

October 18, 2004

MEDIA RELEASE:

GUATEMALA: JUSTICE ??? FOR VICTIMS OF THE RÏO NEGRO MASSACRES

Since 1995, ADIVIMA has been a major community development and human rights partner group of Rights Action. We are proud to send out this information about their on-going work to build the rule of law in a country long dominated by power abuse and impunity, even as repression is a constant possibility and reality. If you want on-off this elist: info@rightsaction.org

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[En espanol, mas abajo]

PRONOUNCEMENT of ADIVIMA (adivima@yahoo.com) - Association for the Integral Development of Victims of Violence in the Verapaces, Maya Achì:

[Translated in solidarity with Rights Action by Rosalind M. Gill, RGill@glendon.yorku.ca, School of Translation, York University]

During the conflict, the village of Rïo Negro, in the Municipality of Rabinal, department of Baja Verapaz, suffered 5 massacres, which were carried out by the Army and Civil Defense Patrols from Xococ, under the governments of Lucas Garcìa and Efraìn Rïos Montt.

The largest massacres were carried out on February 13, 1982, in which 73 (mainly) men lost their lives, and on March 13, 1982, in which 107 children and 70 women died and the village was destroyed, the remaining children orphaned and the surviving women widowed.

Subsequently, surviving children were forced into slavery; others took refuge in the mountains to save their lives, living in misery, persecution, inhuman conditions, exposed to the rain and the sun, suffering from hunger and thirst, and faced with the injustice of being expelled from their own land for the sole reason that they are poor and indigenous. These people were brutally massacred so that the Chixoy Hydroelectric Dam project (funded by the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank) could begin

operations.

These events deserve justice and an explanation from the material and intellectual authors of these massacres, as well as from the state of Guatemala; and this can only happen if the silence is broken, impunity is no longer tolerated and demands are made that the laws of the country and the international treaties and conventions ratified by Guatemala be respected. In this way, we will achieve justice, forgiveness, Reconciliation and peace.

After a ten-year struggle for justice, the Sentencing Tribunal of Baja Verapaz has declared 9AM, October 19, 2004, as the official time for the Public Trial on the issue of the third massacre in Río Negro, or the events which occurred on March 13, 1982.

We therefore call upon Human Rights Organizations, the National and International Press, brothers and sisters and victims of the internal conflict to accompany us, to ensure that there is transparency in the proceedings of the Public Trial, to obtain justice and sentencing of those who carried out the Río Negro massacre and to speak out against impunity.

Yours Sincerely, ADIVIMA

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JUSTICIA POR LAS MASACRES DE RIO NEGRO

La historia violenta de Guatemala, no concluye sin ninguna explicación de las masacres de nuestros familiares y de nuestras comunidades. Durante el conflicto armado interno, la aldea Río Negro del Municipio de Rabinal Baja Verapaz, sufrió 5 masacres, ejecutados por el Ejército Nacional y Patrulleros de Autodefensa Civil de Xococ, del mismo municipio; bajo el gobierno de Lucas García y Efraín Ríos Montt.

Las masacres de gran magnitud son las ejecutadas el 13 de febrero del año de 1,982 donde perdieron la vida 73 hermanos y la masacre del 13 de marzo de 1,982 en donde se murieron 107 niños y 70 mujeres, en la cual dejaron

la aldea destruida, con niños y niñas huérfanos y viudas. A la que posteriormente, los niños sobrevivientes fueron sometidos a la esclavitud y otros se refugiaron en montañas, salvándose la vida, en miseria, en persecución, en condiciones inhumanas, bajo la lluvia, sol, aguantando hambre y sed, ante la injusticia de ser despojado de sus propias tierras, por el hecho de ser pobres e indígenas, en la que brutalmente fueron masacrados para iniciar sus operaciones el proyecto conocido como Hidroeléctrica Chixoy (financiado por el Banco Mundial y el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo).

Estos acontecimientos merece justicia y una explicación de parte de los autores materiales e intelectuales de las masacres, así como el Estado de Guatemala; que sólo se obtendrá mediante el rompimiento del silencio y la intolerancia de la impunidad, exigiendo el cumplimiento de las leyes del país y de los tratados y convenios internacionales ratificados por Guatemala, para alcanzar la justicia, el perdón, la Reconciliación y la paz.

Durante la lucha de más de diez años en busca de la justicia, El Tribunal de Sentencia de Baja Verapaz, ha señalado el día 19 de Octubre de 2004, a las 9:00 horas, para celebrar el Debate de Juicio Oral y Público, del caso de la tercera masacre de Río Negro, o sea el ocurrido el 13 de marzo de 1982, por lo que CONVOCAMOS a: Organizaciones de Derechos Humanos, prensa Nacional e Internacional, hermanos y hermanas víctimas del conflicto armado interno, para que nos acompañen para la observancia en la transparencia del desarrollo del Debate Público, para obtener la justicia y condena contra los responsables materiales de la masacre de Río Negro, y pronunciarse contra la impunidad.

Atentamente.

ADIVIMA (Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las Víctimas de la Violencia en las Verapaces, Maya Achi). adivima@yahoo.com

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RIGHTS ACTION, with its main office in Guatemala, is tax-charitable NGO that supports community development work in Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, Nicaragua, and engages in north-south education and work related to global development and human rights issues.

CONTACT US:

- to come to Central America on a fact-finding educational delegation
- to be a community development and human rights accompanier in Guatemala

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