

Rights Action  
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## “September 27 ... A Day of Pain”

On September 27, 2009, private security guards in the hire of Hudbay Minerals (via its Guatemalan subsidiary CGN) assassinated Adolfo Ich (a local teacher, father, husband and community leader), shot and left paralyzed German Choc (a young campesino man, father), and wounded numerous others.

### BELOW:

- “September 27 ... A Day of Pain”, by Maria Magdalena Cuc Choc, sister-in-law of Adolfo Ich
- COMMUNIQUE from the Mayan Qeqchi Territorial Defense Committee
- Trailer: “Defensora” documentary film about the Mayan Qeqchi people’s struggles for justice and remedy
- Fund-raising appeal for Mayan Qeqchi Territorial Defense Committee

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## SEPTEMBER 27 ... A DAY OF PAIN

By Maria Magdalena Cuc Choc

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September 27, 2012

(Translated for Rights Action by Rosalind Gill)

I will never forget that day ... I will never forget how I ran all over the place looking for Adolfo Ich. I will never forget how I lost my sandals, running to escape the bullets.



(Maria and her mother, July 2012, Barrio La Union, El Estor. Photo @ Grahame Russell)

I never thought I would ever experience what I did on that day, September 27, 2009. I didn't even notice that my bare feet were full of thorns. All I knew was that people were screaming, crying, and running past me looking for refuge. I just kept running and running, looking for Adolfo.

Bullets flew over our heads and into houses. I thought it was fireworks. But it wasn't. The Canadian mining Company, Hudbay Minerals and its subsidiary, Guatemala Nickel Company, were putting on their own fireworks, killing local residents, innocent campesinos. Bullets kill community leaders in different parts of the world ...

I keep thinking: Why do we have to live with so much injustice in our Guatemala?

Today, our beloved El Estor is grieving the loss of a teacher, a great leader and defender of the rights of the indigenous people. The people of El Estor know about the murder, but they don't ask why he was killed. Who did it and why? What was the motive for this murder?

But I know who committed the murder and why was it was carried out. The person who pulled the trigger on the gun that killed Adolfo Ich Chaman was paid a lot of money by the Nickel Company to protect the interests of Hudbay Minerals. Not only did he murder, he also left people wounded and even handicapped. What evil people they are! Three years after Adolfo's murder, we are living with illness, trauma, fear, terror and persecution. Will we ever be able to live in peace here? No, as far as I can see, it will never happen.

They say we live in a democratic country with a peace accord ... but it is sad to think about how landowners get their power.

All I know is that I had to quickly move my brother-in-law's body away from where it was lying near the entrance to this Canadian company's mine. I checked Adolfo's bleeding body to see if he was still alive and breathing, if his heart was beating. But there was no sign of life. All I could do was find a blanket to wrap him in, take him to his house... and leave the body of the deceased with his wife. You can't imagine what that felt like. All I know is that Adolfo's heart stopped beating at 5.45 that afternoon.

The State of Guatemala does not care about this murder. And neither do they care about punishing the murderers who are also guilty of selling our natural resources. Our governments gave away our homeland ...

Today is the third anniversary of the murder of my brother-in-law, Adolfo. It happened on a Sunday. I continue to struggle for human rights and that is why I am writing this memory of what happened on the day of that murder. I pray for strength from AJAW and our ancestors who inherited this beautiful little corner of the world.

Our struggle does not end here. We are still fighting for justice and freedom and demanding that our ancestral rights be respected.

AAAAHHH, it is not easy, Brothers and Sisters. We will continue our struggle and pray that we will learn to think for ourselves and stop being so obedient ... We need to understand our own struggle and realize why we have been victims of murders like this one.

We demand justice before the law and before our society as a whole. We deserve to live in peace and not to be traumatized. When these demands are met, we will live in complete peace.

As a Qeqchi indigenous woman from this region, I write this with deep sadness.

EL ESTOR, IZABAL

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## **COMMUNIQUE**

**September 27, 2012**

By the Mayan Qeqchi Territorial Defense Committee seeking justice and remedy, in Guatemala and Canada, for the harms and violations they have suffered, over the course of 50 years of nickel mining by INCO, Skye Resources and Hudbay Minerals.

## **IT HAS BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE THE MURDER OF ADOLFO ICH CHAMÁN; IMPUNITY FOR THE MURDERERS CONTINUES**

Today is the third anniversary of the murder of respected Mayan Quechí community leader Adolfo Ich Chamán, who was killed near El Estor, Izabal, Guatemala. On September 27, 2009, Adolfo was attacked with machetes and shot at by private security guards hired by the Guatemalan Nickel Company, a subsidiary of HudBay Minerals, a Canadian mining company.

On that same day, another local resident, German Chub Choc, was wounded by private security guards and left for dead. He survived but is now paralyzed from the waist down.

Adolfo had publicly criticized violations of human rights and environmental damage caused by corporate mining activity in his community, in particular, by the Fenix mine operated by the Guatemala Nickel Company. It has been three years since he was murdered, and despite eye-witness accounts of the crime, a warrant for arrest of Mynor Padilla Gonzalez, Chief of security at the time, has only just been issued. Otherwise, there has been no serious attempt to investigate the murder of Adolfo.

As, well, there has been no attempt at justice in the case of 11 women from the neighbouring community of Lote Ocho who were raped by private security guards, the police and soldiers during a forced eviction on January 17, 2007.

These violent illegal evictions left hundreds of families homeless after their houses and crops were burned, in full violation of international human rights standards.

Today is a day, not only to place the murder of Adolfo Ich Chamán in a wider context of criminalization and attacks against those who defend their land against the invasion of corporate mining companies but also a day to mark the irreparable loss Adolfo's death represents for his community, his children and his wife, Angelica Choc.

Today we will hold a public commemoration with all the local communities to denounce the murder of Adolfo Ich Chamán, the shooting of German Chub Choc and the rape of 11 of our women.

We will demonstrate that we will never forget or stop our struggle for justice in these cases.

We therefore demand:

1. that the Public Ministry pursue its investigation of the murder of Adolfo Ich Chamán, of events that led to his murder and establish the identity of the material and intellectual authors of this crime.

2. that the Public Ministry pursue its investigation until justice has been achieved for the violent and illegal evictions of 2007, during which 11 women of Lote Ocho were raped.
3. that the Public Ministry pursue its investigation until justice is achieved in the case of the shooting of German Chub Choc.
4. that the CICIG (International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala) intervene in the case to ensure that an investigation is carried out and that justice is achieved.
5. that transnational mining companies respect the rights of indigenous peoples to have prior, free, and informed consultation and recognize that we are the legitimate owners of our land.
6. that the Guatemalan government guarantee the security of the family of Adolfo Ich Chamán, the security of the Mayan Qeqchi community of El Estor, the security of all defenders of human rights in Guatemala, especially those who are defending their land, their right to their land and the rights of indigenous peoples.

September 29, 2012  
El Estor, Guatemala

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### **Forthcoming Film – DEFENSORA**

Watch 5 minute trailer: <http://www.indiegogo.com/defensora>

“Defensora” documents the Mayan Qeqchi people's struggle, in eastern Guatemala, to reclaim their ancestral lands, to promote community development and environmental well-being, and to seek justice and remedy for the murder, shootings and rapes committed against them by Canadian mining companies in Guatemala.

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### **DONATE (TAX-DEDUCTIBLE in Canada and the U.S.)**

To support the courageous and on-going community development, environmental defense and human rights work of the Mayan Qeqchi Territorial Defense Committee, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887  
CANADA: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS can be made (in Canada and U.S.):

<http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>

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### **Comments / questions:**

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