

From: Rights Action [info@rightsaction.org]  
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2002 11:01 PM  
To: info@rightsaction.org  
Subject: Death threats against indigenous activists - Rio Negro,  
Guatemala

May 14th

A day to commemorate the Los Encuentros massacre in Guatemala.

A day to call, email, fax, write the World Bank and the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) concerning the Chixoy Dam Massacres.

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For more information, contact:

- Rights Action, Grahame Russell, 416-654-2074, info@rightsaction.org  
- NISGUA, Carrie Ferrence, 202-518-7638, nisgua@igc.org

If you want on/ off this e-list, contact: info@rightsaction.org

For people interested in our "On the Road to Kananaskis - Indigenous to Native" speaking tour across Canada, this urgent action concerns one of our invited speakers. See below.

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On Tuesday, May 14th, activists with NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) and Rights Action will conduct a call-in and write-in day to the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to demand reparations and compensation for the survivors of the Chixoy Dam massacres.

May 14, 1982

Twenty years ago, on May 14, soldiers and civil patrollers entered Los Encuentros, now an archaeological site near the rural, Mayan village of Rio Negro, where many Rio Negro community members had taken refuge (having survived two prior Rio Negro massacres).

Seventy-nine villagers were murdered on the spot, and fifteen women were taken away alive in a helicopter ó their whereabouts are still unknown.

The Los Encuentros massacre was the 3rd of four Rio Negro/ Chixoy Dam massacres, in which over 440 people were murdered.

Rio Negro community members are currently seeking justice for the

crimes committed against themselves and their families, and the wholesale loss and destruction of their homes, property and community, by participating in the genocide cases against ex-dictators Rios Montt and Lucas Garcia.

#### WORLD BANK, IDB and the CHIXOY DAM MASSACRES

Between 1975 and 1985, the World Bank and the IDB made loans to the US-backed military government of Guatemala in support of the Chixoy Dam Project. By channeling \$350,000,000 to such a military regime, and by promoting and continuing with the project during the worst years of state terrorism and genocide, the World Bank and the IDB legitimized the repression.

Between February and September 1982, 440 villagers from Rio Negro were killed in a series of massacres, due to their resistance to being forcibly displaced to make way for the dam. Shortly after the final massacre, the land and now-destroyed community of the Maya-Achi community of Rio Negro was flooded!

The survivors received little of the largely empty promises the government offered for resettlement. Most survivors live today in conditions of endemic poverty; many suffer on-going trauma related to the massacres and forced displacement.

Both the World Bank and the IDB have refused to acknowledge their contributory role in these crimes, initially claiming that the massacres were a result of guerilla activities in Rio Negro! The UN-sponsored Guatemalan Truth Commission (CEH) concluded that the Chixoy Dam Project was a causal factor of the Rio Negro massacres.

By conducting a call-in, concerned citizens and activists will be helping pressure the World Bank and the IDB to acknowledge their contribution to these crimes, and to make proper, and long overdue, compensation and reparations to the surviving family members of the Rio Negro community.

#### ON-GOING REPRESSION AGAINST RIO NEGRO SURVIVORS & HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

We re-produce here a May 10th Amnesty International urgent action, concerning repression and threats against 2 survivors of the Rio Negro massacres, now human rights activists and community leaders. They are getting these threats due to their tireless efforts to have justice done for the crimes and genocide of the past, including efforts to get proper compensation and reparations from the WB and the IDB.

Amnesty International, 10 May 2002 -- Fear for safety / intimidation

GUATEMALA

Jesus Tecu Osorio (m, from Rio Negro)] human rights defender Carlos Chen Osorio (m, from Rio Negro)] human rights defender Pedrina Burrero Lopez (f)] human rights defender Juan de Dios Garcia Xajil (m)] human rights defender

The four people named above work for a non-governmental organisation that is exhuming the clandestine mass graves of people massacred by the army during Guatemala's civil conflict in an area in Baja Verapaz Department inhabited by the Maya-Achi indigenous people. All have been receiving anonymous death threats for some time, but these have suddenly increased, and Amnesty International believes their lives are in danger.

All four work for the Asociacion para el Desarrollo Integral de las Victimas de la Violencia en las Verapaces Maya Achi (ADIVIMA), Association for the Integral Development of Victims of Violence in the Verapaces Maya Achi.

[Note from Rights Action: ADIVIMA has long been funded and otherwise supported by Rights Action.]

Two of those threatened, Jesus Tecu Osorio and Carlos Chen Osorio, are also key witnesses in the CALDH (The Legal Centre for Action in Human Rights) suit for genocide against officials of the administrations of General Romero Lucas Garcia and Efraim Rios Montt, the latter now President of the Guatemalan Congress.

[Note from Rights Action: Carlos Chen will be on an educational speaking tour in Canada, from Toronto to Calgary, during the month of June. For more information, contact Rights Action]

Anonymous threats to the four have been made to the ADIVIMA office, to their homes and mobile phones. The caller threatens to kill them if they continue with their work. Juan de Dios Garcia Xajil was told for example, 'te voy a matar' (I'm going to kill you) and 'te conozco' (I know you), or has had callers simply hang up when he answers. Carlos Chen was told he will be killed unless he stopped pressing for exhumations. On 1 May Pedrina Burrero Lopez received a call in which a funeral march was played. She was asked if she had stopped working for ADIVIMA: if not, the caller said, 'punto y parte' (that's the end of the story). In addition, shots were fired opposite Carlos Chen's home on 1 April, and close to Pedrina Burrero Lopez's home on 2 May.

ADIVIMA has carried out 19 exhumations of clandestine graves in and around the Rabinal municipality, finding remains of 706 people. They estimate a further 61 clandestine cemeteries in the Rabinal area alone.

All four victims have been closely associated with these exhumations. ADIVIMA fears the threats are intended to intimidate them, to stop the

exhumations and their efforts to bring those responsible for the massacres to justice. The threats have been reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Salama, Baja Verapaz, which has been asked to investigate.

This month ADIVIMA is planning two further exhumations in the Vega Santo community, where they expect to find some 20 remains. They also plan exhumations in an education centre in Rabinal, where witness testimony indicates up to 800 massacre victims are buried.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ADIVIMA has experienced death threats and intimidation since its foundation in 1994, but threats have intensified alarmingly since February this year, particularly since 20 April. On 25 February, ADIVIMA demanded that the military detachment in Rabinal be permanently withdrawn, in a written submission to the local office of the Human Rights Procurator. The day before presenting the demand, ADIVIMA members began receiving the threatening calls.

Guatemalan human rights defenders have been experiencing a heightened wave of abuses for almost two years. Many have been threatened, harassed, and intimidated for their efforts to investigate past human rights violations and to bring those responsible to justice. Threats to the Fundacion de Antropologia Forense de Guatemala (FAFG), which gives technical support for the exhumations carried out by ADIVIMA, have also increased over recent months (UA 68/02 issued 5 March 2002 and re-issued 13 March 2002).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Jesus Tecu Osorio, Carlos Chen Osorio, Pedrina Burrero Lopez, Juan de Dios Garcia Xajil and other ADIVIMA workers, and all those involved in legitimate human rights work;
- urging them to immediately investigate all the reported threats against the four ADIVIMA workers, making the results public and bringing those responsible to justice;
- pointing out that the Guatemalan government is obliged to support the work of human rights defenders, referring to the principles in the resolution 'Human Rights Defenders in the Americas' supported by Guatemala and adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of the American States, in Guatemala, in June 1999.

#### APPEALS TO:

Vice-president of the Republic of Guatemala  
Lic. Juan Francisco Reyes Lopez  
6a Avenida 'A' 4-18

Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala  
GUATEMALA  
Telegram: Vicepresidente de la Republica, Ciudad de Guatemala,  
Guatemala  
Fax: 011 502 239 0090 (please keep trying this number)  
Salutation: Dear vice-president/Senor Vicepresidente

Minister of the Interior :  
Eduardo Arevalo Lacs  
Ministro de Gobernacion  
Ministerio de Gobernacion  
6a Avenida 4-64, Zona 4  
Ciudad de Guatemala  
GUATEMALA  
Telegram: Ministro de Gobernacion, Ciudad de Guatemala , Guatemala  
Fax: 011 502 362 0239/ 362 0237  
Salutation: Dear Minister/Senor Ministro

Departmental Police:  
Jefe Comisario 52 David Rodriguez Hernandez,  
Policia Nacional Civil  
Barrio el Centro  
Salama  
Baja Verapaz  
GUATEMALA  
Fax: 011 502 9400 168  
Salutation: Estimado Senor Jefe/Dear Sir

Public Prosecutors Office:  
Fiscal Distrital Nicolaz Garcia Fuentes  
Ministerio Publico  
1 Calle, 3-74 Zona 2,  
Barrio San Jose  
Salama  
Baja Verapaz  
GUATEMALA  
Fax: 011 502 940 2325 (please keep trying)  
Salutation: Estimado Senor/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Rights Action, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org), [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org), tel  
[Canada] 416-654-2074

Ambassador Ariel Rivera Irias  
Embassy of Guatemala  
2220 R St. NW  
Washington DC 20008  
Fax: 1 202 745 1908

[Amnesty International is a worldwide grassroots movement that promotes and defends human rights. Urgent Action Network, Amnesty International USA, PO Box 1270, Nederland CO 80466-1270, Email: uan@aiusa.org, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent/>, Phone: 303 258 1170, Fax: 303 258 7881]

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PHONE, FAX or EMAIL the WORLD BANK & the IDB

Demands:

- 1) compensation for the people of Rio Negro for land, personal and community property lost to the dam;
- 2) reparations for land and personal and community property stolen or destroyed;
- 3) reparations for loss of life and suffering related to the repression;
- 4) reparations for 17 years of lost income due to lack of access to land and personal and communal property;
- 5) reparations for lost family support due to murdered heads of household;
- 6) reparations for psychological damages.

WORLD BANK

James Wolfensohn, President  
The World Bank 1818 H Street NW Washington DC, 20433

Attention to:  
Minneh M. Kane  
[Asst. to the President]  
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Mario Marroquin  
The World Bank, Guatemala City  
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INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Enrique V. Iglesias, President  
Inter-American Development Bank  
1300 New York Ave., NW  
Washington DC, 20577

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Peter Bate, Media Liaison  
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FOR MORE INFORMATION about the Chixoy Dam Project and the Rio Negro  
massacres,

- 1- [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org), or contact: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)
- 2- Obtain a copy of the Witness for Peace report "A People  
Dammed":  
<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/apd.html>
- 3- [www.advocacynet.org](http://www.advocacynet.org)

For more information on the genocide cases against Rios Montt and  
Lucas Garcia, [www.justiceforgenocide.com](http://www.justiceforgenocide.com)

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#### FUNDS NEEDED

To provide tax-charitable donations in Canada and the U.S. for the  
work of ADIVIMA, contact: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org), 416-654-2074, or  
donate  
on-line: [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org).

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