

Rights Action

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March 2019

Trying Times Again Guatemala & Honduras crisis response fund

Yet another spike in repression, corruption and impunity

For over two decades, Guatemalan human rights defenders – many funded and supported by Rights Action – have been courageously struggling for truth and justice. Their achievements (and lives!) are again at increased risk.

Matching donor: An anonymous supporter will match contributions (up to a total of \$25,000), made by April 20, 2019

Since the U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup in 2009, Honduran human rights defenders – many funded and supported by Rights Action – have courageously struggled for a restoration of their democracy and the rule of law. Their lives are again at increased risk, as well.

Why this spike in corruption, repression and impunity in Guatemala and Honduras?

Coup attempt in Venezuela

Over the past two years, and particularly since January 1, 2019, Guatemala and Honduras (along with other repressive, corrupt governments in the Americas) are considered by most politicians and mainstream media outlets in the U.S. and Canada as “democratic allies” in support of illegal U.S. and Canadian-led efforts to economically strangle, isolate and overthrow Venezuela’s government.

Recommended Reading

- “Venezuela Coverage Takes Us Back to Golden Age of Lying About Latin America”, by Mark Cook, February 27, 2019, <https://fair.org/>

Even the small amounts of pressure the U.S. and Canadian governments were bringing to bear on Honduras and Guatemala to take small steps to remedy the endemic exploitation, repression, corruption and impunity have stopped.

(continued)



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Make checks payable to “Rights Action” and mail to the appropriate US or Canadian office.

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GET INFORMED/ GET INVOLVED

Speakers: Invite us to give presentations in your community about these issues

Educational Delegations:

Form your own group or join one of our educational-solidarity delegation seminars to Guatemala and Honduras to learn more about these issues and struggles

Daily News:

- www.democracynow.org
- www.theintercept.com
- www.rabble.ca

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In Guatemala, the corrupt, repressive government of president Jimmy Morales has been intervening in criminal lawsuits and investigations, trying illegally to block the work of lawyers and investigators with CICIG (International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala). In early January 2019, the government of Morales blocked a criminal investigation of organized crime against Morales' son, and forced many CICIG lawyers and investigators out of the country.

At the same time, Morales' military-backed political party is close to passing a 'get-out-of-jail-free' amnesty law in the corrupted congress that would immediately end all war crimes investigations, and release from jail dozens of convicted war criminals.

Recommended Reading

- **"Guatemala: Impunity for War Criminals, Again."** Guatemala is poised to pass a law reversing its National Reconciliation Law, which prohibits amnesty for those who committed international crimes during the country's civil war. Who benefits from blanket amnesty? By Jo-Marie Burt and Paulo Estrada, February 5, 2019, <https://nacla.org/>

As the U.S. and Canada continue with illegal aggressions against Venezuela, this pending amnesty law (illegal, according to Guatemalan and international law) has drawn virtually no criticism from the U.S. or Canada. Neither government has done anything to support and protect the legal mandate of CICIG.

In Honduras, the corrupt, repressive government of president Juan Orlando Hernandez ("JOH") has similarly blocked organized crime investigations into his own family members, even as Juan Orlando's brother – Tony Fernandez, a former member of Congress – was extradited to the U.S. to face drug trafficking charges as a drug cartel leader.



In both countries, military-backed governments push ahead promoting the interests of global resource extraction, hydro-electric dam and for-export companies, forcibly evicting communities and using repression against community, environmental and human rights defenders.

With "democratic allies" like these, who needs violent dictatorships?

By presenting Guatemala and Honduras as "democratic allies" in the illegal, harmful and deadly coup-attempt in Venezuela, the U.S. and Canada are re-creating and re-producing the very conditions of repression, evictions, crime and corruption that force so many Hondurans and Guatemalans to flee.

Predictably, since January 1st alone, 10s of thousands more Hondurans and Guatemalans have fled in refugee caravans or separately, to try and get asylum in the U.S.

What to do?

“There are no magic answers, no miraculous methods to overcome the problems we face, just the familiar ones: search for understanding, education, organization, action ... and the kind of commitment that will persist despite the temptations of disillusionment, despite many failures and only limited successes, inspired by the hope of a brighter future.”

(Noam Chomsky)

Thank-you for your on-going trust in and support for Rights Action’s work:

- funding courageous community / human rights / environmental / territorial defenders in Honduras and Guatemala;
- educating about the fundamental inter-connectedness, local-to-national-to-global, of these issues;
- chipping away at holding U.S. and Canadian governments, companies and investors accountable for how they often contribute to and benefit from systemic exploitation and environmental harm, repression and violence, corruption and impunity in Honduras and Guatemala.

Thank-you for your work and activism in your community and corner of the planet in favor of economic and political models friendly to and respectful of all people, all life forms and Mother Earth.

Grahame Russell
grahame@rightsaction.org



Your donations at work

Organizations, individuals & projects funded by Rights Action, as of March 16, 2019

Each project Rights Action supports is a community/ human rights/ environmental defense struggle that is taking on, directly or indirectly, the global economy, taking on the wealth, corruption and (oftentimes) violence of companies, investors and governments, near and far, in the sectors of mining, dams, African palm, tourism, etc.

GUATEMALA

Community / environment / human rights defense struggles

- La Puya, resisting violent, illegal mining of Kappes, Cassidy & Associates: \$1,045
- CODIDENA (Comision Diocesana Defensa de la Naturaleza), resisting harms and violence linked to Tahoe Resources / Pan American Silver: \$1,650
- Buenavista Maya Achi land claim struggle, before IACHR: \$350
- Q’eqchi’ territorial rights defense committee, resisting harms and repression by CGN mining company, owned by Solway Investment Group (formerly by Skye Resources, Hudbay Minerals)
- Maria Choc, receiving award as woman, indigenous defender: \$260
- Gremial (union) of fisherpeople and campesinos – legal defense and political prisoner support work: \$1,400
- Meetings and preparation work with victims/ plaintiffs in Mynor Padilla criminal trial (former Hudbay/CGN head of security) and Hudbay Minerals lawsuits: \$5,600

Community development

- Lote 8 women, community re-building, education and humanitarian relief: \$3,000
- La Union women’s pig cooperative: \$250
- Truth, Memory, Justice
- Commemoration, Feb.12, 1982, World Bank/IDB’s Chixoy dam/Xococ massacre: \$950

- Commemoration, Mar. 13, 1982, World Bank/IDB's Chixoy dam/Rio Negro massacre: \$780

Emergency responses

- Ramiro Choc, health emergency (diabetes): \$1,800
- German Chub, health support, victim of Hudbay-linked shooting: \$380
- Carlos Ernesto Choc, health emergency support: \$1,200
- Angelica Choc (widow of Hudbay-linked shooting), living-security support: \$3,000

Education

- Rio Negro/Pacux refugee community - primary school, scholarships for children of genocide victims: \$3,900
- San Miguel Ixtahuacan, scholarship, law degree, Mam woman resisting Goldcorp mining harms: \$1,045
- El Estor, scholarships, children of Q'eqchi' community defenders seeking justice for mining harms: \$3,700

Links to articles, interviews, films and video reports addressing community, environmental, human rights defense work that Rights Action is supporting & involved with in Guatemala & Honduras:
<http://rightsaction.org/resources-articles-interviews-films/>

HONDURAS

- Azacualpa community resisting harms, violations, cemetery destruction caused by Aura Minerals: \$700
- ASONOG – study on Aura Minerals harms: \$1,045
- Berta Cáceres family, demanding justice for her assassination: \$2,100
- Commemoration, Mar,2, 2016, assassination of Berta Cáceres: \$870
- OFRANEH (Indigenous-Garifuna & Afro-descendant people's organization): \$2,500
- Refugee support, Felix & Benjamin in Canada: \$2,000

NORTH-SOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS ACCOMPANIMENT, REPORTING & ACTIVISM

- Mining Injustice Solidarity Network: Education and activism related to Canadian mining repression and harms: \$2,000
- Education presentations, Canada/U.S.: \$1,750
- Journalist –SC- transition to Guatemala: \$350

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