

GUATEMALAN MASSACRE VICTIMS versus WORLD BANK & INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

CHIXOY DAM REPARATIONS CAMPAIGN

Dear friends,

We ask for your urgent support with this Chixoy Dam Reparations Campaign to encourage the active participation of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank in the working group to be set up to negotiate reparations for the communities violently evicted and harmed by the WB and IDB financed Chixoy Dam in Guatemala.

After a peaceful occupation of the Chixoy dam site on September 8, affected communities succeeded in persuading officials from the government and power company to work toward negotiations on providing reparations for damages caused by the construction of Chixoy Dam.

Please sign on to this letter! Please send your name, name of institution and country in order to endorse it. Please send endorsements until Tuesday, September 21, to <monti@irn.org>.

Many thanks for your support. We will keep you posted.

Grahame Russell, Rights Action

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Please re-distribute this information and wide.

If you can make tax-charitable donations for the community development and re-building work of the affected communities, see below.

Please write your own letters and send them to the WB and IDB officials listed below.

If you want on/ off this elist: info@rightsaction.org.

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Guatemala City, Berkeley, Washington DC, September 15, 2004

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn
President
The World Bank
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20433

Mr. Enrique Iglesias
President
The Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20577

Dear Mr. Wolfensohn and Mr. Iglesias,

We are writing to urge the active participation of senior World Bank and the

Inter-American Bank officials in the working group to be set up to negotiate reparations for the communities harmed by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank funded Chixoy dam in Guatemala. The composition and mandate of the working group was established in an agreement signed by on September 8 by representatives of dam-affected communities, the national electricity utility INDE, the Guatemalan Mission of Verification of the UN, and the Ombudsman's Human Rights Office. The latter body will facilitate the working group.

The September 8 agreement states that the working group should be comprised of representatives from the Government of Guatemala, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, INDE, Union Fenosa, and the affected communities. The working group is to begin discussions on a process for providing reparations for past and on-going harms caused by Chixoy dam.

The agreement was signed in response to the occupation of the Chixoy hydroelectric facility by over 2000 Mayan-Achí villagers who had been forcibly displaced by the dam in the 1980s. The signing of the agreement led to the villagers calling off their peaceful occupation after 29 hours.

We have been working closely with the Chixoy-affected communities for many years and are currently nearing completion of a comprehensive report documenting the consequential damages of dam construction and their reparation needs. This report will be shared with both Banks upon completion and will be an important contribution to the negotiations process.

As you are aware, nearly 450 people, mainly women and children from the community of Río Negro, were massacred in the early 1980s because they peacefully resisted evictions to make way for the dam. In the years since the dam was completed, the massacre survivors from Río Negro and the people from neighboring communities have lived in conditions of appalling poverty, violent repression, and psychological trauma. Housing is substandard; inadequate replacement land has produced widespread hunger; downstream villages are flooded without warning by dam releases; and the lack of a bridge or reliable boats has cut off access to communal lands.

The institution responsible for implementing resettlement and other compensatory agreements, INDE, has been privatized in a process facilitated by the World Bank. The new private power companies have refused to recognize prior agreements to provide free electricity to the displaced villagers. The resettlement village of Pacux has now had its electricity cut off because it could not afford to pay its bills. Because their water supply depends on electric pumps, the loss of power means that the people of Pacux have also lost their access to potable water. In short, people lack the means to enjoy their basic rights to food, water, health and livelihood.

Mr. Presidents we urge you to use your powers to ensure that the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank take an active and constructive role in this unprecedented opportunity to address the legacy issues of the Chixoy Dam.

Sincerely,

Rights Action
International Rivers Network [IRN]
Reform the World Bank - Italy
Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions [COHRE]

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CONTACT ADDRESSES:

-- WORLD BANK

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-- INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

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TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS in the USA and Canada:

To support community re-building efforts of Chixoy dam-affected communities,
make your check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

USA: Rights Action, 1830 Connecticut Av, NW, Washington DC, 20009.
CANADA: Rights Action, 509 St. Clair Av, W. box73527, Toronto ON, M6C-1C0.

To come on an educational delegation to Guatemala or to become a human
rights accompanier in the region, please -1- get on our elist and -2-
contact RA: 416-654-2074, info@rightsaction.org.

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INTERVIEWS

For interviews concerning the Chixoy Dam/ Rio Negro massacres Reparations Campaign, contact Rights Action: Grahame Russell. Tel: (416) 654-2074, info@rightsaction.org.

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