

Rights Action
April 14, 2014

Gilberta Tun Osorio, a Child of the Chixoy Dam Massacres and Forced Evictions, Is Detained in the USA

Below: Yet another letter to the WB and IADB concerning the on-going violations and suffering of the surviving victims of the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacres. Please email or mail your own letter to the WB and IDB (address info below). Thank-you.

Please share and re-distribute this information ...

April 14, 2014

Mr. Luis Alberto Moreno, President
Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20577 USA
Fax: (1 202) 623-3096

Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President
World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA
Fax: (1 202) 477-6391

To Whom It May Concern:

The nightmare living conditions of the Chixoy Dam/ Rio Negro massacre survivors continues.



(Chixoy hydro-electric dam wall, along the Chixoy river, also known as the Rio Negro, at the three corners of the departments of Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz and Quiche.)

Though 32 years have passed since this 'picturesque' dam wall was built, the on-going suffering of the survivors of the Chixoy Dam development project is due, in large part, to the impunity and immunity from accountability that your banks abuse, and to the fact that your banks have not ensured that the Government of Guatemala release the \$154 million agreed upon got the Chixoy Dam Reparations Plan.

As your banks know, most of the Chixoy Dam massacre survivors – and children and grand-children - live in miserable conditions in Pacux, a tiny neighborhood on the edge of Rabinal. Their lives are characterized by:

- Extreme poverty and virtually no decent employment
- No land
- No regular water source for personal or irrigation use
- No decent basic services in health, education, sports, culture
- Gang-related violence
- Family breakdown

... all of which result in desperate conditions for most inhabitants.

Two Short Films

- Poverty in Pacux: 30 Years and Counting, a 4 minute film by Rachel Schmidt (2012): <http://vimeo.com/52439128>
- Chixoy Dam Massacres and Evictions: No Reparations, No Justice, No Peace, a 16 minute film by Lazar Konforti (2012): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF3YI7XMNEE&feature=youtu.be>

Gilberta Tun Osorio, a Child of Massacre Victims, Is Detained in USA

Gilberta Tun Osorio grew up in Rio Negro and is a survivor and orphan of the four Chixoy Dam/ Rio Negro massacres. Her father was killed February 12, 1982, in Xococ (the first massacre); her mother was killed March 13, 1982, in Rio Negro (the second massacre).

Desperate, she finally left her three children with her sister, to go to the USA to try and work and send money home. She has been detained for over 45 days already. Support is needed for her children and to help provide her legal support in the USA.

Gilberta's story is one more "development success story" of your banks.

Stop pretending that 'your hands are tied'. Stop pretending this is the sole responsibility of the Government of Guatemala. These stories of suffering and on-going violation will simply not end. At a bare minimum, the \$154 million agreed upon must be released, so that the Chixoy Dam Reparations Plan can begin to be implemented and the survivors – eye-witnesses, children, grand-children – can finally have a small chance of re-building their lives.

Grahame Russell

info@rightsaction.org

April 2014 Funding Appeal ~ Pacux Emergency Support Fund

Emergency support, justice and reparations needed for Mayan Achi survivors of the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacres

This year to date, we have channeled your donations and grants to partner community organizations, mainly in Honduras and Guatemala, that are documenting and resisting environmental harms and human rights violations caused by global economic actors (mining companies, hydro-electric dams, tourism enclaves, garment 'sweatshop' factories', etc), and that are telling the truth about and seeking justice for the war crimes and human rights violations of the past and present.

- **Funding Summary:** Groups, projects and struggles we have supported, January-March 2014, with your funds: <http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/your-funds-work-january-march-2014>

In our quarterly newsletters, we rarely ask for donations for a particular struggle for truth and justice, for any particular harmed community. However, some situations of harm and violation are more egregious than others. The living conditions of hundreds of Mayan Achi families living in squalor, oppression and on-going trauma in the Pacux neighborhood of Rabinal are one such over-the-top crisis situation.

Perfect Storm: 'Cold War' Repression, Exploitation, Racism and "Development"

During the worst years of U.S. backed repression in Guatemala, 100s of villages were victims of "scorched earth" massacres. This is well-documented in the 1999 United Nations "Truth Commission" report and 1998 Catholic Church "REHMI" report. All told, over 250,000 Guatemala civilians were massacred, assassinated and disappeared; hundreds of villages were destroyed; over 1,000,000 Guatemalans were displaced from land and home. A majority of victims were Mayan.

In at least four regions of the country, the military carried out genocides against the local Mayan peoples. Rabinal, millennial home to the Mayan Achi people, was one of those regions. At the same that the military was destroying villages and massacring people in Rabinal, the World Bank (WB) and Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) invested \$100s of millions in an enormous hydro-electric "development" project along the Chixoy river.

The WB and IADB chose to do business in a very bad situation, invested \$100s of millions directly to the military regimes, made the situation in along the Chixoy river much worse, and, years later, profited financially from their investments.

To make way for the hydro-electric project, 25 Mayan communities up the Chixoy river from the dam wall had to be partially or completely relocated. The project partners – WB, IADB and successive military regimes – never consulted with the communities who had inhabited the Chixoy river basin area going back as much as 1000 years.

The "development" project was imposed with unimaginable violence. Rio Negro was the village that most articulately and peacefully opposed being illegally and forcibly relocated. In response, the military, and armed guards hired by the project, carried out four large-scale massacres against the village of Rio Negro in 1982. In all, some 444 villagers – women, men, young, old – were slaughtered.



(Mayan ceremony, Pacux neighborhood, for victims of the Los Encuentros massacre, the 3rd of 4 Chixoy Day/Rio Negro massacres.)

The massacres were the “relocation”.

Survivors from Rio Negro, and people from the other villages fled their homes and lands along the Chixoy river basin. In 1983, the Banks and military regime in power completed the dam wall and flooded the river valley.

Development project completed.

In many ways, the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacres were as devastating, brutal and criminal as hundreds of massacres committed in the late 1970s, 80s and early 90s. Since 1995, Rights Action has supported many communities victimized by massacres, as they work to rebuild lives and community well-being, while seeking truth, justice and reparations for the crimes of the past.

Poverty and Despair in Pacux

In other ways, the situation of the surviving victims is worse. The survivors of only 16 families have been able to return to their home community of Rio Negro – most of the original community, and all of the best lands now lie under the flood basin waters of the Dam. With your support, Rights Action has over the years funded a number of projects: water for human use and irrigation; primary school; land legalization; community historic center; local micro-businesses; commemorative monuments and ceremonies.

However, the majority of the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacre survivors live today in ghetto-like conditions in the neighborhood of Pacux, on the outskirts of Rabinal. Pacux was built in the 1970s by the genocidal regime of General Lucas Garcia as a “model village” where massacre survivors were forced to live under the control of the military. For years after the massacres, the surviving Rio Negro men were regularly detained and tortured; surviving women and girls were detained and raped.

1. Poverty in Pacux: 30 Years and Counting, a 4 minute film by Rachel Schmidt (2012): <http://vimeo.com/52439128>
2. Chixoy Dam Massacres and Evictions: No Reparations, No Justice, No Peace, a 16 minute film by Lazar Konforti (2012): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF3YI7XMNEE&feature=youtu.be>

Over the past 32 years, the surviving family members, including many orphans, have survived and grown up in absolute poverty, torn from families, grand-parents, lands and home. Today, the lives of the Rio Negro survivors in Pacux are characterized by: endemic poverty; no access to adequate land, water, housing, education, or health services; inter-community divisions and violence; gang violence.

It has become a permanent situation of poverty, desperation and latent if not open violence.

Advocacy for Truth, Memory and Justice

Despite these conditions, the Chixoy Dam survivors have succeeded, through years of courageous struggle, in:

- having the truth told about all they suffered and lost
- having the Inter-American Court of Human Rights find the government of Guatemala responsible for the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro massacres, and obliged to pay reparations
- having the government of Guatemala accept its responsibility for the illegal and violent loss of land, home, property and livelihood of the Chixoy Dam harmed communities, including Rio Negro, and commit to providing \$154,000,000 for a comprehensive Reparations Plan
- having the U.S. government pass a law obliging the WB and IADB ensure the implementation of the Reparations Plan

It took 32 years for the Chixoy Dam/Rio Negro survivors to achieve all this ... and still nothing!

The government of Guatemala, led by former military General (and alleged war criminal) Otto Perez Molina refuses to comply with the Inter-American Court Sentence and the Chixoy Dam Reparations.

The WB and IADB do effectively nothing to ensure implementation of the Reparations Plan; the governments of the U.S. and Canada continue with business and politics as usual with the Guatemala regime.

The situation in Pacux is bleak.

The Chixoy Dam massacres survivors need support, both to survive and get by in the short term, and to achieve the pressure necessary to force the government of Guatemala, the WB and the IADB to do the right thing and comply with the Court Sentence and Reparations Plan.

Pacux Emergency Support Fund

Please help us to continue to channel funds to the families of Pacux and their human rights groups (Adivima, Cocahich, Legal Aid Clinic), both to respond to their on-going emergency situation and to support their struggle for justice and reparations.

- Education: Scholarships for children and grand-children of the survivors
- Emergency health services for the most sick

- Pacux sustainable agriculture/floricultura project
- Justice and Reparations: Organizing and mobilizing work to ensure compliance with the Chixoy Dam Reparations Plan and Sentence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

[* Upon request, I can provide a full proposal and budget to donor institutions.]

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support the Pacux Emergency Support fund, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

1. United States: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
2. Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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

Emails – WB

dtheis@worldbank.org, astilwell@worldbank.org, sstegeman@worldbank.org, ncieslik@worldbank.org, msheikh1@worldbank.org, egex@worldbank.org, sjouy@worldbank.org, berlin@worldbank.org, glaryea@worldbank.org, vjacobs@worldbank.org, infobrussels@worldbank.org, bgielis@worldbank.org, Sjackson2@worldbank.org, dwarren1@worldbank.org, londonoffice@worldbank.org, rjones1@worldbank.org, vchevalier@worldbank.org, ldepetiville@worldbank.org, jkopperud@worldbank.org, cdoody@worldbank.org, jkopperud@worldbank.org, mpaolucci@worldbank.org, jbarrera@worldbank.org, cmoreira@worldbank.org, psoto@worldbank.org, thirai@worldbank.org, ybeejadhur@worldbank.org, msaleson@worldbank.org, csantospianesi@worldbank.org, hboh@worldbank.org, chanlon@worldbank.org, akircher1@worldbank.org, kschrader@worldbank.org, sjackson@worldbank.org, dlautenbach@worldbank.org, nyamouri@worldbank.org, bcrow@worldbank.org, mtuckprimdahl@worldbank.org, vkanchi@worldbank.org, phay@worldbank.org, creynolds@worldbank.org, mhermoso@worldbank.org, mmayhew1@worldbank.org, gchopra@worldbank.org, delnaggar@worldbank.org, Jbassat@worldbank.org, rjones1@worldbank.org, nsghannam@ifc.org, fparedes@worldbank.org, cjaramillo@worldbank.org

Emails – IADB

iicmail@iadb.org, mifcontact@iadb.org, Pabloro@iadb.org; alejandrof@iadb.org; JOSET@iadb.org; HUGOU@iadb.org, pbachelet@iadb.org, mildredr@iadb.org, peterb@iadb.org, paulc@iadb.org, hflores@iadb.org, mayah@iadb.org, gadorm@iadb.org, rominan@iadb.org, mildredr@iadb.org, alejandral@iadb.org, nevardoa@iadb.org, claudiae@iadb.org, BIArgentina@iadb.org, camilled@iadb.org, annekej@iadb.org, Mdotazu@iadb.org, janainag@iadb.org, jdelacerda@factorc.cl, viviann@iadb.org, mleon@iadb.org, germana@iadb.org, marcon@iadb.org, ealmeida@iadb.org, dorotheal@iadb.org, dianacha@iadb.org, fchirinos@chisac.com, riaj@iadb.org, emilianos@iadb.org, joelb@iadb.org, cmartin@iadb.org, MGREWE@iadb.org, consuelof@iadb.org, jhaley@iadb.org

- To get on/off our listserv: www.rightsaction.org
- Follow us on facebook: www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org
- Please Share, re-post and re-publish this information
