapas changes from under the dominion of Guatemala to being a Mexican state, which benefits the ruling elites.

1867-70: Indigenous rebellion over taxation, market control and religious freedom in Chamula, a Tzotzil stronghold in the Chiapas Highlands. Once again brutally put down by the Spanish Crown forces based in the garrison town of Ciudad Real (San Cristóbal de las Casas).

1910: Beginning of the epic 10-year long Mexican revolution, triggered by unrest amongst peasants and urban workers. Due to its geographical isolation, Chiapas remains relatively untouched by events in the rest of revolutionary Mexico.

1911: Mexico's dictator, Porfirio Díaz, is overthrown. The new president is Francisco Madero, a liberal. Madero introduces land reform and labor legislation. Political unrest continues with Emiliano Zapata leading a peasant revolt in the south. Again, Chiapas is barely affected by land reform or the changes in the structure of power.

1919: Assassination of Emiliano Zapata, at Chinameca, on the 10th April. With his death, the true revolutionary potential of the Mexican Revolution is lost.

1928-1970s: The pace of land reform continues to stagnate in Chiapas, culminating with thousands of indigenous being forced off arable land and into the sparsely populated Lacandon jungle.

1968: Tlatelolco Massacre. Student demonstration during the Olympic Games is fired upon by Mexican security forces in Tlatelolco, Mexico City. Hundreds of protesters are killed and wounded, and thousands are arrested. The ensuing months of repression of the social movement lead many activists into clandestinity and the formation of guerilla nuclei.

1974: Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas organizes the Indigenous Congress – 1200 delegates from 300 communities come together to demand land reform, education in indigenous languages, health care and labor rights.

1979: “Plan de Ayala” created by the Chiapas-based National Coordinating Committee – two dozen peasant communities declare themselves independent of the government.

1982: The new governor of Chiapas, General Absalon Castellanos Dominguez, increases military repression in the face of indigenous rebellion – his forces kill 102 campesinos, 327 more disappear, 590 imprisoned, 427 kidnapped and tortured, 407 families forced to move and 54 communities are overrun by security forces in an attempt to quell rebellion.

1982: Activists from the National Liberation Forces (FLN), including Marcos, arrive in Chiapas.

Nov. 17, 1983: The EZLN (Ejercito Zapatista Liberacion Nacional, or Zapatista National Liberation Army) is founded by three indigenous activists and three mestizos.

1985 – Earthquake in Mexico City kills thousands and makes many more homeless. An active civil society arises to act in solidarity with victims where the government has let the people down.

1986: EZLN enters its first indigenous community at the invitation of local leaders.

1988: Carlos Salinas, PRI, steals the Presidential election from Cauhtemoc Cárdenas.

1989: The EZLN grows to 1300 armed members.

1992: President Salinas “reforms” Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution to allow for privatization of ejidos (community landholdings), effectively ending land reform.

1993: Zapatista communities approve a military offensive by the EZLN. The Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee-General Command (CCRI-CG) is formed to lead it.

1994: Uprising and peace talks

January 1st: Uprising! The Zapatistas declares war on the Mexican government on behalf of the country’s indigenous people. They launch their uprising on this day because it is the date the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) goes into effect. From their base in Mexico’s southernmost state of Chiapas, the Zapatistas seize government offices and occupy thousands of acres of private land. The insurgents demand democracy, liberty, and justice for all Mexicans. The EZLN’s General Command issues the First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, and the municipalities of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Chanal, Oxchuc, and Huixtan are all taken by the rebels.

Early January: The Mexican army responds by sending troops to the state. Firefights last for 12 days.

Representatives of national and international human rights groups swarm into the state. After a series of pitched battles causing 145 deaths and hundreds of casualties, both sides agree to a cease-fire.

February 21: Dialogue for peace between the EZLN and the federal government, moderated by San Cristóbal's bishop Samuel Ruiz García, held in the cathedral of San Cristóbal de las Casas. The EZLN declares that the results of the talks will be submitted to a long consultation among all the Zapatista communities and civilian bases of support.

March 24: Assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, probably by another faction of the PRI. Due to the unstable political climate, the EZLN's consultations are temporarily suspended.

April 9: Bishop Samuel Ruiz, mediator in the peace talks, is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for the first time.

June 12, 1994: The Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle is issued by the EZLN. The results of the consultation are made public: 97.88% reject the government's proposals for reaching a definitive solution to the conflict, while only 2.11% are in favor of signing peace. However, only 3.26% manifest a desire to return to hostilities, so the decision is made to continue abiding by the cease-fire, while opening a new dialogue with civil society.

August 5-9: Civil society mobilized in the jungle: The National Democratic Convention (CND) is held in EZLN territory, Chiapas, with more than 6,000 people from around the country in attendance to dialogue with the Zapatistas.

Late August: The new PRI presidential candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, wins by a landslide.

October 11: Peace talks end. The EZLN breaks off all talks with the federal government, citing continued repression, a build-up of the Mexican army's forces around their territory, and increased military provocations.

December 19: The EZLN launches a new, "nonviolent" military offensive in Chiapas with the help of the civilian population. Overnight, over half of Chiapas is declared "rebel territory" without a single shot being fired, as Zapatistas announce the formation of 38 autonomous municipalities, an area roughly the size of the state of Maryland.

Late December: Financial crisis – The Mexican government announces that it will default on loan payments to the International Monetary Fund. The Mexican peso goes into a free fall, losing half its value. A month later, in a leaked memo, Chase Manhattan Bank issues a report calling for the Mexican government to "eliminate the Zapatistas" in order to stabilize the country.

1995: Military offensive and new peace talks in San Andres

January 1st: Third Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle is issued by the EZLN, calling for the creation of a National Liberation Movement.

February 9, 1995: The federal government suddenly launches a military offensive against the EZLN and their communities of supporters, both inside and outside of Chiapas. President Zedillo, in a dramatic television appearance, announces arrest warrants for the "top Zapatista leadership", unilaterally breaking the cease-fire. The EZLN, however, retreats into the mountains, as do most of their support bases, and refuses to return fire against the government troops. Implementing a strategy of civilian-targeted warfare, the army displaces 20,000 campesinos, destroys Zapatista headquarters and starts constructing new military bases all over the territory.

The army fails to locate the CCRI-CG(General Command) of the EZLN in order to apply the arrest

warrants. However, several dozen people in Chiapas, Mexico State, Veracruz, and Mexico City are arrested, tortured, and jailed on trumped-up terrorism charges for supposedly being members of the EZLN.

March 11: Upon tacitly recognizing the failure of the military operation, the Mexican Congress approves (and the President signs) the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and a Just Peace in Chiapas. The law calls for a reinitiation of peace talks, a suspension of military operations against the EZLN, a suspension of arrest warrants against its supposed leadership. A legislative commission, the Commission on Concordance and Pacification (Cocopa), will be in charge of facilitating and laying the bases for this new dialogue.

August: Zapatistas hold the first international *consulta* (consultation, or plebiscite) to let all Mexicans, and even foreigners, vote on the EZLN's demands, as well as on the very future of the rebel organization. Over one million people vote to support the Zapatista proposal to transform the EZLN into an independent political force. The *consulta* represents the EZLN's greatest success yet in opening up dialogue with civil society.

September 10, 1995: The EZLN proposes six major themes for the new dialogue: Indigenous Rights and Culture; Democracy and Justice; Welfare and Development; Reconciliation in Chiapas; Rights of Women in Chiapas; and, finally, the Cessation of Hostilities.

October 18-22: The first phase of the San Andrés talks is held between the EZLN and the Federal Government with regards to Indigenous Rights and Culture.

October 28: The EZLN suspends the "red alert", and announces it will attend the upcoming second phase of peace talks in San Andrés regarding Indigenous Rights and Culture.

December, 1995: The EZLN responds to the destruction of their headquarters in La Realidad by constructing five autonomous centers of resistance ("Aguascalientes") in the villages of La Realidad, Oventic, La Garrucha, Morelia and Roberto Barrios.

December 31, 1995/January 1, 1996: The Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle is issued by the EZLN, calling for the formation of a new Zapatista organization—the Zapatista Front of National Liberation (FZLN)—which is to be a national, nonviolent, and independent civilian political force with its base in the EZLN. This carries out the EZLN's promise to abide by the results of the *Consulta*.

1996: Negotiating the San Andres Peace Accords, and the first Intercontinental Encuentro.

January 3-10: The first National Indigenous Forum is held in San Cristóbal de las Casas, attended by 24 comandantes of the EZLN, as well as nearly 500 representatives of over 30 indigenous groups from throughout the country.

February 16th: The Zapatistas and the federal government sign the first set of accords resulting from the Dialogue of San Andrés: 40 pages of national reforms to be undertaken regarding Indigenous Rights and Culture. But Comandante David warns: "This is only a small agreement, on paper. We will not be tricked into thinking that what has been signed is a peace agreement."

March 21: The negotiations on the issue of Democracy and Justice begin in San Andrés. The dialogue becomes a monologue, however, as the government's representatives refuse to discuss any of the EZLN's proposals.

July/August: First Zapatista Intercontinental Encuentro (Meeting) for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism. Thousands of people from around the world come to the Chiapas jungle to attend.

August 1, 1996: Schools for Chiapas was officially born during “The First Intergalactic”, as the international community and the autonomous Mayan communities gathered together for the first mass encuentro.

August 12th: The plenary session in San Andres on Democracy and Justice ends with no agreement between the parts.

October 9th, 1996: Comandanta Ramona represents the Zapatistas at the Permanent National Indigenous Congress in Mexico City. She is the first Zapatista to appear publicly outside of Chiapas.

December: President Zedillo formally rejects the San Andres Accords. This decision plunges the peace process into crisis.

1997: Peace talks breakdown, Acteal massacre

January 11th, 1997: The EZLN meets with the inter-party Peace Commission COCOPA in La Realidad, and rejects the government’s counterproposal. The EZLN reiterates that it will not return to the negotiating table with the government until the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture are implemented.

January – March: Military and police presence and repression dramatically increase in Chiapas while the peace process stalls.

February 1st: 9,000 civilian Zapatistas march through San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, demanding the government honor the San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.

April-July: Dozens of murders of mainly civilian Zapatistas in the northern zone of Chiapas, killed by pro-government paramilitary squads or police.

September 8: 1,111 members of the EZLN (representing 1,111 Zapatista base communities) travel to Mexico City to be present for the founding of the Zapatista National Liberation Front (FZLN), the civil political arm of the movement.

December 22nd, 1997: Acteal massacre. The “Peace and Justice” paramilitary group, affiliated with the PRI, attack the hamlet of Acteal in the Highlands of Chiapas, where refugees from recent paramilitary attacks are taking refuge. The attackers launch a 5-hour killing spree, murdering 45 people—mostly women and children—and wounding 25 others. Despite their proximity to the site of the attack, the public security police do not intervene.

1998: Military attacks on Zapatista Municipalities

January: The EZLN does not respond militarily to the paramilitary offensive, insisting it still wants to see a political solution to the conflict.

January 12: Demonstrations are held worldwide to protest the violence in Chiapas and demand the compliance of the San Andres accords. . In Ocosingo, Chiapas during a peaceful demonstration, the state security police opens fire, killing one woman and injuring two children.

February: The Zedillo administration begins a campaign to expel foreign human rights observers from Chiapas. Over 150 are expelled during the next two years.

April 11, 1998: The army launches an attack on various Zapatista autonomous centers. Over 1,000 troops and police violently invade four communities, arresting community leaders.

In the newly declared autonomous municipality of Ricardo Flores Magon, in the town of Taniperlas, hundreds of state and federal police, along with the army and immigration officials, destroy the

municipal offices, beat local inhabitants, and arrest and incarcerate dozens, including 12 foreigners, who are deported.

May 1: Police, military and immigration officials launch an assault on the autonomous municipality of Tierra y Libertad, located in the town of Amparo Agua Tinta. 53 people are arrested.

June: The army invades the Zapatista community of San Juan de Libertad, leading to a firefight between military and indigenous locals. Eight civilians and one policeman are killed.

June-December: Zapatista autonomous municipalities continue to operate despite the military repression, due to a groundswell of popular support in the region.

1999: National and international consultation

March: The Zapatistas organize *La Consulta* (plebiscite) on Indigenous Rights and Culture, in order to pressurize the government into implementing the signed San Andres accords. The Zapatistas send one man and one woman (5,000 civilian Zapatistas in total) to every municipality in the country

March 21: Three million Mexicans vote to demand the implementation of the San Andres Accords.

April: State police occupy the autonomous community of San Andres Sakamch'em, site of the San Andres Accords, and install a PRI mayor. The next day, 3,000 unarmed Zapatistas nonviolently force the police to leave the town and re-install their own elected authorities.

August: The military deploys paratroopers to occupy the remote village of Amador Hernandez, the final link in plans to build a road that will encircle the Zapatistas in the Lacandon Jungle. The community resists with nonviolent protests, but the military encampment remains.

2000: Fall of the PRI

January: Low-intensity warfare continues in Chiapas.

Spring 2000: Zapatista communities register to vote in historic numbers in preparation for upcoming elections in which the "old dictatorship" PRI will lose their monopoly on power.

July 2, 2000: Opposition presidential candidate Vicente Fox, of the center-right National Action Party (PAN), wins the presidential election by a landslide, in what is widely hailed as the country's first democratic election. The governing PRI loses power for the first time in 70 years.

Newly elected President Fox pledges to solve the Chiapas conflict "in 15 minutes."

August 2000: Following in Fox's footsteps, Pablo Salazar wins the Chiapas gubernatorial race on a coalition ticket that unites several parties opposed to continued rule by the PRI.

November 30: Fox assumes the presidency and the Zapatistas break a five-month long silence and call for the new administration to meet three conditions before peace talks can resume: withdraw troops from seven of the 250 military encampments, release all Zapatista political prisoners, and implement the San Andres Accords.

December, 2000: President orders the army to withdraw from a few positions in the rebel area of Chiapas as a token goodwill gesture. Over the next five months he dismantles seven military bases and frees some of the Zapatista political prisoners. However, few real changes emerge, and the low intensity war and paramilitary attacks continue.

2001: Zapatista Caravan goes to Mexico City

January: President Fox's promise to implement the San Andres Accords falters as the army continues to maintain bases at five of the seven sites they must withdraw from before dialogue can start.

Spring 2001: 'The march of the people who are the colour of the earth' is launched from Chiapas, as twenty-four ski-masked Zapatista commanders, including Marcos, leave Chiapas on a caravan for indigenous rights, mobilizing hundreds of thousands as they tour the country.

March 11: The Zapatista caravan enters the Zocalo, Mexico City, greeted by 250,000 people.

April 25: The senate unanimously approves a mutilated version of the San Andres Accords. The Zapatistas and all other major indigenous organization denounce the laws.

2002: Zapatista silence, end of Peace Process

January – May: Conflict over government plans to expel Zapatista communities from the Montes Azules Biosphere.

July 2002: Crimes against humanity: Former President Luis Echeverria is questioned about massacres of student protesters in 1968, when he was interior minister, and in 1971 when he was president. The genocide trial continues for a few years and then is suspended in 2007.

August: Paramilitary activity is stepped up with attacks on the autonomous townships resulting in four dead, more than twenty wounded, and many displaced.

November: First edition of a new Zapatista magazine, *Rebeldia*, is published.

December: Marcos publishes a series of five controversial letters about Basque autonomy. Some Basque groups respond by telling him to mind his own business.

The first displacement of indigenous villages begins in the Montes Azules biosphere reserve despite vigorous non-violent protest by locals and their supporters.

2003 Birth of the Caracoles and the Autonomous Good Governments

January 1st: 15,000 masked Zapatistas gather in San Cristóbal to mark the ninth anniversary of the uprising, taking over the city for a night. It is the largest show of Zapatista strength to date.

April: The Zapatistas mobilize and speak out against the war on Iraq.

Summer 2003: President Fox's party, the PAN, loses badly in state and national mid-term congressional elections. The PRI regains control in many areas of the state.

August 8, 9, 2003: Birth of the Caracoles and Junta. The Zapatistas implement the San Andrés accords themselves in their territories without government permission. A celebration is held in Oventic attended by more than ten thousand people. The Zapatistas formally declare the death of the Aguascalientes, and the birth of the five autonomous Caracoles, political and cultural centres, and their Good Government Juntas, who "govern by obeying". This marks the full separation of the Zapatista civil and military structures and authorities, and the symbolic creation of full autonomy.

August: *Radio Insurgente*, the Zapatista radio station, begins broadcasting.

September: In response to the birth of the Caracoles, the Mexican government and paramilitary groups step up harassment of the Zapatista communities.

November 17, 2003: The Zapatistas celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the EZLN.

2004: Consolidating autonomy, defending territory

January 1: The 10th anniversary of the uprising, celebrated by large crowds in all five caracoles.

The year is marked by an increase in military and police presence, and by renewed efforts to remove communities from the Montes Azules biosphere reserve “in the interests of preserving the jungle”. In truth, it is to prepare the region for mass tourism.

April: A Zapatista demonstration in Zinacantan is attacked by opposition forces. 29 Zapatistas are injured and 125 families flee for several weeks.

August: First anniversary of the Caracoles. The Zapatistas release a series of communiqués detailing how their autonomous communities are governed and admit that in most communities Zapatista women still haven’t obtained equal status with men.

November: Marcos collaborates with renowned Mexican novelist Paco Ignacio Taibo II to write a novel, *Muertos Incomodos (The Uncomfortable Dead)* published in regular installments in the daily newspaper, *La Jornada*.

2005: La Sexta (The Sixth) and The Other Campaign

January: Seven Zapatista communities are forced to relocate from Montes Azules.

June 1st: Red Alert in Zapatista territory called by the EZLN citing the possibility of an imminent military attack. The autonomous region is closed off.

June 9, 2005: The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle, usually known as *La Sexta*, is announced. The first such document they have released since July 1998. The EZLN announce the birth of a new campaign (*La Otra*) to bring together leftist groups all over the country for radical social change.

August: *The Other Campaign* begins with a series of preparatory meetings in Zapatista territory, where unions, campesino organizations, indigenous groups, social justice organizations, collectives, NGOs, and groups and individuals “from below and to the left” from all over Mexico come to share their struggles and vision.

September: The *Other Campaign* announces its adherent groups and committees: 64 leftwing political organizations, 118 indigenous groups, 197 social organizations, 474 NGOs, groups and collectives and 1898 individuals.

2006: La Otra, Atenco, Oaxaca Commune

January: Official launch of *La Otra* campaign. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, as Delegate Zero, begins a 6-month tour of the country to make contact with all the groups who are taking part in the campaign, shadowing the state elections in June.

6th January: **Comandanta Ramona dies** of kidney failure.

May 1: Subcomandante Marcos addresses the annual Mayday march in Mexico City, urging Mexico’s workers to seize the means of production.

May 3: Brutal police repression in Atenco, in the state of Mexico, against one of the constituent organizations of *La Otra*, the People’s Front in Defence of the Land in San Salvador Atenco. In an extremely violent security operation, 275 people are arrested and detained, two killed, and 23 women sexually abused by police.

May: The *Other Campaign* is forced to halt in Mexico City. Demonstrations are held in thirty countries.

A *Red Alert* is called again in Zapatista territory, and the Caracoles and communities are closed, fearing an Atenco-style government attack.

May and June, 2006: Uprising in Oaxaca City led by APPO (The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca). The city is completely cleared of all state forces and government administration and enclosed by a 1000 barricades to keep authorities out, manned by Oaxaca residents.

July 2006: Conservative candidate Felipe Calderon is declared the winner of presidential elections with a razor-thin majority over his leftist rival, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who challenges the result with mass street protests.

October: The *Other Campaign* resumes in the north of Mexico. Zapatistas announce a national and cross-border consulta, and a forthcoming intergalactic gathering.

November: The Other Campaign reaches the bridge from Ciudad Juarez to the United States, where hundreds of US citizens and Mexican migrants mobilize to show their support.

Hurricane Stan devastates Western Chiapas. The Zapatistas are among the first to mobilize on the ground to help the victims.

November 10–13: Federal Forces re-take Oaxaca City in a bloody two-day battle in the streets, leaving hundreds injured and at least 160 protesters imprisoned, some tortured. Zapatista support bases block all major roads in Chiapas in solidarity with APPO. The “Oaxaca Commune” is destroyed.

December: First phase of the Other Campaign draws to a close, having covered 45,000 kilometers across Mexico and mobilized hundreds of thousands of citizens. But the movement was still relatively small and not all the goals of the first phase have succeeded.

2007: La Otra Campaign in the north, international outreach

January: The *First Encounter between the Zapatistas and the Peoples of the World* is held in Oventic over the New Year, giving the Zapatistas the opportunity to explain their autonomous organisation to over 2,000 people from 43 countries.

February: Peace Camps are set up at Huitepec near San Cristóbal as Zapatista land is threatened by paramilitaries. Similarly, a camp is set up on Cucapa lands in el Mayor, Baja California, as part of *La Otra* campaign.

March: Launch of the International Campaign in Defence of the Indigenous, Peasant and Autonomous Lands and Territories of Chiapas, Mexico and the World, endorsed by the Landless Movement of Brazil (MST) and the international agrarian reform organisation Via Campesina.

This launch marks the beginning of the second phase of the Other Campaign in the north of Mexico, with the participation of 15 EZLN commanders.

June: The Other Campaign finishes its campaign in northern Mexico. EZLN Commanders return to Chiapas because of the increase in attacks on Zapatista communities by paramilitary groups. The attacks are part of a coordinated assault by paramilitaries and landowners to take back land ‘recuperated’ by the Zapatistas in 1994.

July: More than 2,000 people attend The Second Encounter between the Zapatistas and the Peoples of the World is held in three of the Zapatista Caracoles – Oventik, Morelia and La Realidad.

August: Two more Zapatista communities are expelled from Montes Azules.

September: Paramilitaries attack Zapatistas in Bolon Ajaw,

September 22: The EZLN suspends the Other Campaign tour in the face of the rapidly deteriorating situation faced by Zapatista communities: evictions, paramilitary attacks, invasions, persecution and threats.

2008: Drug War in Mexico intensifies, violence against Zapatistas increases

January: The Third Encounter between the Zapatista Women and the Women of the World, named after Comandanta Ramona, is held over the New Year in La Garrucha. Over 3,000 attend.

February: Attacks against Zapatista communities continue, at Agua Azul/Bolon Ajaw. Political prisoners in Chiapas go on hunger strike.

May: US Congress agrees to give Mexican army billions of dollars to “fight drug trafficking”, under the *Merida Initiative*, widely known as *Plan Mexico*. Drug-related killings in Mexico soar in the first six months of the year. Murders linked to organized crime leap to almost 1,400.

June: 200 Mexican Army troops in tanks and trucks, together with state and local police, attempts to enter the Zapatista Caracol of La Garrucha.

Police set up an encampment on the land of the community of Cruzton to protect gold explorers.

July: The *National and International Caravan for Observation and Solidarity*, composed of over 300 national and international human rights promoters, visits many of the threatened Zapatista communities in Chiapas.

August – Nationwide Marches Against Drug War. Hundreds of thousands join mobilizations throughout Mexico to protest against drugs-related violence and state repression.

November: Mexico’s Energy Secretary announces oil drilling is to start in the Lacandon Jungle, and a new ‘bio-diesel’ plant is to be built in Chiapas.

December: The International Conference in Memory of Andrés Aubry takes place in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, attended by Subcomandante Marcos. He announces that this will be the last time that he or any of the commanders will appear or speak in public for a long time: “the foul smell of war has returned to our lands”.

2009: War on Drugs escalation

December, 2008/January, 2009: Digna Rabia or the *Worldwide Festival of Dignified Rage* takes place in Mexico City and Chiapas. The theme is “Another World, Another Politics”, attended by many thousands.

March 8: International Women’s Day Festival in Oventik; thousands attend.

June: The *First American Continental Gathering against Impunity* is held in the Caracol of Morelia.

The World Tourist Organisation meets in Chiapas and announces plans for a major tourist development, *Chiapas 2015*.

July: San Sebastian Bachajon prisoners are freed. A member of the community of Mitzitón, Other Campaign adherents also opposing the new road, is killed by a truck driven by an evangelical paramilitary group based in the community.

August: The first group of paramilitaries who committed the Acteal massacre are freed. The rest are released in November. The message is one of impunity.

January- December: According to the authorities, some 6,500 people have been killed in drug-related

deaths for 2009, the worst year of bloodshed since President Felipe Calderon declared war on the drug cartels in late 2006.

2010: Increased Paramilitary activity

January: The Zapatista caracoles are closed for New Year/Anniversary celebrations for the first time.

Instead, an international seminar in honour of Andrés Aubry is held in San Cristóbal, attended by thousands of Zapatista supporters.

February: Conflicts break out in Mitziton and Bolon Ajaw, both communities in resistance to the government road, who are threatened by paramilitary groups.

June: The paramilitary group Army of God – Eagle Wings threatens the Other Campaign adherents in Mitziton: “We are going to commit a worse massacre than that of Acteal”.

September: 170 Zapatista supporters are displaced from the community of San Marcos Avilés, municipality of Chilon, by non-Zapatista community members.

October: The evicted villagers return to San Marcos Avilés with the backing of Human Rights and solidarity groups, but repression against them continues.

2011: Civil Society mobilizes against the War on Drugs, conflict over Zapatista-held land.

January 24th: Death of Samuel Ruiz Garcia, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas. The EZLN break nearly 2 years of silence with a communiqué honoring him.

February: A series of letters between Marcos and the philosopher Luis Villoro, ‘on ethics and politics’ is published, marking Marcos’s return to writing for the first time in more than two years. It would seem that rumours in the mainstream media that he had died were premature.

117 Other Campaign members are arrested in San Sebastian Bachajón during the ongoing dispute over the tourist tollbooth at the entrance to the waterfalls at Agua Azul, an area where a large international tourist development is planned.

April: Thousands participate in protests across Mexico against drug-related violence. The marches are called by Mexican poet Javier Sicilia, whose son was murdered in March 2011; protests continue throughout the summer.

March: President Felipe Calderon inaugurates the second “Sustainable Rural City” at Santiago del Pinar, close to Oventic. Human Rights group denounce the initiative as an enclosure of the indigenous population in controlled model villages.

April: The Mexican Army announce the creation of two new military bases on the Chiapas/Guatemala border, part of the increasing militarisation of the area. The EZLN issue a communiqué calling on their supporters to participate in the march convoked by Javier Sicilia against the war and the bloodshed.

May 7th: 20,000 masked Zapatistas, including 30 commanders, along with members of the Other Campaign and civil society march in silence through the streets of San Cristóbal in solidarity with the National March for Peace with Justice and Dignity. This is their first public appearance outside autonomous territory for five years.

June: The EZLN announce their support for the Peace Caravan to Ciudad Juarez. Javier Sicilia calls the Zapatistas “a great moral force”.

July: The final five remaining prisoners from San Sebastian Bachajón are finally freed.

July 24: Jan de Vos, renowned historian of the Lacandon jungle, dies.

August: The three Caracoles of La Realidad, La Garrucha and Morelia denounce a pattern of land invasions, destruction of crops, burning, threats and provocations against Zapatista bases.

September: More than 100 paramilitaries encircle the Zapatista Community of San Patricio in the Caracol of Robert Barrios threatening to evict and kill. And nearby the La Garrucha Caracol, over 100 paramilitaries surround the community of Nuevo Purisima, in a failed attempt to invade Zapatista lands.

11 political prisoners, members of organizations belonging to the Other Campaign, start a hunger strike and fast at state prisons in Chiapas.

October: 13 political prisoners on hunger strike. Their families set up an encampment in San Cristóbal. Two prisoners from Mitzitón community are released. Expressions of solidarity come from all over the world, but Alberto Patishtán, spokesperson for the fasting prisoners, is transferred to a high security federal prison in Guasave, Sinaloa.

November 17: The 28th anniversary of the EZLN.

2012 PRI return to power, mass Zapatista mobilization

January 1-3: Seminar on Anti-Systemic Movements held in Cideci-Unitierra celebrating the 18th anniversary of the Zapatista Uprising.

February: Another seven men convicted of the Acteal Massacre are released from prison, found innocent. A judge orders Zapatista prisoner Alberto Patishtán's return to Chiapas, but the federal government intervenes.

March – A national and international campaign is launched by Frayba and the MJB to win freedom for the political prisoners Alberto Patishtán Gomez and Francisco Santiz Lopez.

May 19: National and international day in solidarity with the Zapatistas and against the continual actions of repression directed at their continuing advance towards autonomy.

June: The JBG of Morelia denounces more land grabs, attacks and harrassment by the paramilitary ORCAO group, with the support of the government, against Zapatista base communities in Patria Nueva and El Nantze.

July 2: PRI declared election winners. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) candidate Enrique Peña Nieto wins the presidential election, defeating veteran leftwing candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and ending 12 years of rightwing National Action Party (PAN) rule. General dismay among Zapatistas and their supporters throughout the country that the PRI are back in power.

August- December: Attacks and threats against Zapatista communities increase dramatically in the wake of the elections, as paramilitary groups in Chiapas are emboldened by the change of government. Zapatista Good Government Juntas in all five regions denounce attacks.

December 1, 2012 – The new President, Enrique Peña Nieto takes the oath of office, amid large protests in Mexico City. Protesters are fired upon by the police with rubber bullets or tear gas cannisters, injuring many and critically wounding a Zapatista activist, Juan Francisco Kuykendall, who dies from his injuries a few months later.

December, 2012: An Italian civic organization, Libera, releases a report counting 116,000 deaths in

Mexico during President Calderon's War on Drugs campaign, between 2006 and December, 2012.

Dec 21, 2012 : 40,000 masked Zapatistas March in Chiapas. Marking the end of the Mayan Long Count Calendar (13 Baktún) and the beginning of a new calendar, 40,000 Zapatista support bases marched silently into 5 Chiapas cities (Ocosingo, Palenque, San Cristóbal, Las Margaritas and Altamirano) in the largest public manifestation of indigenous Zapatistas in the 30 year history of the organization. "Did you hear it?" an EZLN communiqué asks. "It's the sound of their world ending. It's that of ours resurging."

Dec 22: 15th Anniversary of the Acteal Massacre. Relatives of the victims say justice has not been done. Las Abejas of Acteal, a civil society organization, denounce the reactivation of the paramilitary group, Mascara Roja, in Chenalhó Municipality.

2013: La Escuelita, national teacher strike

January: The EZLN formally changes the name of the Other Campaign to "adherents to the Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle."

February 23: In another flashpoint in the ongoing struggle to protect Zapatista-held land, Zapatistas in San Marcos Avilés are threatened with violent eviction by pro-government groups. A human-rights peace caravan is mobilized to support the beleaguered community.

July: Nine indigenous political prisoners of the Voice of El Amate group freed due to intense national campaigns for their release. All are adherents to the EZLN's Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle and were unjustly imprisoned.

August 8: 10th Anniversary of the Caracoles autonomous governments. Celebrations held in each of the five caracoles attended by several thousand national and international supporters.

August 12-16: **Launch of La Escuelita.** 1,500 national and international activists arrive in Chiapas to participate in the Little School of Freedom according to the Zapatistas, an educational initiative run by the indigenous people of the autonomous communities.

September: Chiapas teachers protest the education "reforms" proposed by President Peña Nieto. Denouncing the attempted "privatization" of education, teachers all over the country strike and occupy central plazas and some Pemex installations. Chiapas teachers occupied toll booths on the super-highways and collected the fees to finance protest activities. The government, however, does not budge and violently evicts the central teachers' occupation in the Zocalo, Mexico City.

November 30: Political prisoner Alberto Patishtán released. Homecoming to Chiapas celebration in the Cathedral of San Cristobal. Unjustly imprisoned Zapatista supporter finally returns home after a lengthy national and international campaign to secure his release.

December 2013/January, 2014: The Second Escuelita, attended by another 1500 visiting students in the Zapatista autonomous zone.

2014: Fresh attacks on Zapatista communities

Jan 1st: Zapatistas Celebrate 20 Years of Resistance. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of their Rebellion and Resistance, the Zapatistas hosted approximately 3,000 visitors in their five caracoles, joining thousands of local Zapatista in a night of song and dance.

January 30: Iconic Zapatista community Diez de Abril attacked by 200 aggressors from nearby anti-Zapatista community attempting a land takeover. Three hospitalized and medical workers from a nearby clinic attacked by the aggressors when they came to the aid of the injured Zapatistas.

February 15: International solidarity demonstrations in support of Diez de Abril take place in a dozen countries, revealing that global support for the Zapatistas is alive and well.

May 2: Galeano assassinated. Members of the paramilitary organization CIOAC-Histórica plan and execute an attack on the Zapatista community of La Realidad. Fifteen Zapatistas are injured, and a teacher at the Escuelita, Jose Luis Solis Lopez (aka Galeano) is murdered.

May 25: Farewell Marcos, long live Subcomandante Galeano! In a public ceremony before thousands of supporters to commemorate the death of Galeano, Subcomandante announces the 'retirement' of the persona of Marcos, and assumes the new name of Subcomandante Galeano.