

RELEASED from arbitrary detention: María Cuc, sister of Angelica Choc and Ramiro Choc

<http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/released-from-arbitrary-detention-mara-cuc-sister-of-angelica-choc-and-ramiro-choc>



(Maria, released from jail in Puerto Barrios, stands with two of her sisters, including Angelica Choc.)

Maria Cuc was released from her illegal detention, on the afternoon of Friday January 19. She was obliged to post a Q5,000 bail; will have to appear in court once a month, over next 6 months; is forbidden from leaving her home department of Izabal; the court will carry out a criminal investigation into the trumped up charges that were laid against her.

The System: *As the U.S. and Canadian governments and North American business and investor interests (dams, mining, African palm, tourism, cattle, fruits, ...) maintain profitable relations with the corrupt, repressive government of Guatemala, turning a blind eye to repression, human rights violations, corruption and impunity; that same government uses repression against its own people who are suffering repression and human rights violations caused by the business and investor interests; and then the victims of the repression and violations have to spend time and resources (they don't have) – often supported by activist and concerned citizens from the U.S. and Canada – to remedy and respond to the harms and violations committed against by the government on behalf of the business and investor interests.*

Rights Action sent initial emergency response funds to Maria's family, and will support her over the next months as she is forced to spend time and money defending herself from the false charges laid by the government in the corrupted legal system.

Thank-you for your involvement and support.
Stay tuned.
Grahame Russell

(January 17, 2018, El Estor, Izabal)

Who is Maria?

María is a widely respected community leader of the Maya Q'eqchi' peoples in eastern Guatemala; is the sister of Angelica and Ramiro Choc; and the sister-in-law of the late Adolfo Ich, murdered in 2009 by the private security agents of Hudbay Minerals and CGN.

Besides being well known throughout Guatemala for her courage and vision, Maria is well known in Canada. Since 2004, she has played, alongside sister Angelica, a vital role in documenting and denouncing environmental harms, human rights violations and repression caused by a series of legally-connected Canadian mining companies (Skye Resources, HMI Nickel Inc., Hudbay Minerals). In 2009, Adolfo Ich – Angelica's husband, Maria's brother-in-law – was assassinated as part of the community, environmental, human rights defense struggle of the Mayan Q'eqchi' people.

Maria has worked particularly closely with the remote, mountain community of Lote 8 that was burned and destroyed in 2007 as part of an illegal eviction on behalf of the Canadian companies. During the destruction and eviction, 11 women were gang-raped by company security guards, soldiers and police. After working closely with the Lote 8 rape victims, for years, Maria accompanied some of them to Canada in 2012 as they participated in the precedent setting lawsuits against Hudbay Minerals, for the gang-rapes, the killing of Adolfo Ich and the shooting paralyzing of German Chub.



(Maria Cuc, supporting and working with the Q'eqchi' women from Lote 8 who had been raped by police, soldiers and private security guards of Hudbay Minerals during an illegal and violent eviction.)

Furthermore, Maria's brother – Ramiro – is a widely respected community defender who was illegally jailed as a political prisoner from 2008-2014 on trumped up charges.

January 17, 2018: Without an arrest warrant against her, María was captured on January 17, 2018, at 1:00pm in the city of Puerto Barrios where she had been accompanying the Q'eqchi' community of Rubel Pek in a legal hearing they are involved with, acting as an interpreter/translator from Spanish into their native Q'eqchi'. Following the hearing, she had gone to a bank when she was detained by police. Without being duly notified about the reason for her arrest, she was immediately taken to the local police station.

Maria was detained on trumped up charges related to a community and environmental defense struggle she is involved with in the Livingston municipality – the community of ChaabilChoch -, along with her brother Ramiro. It is suspected that police might try and detain him as well.

What to do?

Send expressions of solidarity to Maria and her family.

Donate funds in the U.S. and Canada, to Rights Action, to help support Maria – over the next months – in this yet another struggle by the (mainly Indigenous) population of Guatemala against repression and human rights violations used by their own government in conjunction with the business, investor interests of the wealthy sectors.

In Canada and the U.S., never stop writing your own elected politicians and government officials, informing them of on-going repression, impunity and corruption in Guatemala carried out by a government that is a strong ally of the U.S. and Canada. The endemic exploitation, poverty and racism, the repression, corruption and impunity of Honduras and Guatemala are 'American' and 'Canadian' issues. The U.S. and Canadian governments, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and North American companies and investors (including pension funds), maintain profitable economic and military relations with the Guatemalan and Honduran regimes, turning a blind eye and/or directly contributing to environmental harms, exploitation, repression, corruption and impunity that force so many to flee their homes and country, decade after decade.

Contact in Guatemala

Maria Cuc, +502 5051 6966 (Whassap)

Angelica Choc, +502 4487-7237 (Whassap)

Contact, in Canada/U.S.

Grahame Russell, Rights Action, info@rightsaction.org, +1-416-807-4436

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

To support the community development, human rights and environmental defense, and emergency relief work of grassroots groups in Honduras and Guatemala working and struggling for justice and fundamental political and economic transformation from the local to national to global levels, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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