

OJ K'ASLIK

(MEANS "WE ARE ALIVE" IN THE MAYA-ACHI LANGUAGE)

Rights Action forwards this email, in commemoration of the victims and survivors of the March 13, 1982, massacre of 177 women and children from the Maya-Achi village of Rio Negro, department of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala.

Since 1994, we have been honored to work with and support the victims and survivors of the Rio Negro massacres (4 in 1982, that killed over 440 villagers), who are protagonists in telling the truth about the atrocities and genocide of the past, of seeking truth for these crimes, and for building a different Guatemala and a different global order.

The work and struggles of the victims-survivors-protagonists of Rio Negro have served as an example for many communities throughout Rabinal and Guatemala and have taught us, in Rights Action, much in how we should and do work. We look forward to many years more of work with the people of Rio Negro and Rabinal.

HOW TO SUPPORT the projects and organizations of the people of Rio Negro and Rabinal: see below.

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From: Emilie Smith [mailto:emilietsmith@hotmail.com]

REMEMBERING THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF RIO NEGRO, RABINAL, GUATEMALA, AND ALL OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS AND MARTYRS OF THAT PRECIOUS AND SPIRIT-FILLED EARTH

On March 13, 1982, the Guatemalan military and civilian security forces, launched an attack on a small village in the mountains of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. Rio Negro was a small, Achi-Maya community of corn-farmers and weavers.

Unfortunately Rio Negro stood in the way of a massive hydro-electric dam that was to be built on the river flowing through their land.

[RA: The Chixoy hydro-electric dam was a project of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.]

This particular situation arose during the generalized "national security" campaign which was to eliminate any opposition to the military and economic elite of Guatemala, a campaign which would end in the genocide of Maya people. The UN Commission that later investigated these crimes estimates that over 200,000 people were killed. [RA: More than 50,000 were disappeared]

In Rio Negro, the tragedy was carried out in two phases. One month earlier, the men of Rio Negro were called to a neighbouring community. There they were killed: 73 of them. But even more horrific was March 13.

All of the surviving men had fled the village. No one believed that the women and children would be attacked. But on that terrible afternoon, 107 children and 70 women were cruelly murdered. Only three women escaped and 18 children, who were taken away by the murderers and forced to work for them in their homes and fields.

Many years later, most of the remains of the women and children of Rio Negro were recovered, and now lie in the Maya cemetery in Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, near to the community where the survivors from all the massacres in the region were forcibly resettled.

To this date no high level officials have been tried or jailed – that is the case with the Rabinal massacres, and the other 600 massacres that occurred in Guatemala. The former village of Rio Negro is under water.

This day, I would like to remember the women and children of Rio Negro, Rabinal, and all the Holy Innocents and Martyrs of Guatemala, whose spirits did not die, but stand as testimony to the unquenchable power of Life and to Human Dignity. May their deaths inspire us to greater acts of love and compassion, standing with one another in solidarity. Women, men and children of Guatemala, presente!

BELOW IS A LIST OF THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO DIED IN RIO NEGRO:

Enriqueta Chen Iboy, Antonio Chen Iboy, Alberta Iboy Sanchez, Juan Iboy Sanchez, Huwaldo Iboy Sanchez, Ishmael Iboy Sanchez, Cesario Osorio Iboy, Silberia Osorio Iboy, Irma Osorio Iboy, Santiago Iboy Osorio, Emilio Sic Chen, Gilberto Sic Chen, Micaela Osorio Osorio, Emilio Perez Osorio, Adelia Osorio Iboy, Juana Iboy Sanchez, Paulina Chen Tecu, Santa Eduarda Chen Chen, Felisa Tum Osorio, Dorotea Sanchez Osorio, Juan Chen Tecu, Catarino Chen Tecu, Marcelo Tecu Osorio, Anastacio Tecu Osorio, Jaime Tecu Osorio, Maria Tum Osorio, Tum Anibal Osorio, Alfredo Sanchez Sic, Mario Sanchez Sic, Miguel Angel Perez Chen, Carmelina Cuxum Lajuj, Maria Salome Cuxum Sanchez, Maria Chen Sanchez, Martin Lajuj Sanchez, Matilde Osorio Chen, Arnulfo Osorio Chen, Benedicto Osorio Chen, Pablo Osorio Sanchez, Basilio Osorio Sanchez, Nicolas Osorio Sanchez, Santos Sanchez Lopez, Francisco Sanchez Lopez, Herlinda Lajuj Iboy, Ricardo Chen Osorio, Margarita Chen Tecu, Siriacca Chen Tecu, Sabina Tecu Osorio, Dominga Tecu Osorio, Tomasa Tecu Osorio, Anastacia Tecu Sanchez, Cristina Tecu Sanchez, Patrocinio Tecu De Leon, Tomas Cuxum Lajuj, Estefana Tecu De Leon, Jesus Tecu De Leon, Juliana Uscap Chen, Javier Chen Uscap, Jose Chen Uscap, Hortencia Uscap Teletor, Jesusa Sanchez Perez, Candelaria Perez Osorio, Demetrio Osorio Iboy, Maria Teresa Osorio Iboy, Petronila Osorio Iboy, Anastacia Osorio Iboy, Marcela Osorio Iboy, Vicenta Tecu Sanchez, Gregorio Chen Sanchez, Eulalia Chen Osorio, Delfina Chen Osorio, Andelez Chen Osorio, Rosendo Sic Ruiz, Tomasa Osorio Chen, Irma Cahuec Osorio, Juana Osorio Sanchez, Elena Osorio Chen, Luis Osorio Chen, Magdalena Osorio Chen, Joaquina Osorio Mendoza, Lucia Osorio Mendoza, Arcadio Sanchez Gonzales, Reginaldo Sanchez Gonzales, Celestina Sanchez Gonzales, Reginaldo Sanchez Gonzales, Celestina Sanchez Gonzales, Victoria Osorio Sic, Francisco Sic Sanchez, Pablo Sic Sanchez, Silberia Sic Sanchez, Narcisa Chen Osorio, Leocadio Tun Sanchez, Eusebio Chen Lopez, Francisco Sanchez Lopez, Adelia Osorio Iboy, Emiliana Osorio Alvarado, Juan Osorio Alvarado, Evaristo Alvarado, Chen Gavina Osorio, Pablo Chen Ismalej, Bonifacio Lopez Osorio, Francisco Iboy Sic, Micaela Osorio Osorio, Raymanda Sanchez Sanchez, Hector Lobez Osorio, Crispina Tecu Chen, Juana Tum Sanchez, Anastasia Cuxum Lajuj, Juana Cuxum Lajuj, Paulina Iboy Osorio, Dominga Sanchez Chen, Dorotea Osorio Chen, Marcela Iboy Osorio, Juliana Osorio Osorio, Juana Iboy Osorio, Guillerma Osorio Chen, Nazaria Tum Sanchez, Luisa Osorio Sanchez, Vicent Iboy Chen, Narcisa

Chen Chen, Francisca Sanchez Chen, Catalina Iboy Sanchez, Demetria Osorio Lajuj, Paulina Chen Tecu, Francisca Sanchez Chen, Petrolina Chen Sanchez, Gregoria Alvarado Gonzales, Siriaca Osorio Osorio, Tranquilina Osorio Chen, Maria Del Rosario Osorio Chen, Juana Tecu Osorio, Juana Tum Sanchez, Pedrina Osorio Perez, Tomasa Osorio Chen, Gavina Sic Siana, Vicenta Chen, Juana Osorio Chen, Vicenta Lajuj Chen, Clementina Osorio, Toribia Cuxum Osorio, Ineza Sanchez Iboy, Lucia Sanchez Iboy, Maria Chen Sanchez, Margarita Sanchez, Alejandra Osorio Chen, Rosa Sanchez Osorio, Tomasa Lopez Ixpata, Dominga Iboy Chen, Margarita Chen Tecu, Dominga Chen, Juana Osorio Chen, Angela Sanchez Chen, Iginia Chen Ixpata, Margarita Chen Uscap, Eugenia Iboy Osorio, Eligio Iboy Osorio, Carmela Osorio Osorio, Juana Perez, Paula Cajuec, Juliana Iboy Sanchez, Narcisa Osorio Lopez, Eulalia Chen Osorio, Justa Osorio Sic, Sin Valeriana, Magdalena Ruiz, Marta Julia Chen Osorio, Felipa Osorio Chen, Isabela Osorio Chen, Juliana Chen Iboy, Pedrina Gonzales Tecu, Julia Sanchez Chen, ManuelaCHen Osorio, Mara Dolores Iboy Osorio, Isabela Sanchez Chen, Andres Iboy Uscap, Matilde Osorio Chen.

QUE DESCANSEN EN PAZ / MAY THEY REST IN PEACE (Oj K'aslik, Estamos Vivos (We are Alive), 234 -236)

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IN RIO NEGRO AND RABINAL, RIGHTS ACTION SEEKS FUNDS FOR ON-GOING PROJECTS:

- an irrigation project for the village of Rio Negro the Chixoy Dam Reparations Campaign, to get, 27 years later (and counting ...)

compensation and reparations from the Guatemalan government, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, for surviving victims of the massacres and forced and violent relocations of 28 indigenous villages in the Chixoy river basin

ADIVIMA, the Association for the Integral Development of Mayan Achi Victims, and their work supporting mass grave exhumations, dignified reburials, the construction of commemorative monuments

the work of ADIVIMA to pursue justice (27 years later, and counting ...) for the massacres and genocide

For a complete proposal, contact Grahame Russell: info@rightsaction.org

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TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

* UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

* CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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Read www.upsidedownworld.org, www.dominionpaper.ca

READ: Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"; Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"; Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"

www.rightsaction.org - Based in Guatemala, Rights Action (with tax-deductible legal status in Canada and USA) funds and works with community-based Indigenous, development, environment and human rights organizations in Guatemala and Honduras, and also in Oaxaca, Chiapas, El Salvador, Peru, Haiti and Nicaragua; and educates about and is involved in activism related to global development, environmental and Indigenous and human rights struggles.

EDUCATIONAL-DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA, APRIL 12-17, 2009 Rights Action is leading an educational trip to Guatemala and the Goldcorp Inc-mining affected regions. To join this delegation and for more information: 1-860-352-2448 , info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org.