

## Angelica Choc's urgent message, denouncing mining violence in El Estor

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/angelica-chocs-urgent-message-denounceing-mining-threats-and-violence-in-el-estor>

In response to a ruling by Guatemala's Constitutional Court ordering Solway Investment Group (and its subsidiary company CGN) to suspend their nickel mining operation, there has been a spasm of mining company violence and threats in El Estor and Mayan Q'eqchi' communities

- Below: Urgent message from Angelica Choc



Angelica and Maria Choc, Rosa Elbira, Cristobal Pop, and other Mayan Q'eqchi' land, human rights and environmental defenders, gathered at Angelica's home, Barrio La Union, El Estor, on July 11, 2019, to meet with a Mayflower UCC congregation-Rights Action delegation investigating the underlying causes of why so many Guatemalans are forced to flee home and country, year after year, decade after decade.

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### From Angelica Choc (Whassap message, July 26, 2019, Barrio La Union, El Estor)

Grahame [of Rights Action], good evening,

I write to share with you a little of what we have been surviving here, during the most recent acts of violence here in El Estor, all of this caused by the mining company Solway Investment Group (Switzerland) and its local subsidiary company CGN (Compania Guatemalteca de Niquel).

Yesterday, one of the "góndolas" – those huge industrial trucks the company use to transport the earth and rock – ran over a local Indigenous Mayan Q'eqchi' man and his son – both were killed instantly.

Local folks were furious, again, and also because Solway/CGN had taken some local leaders – “Cocodes” – to give testimony in the Company’s favor in the lawsuits challenging the validity of Solway/CGN’s underlying mining license, dating back to 2006.

So, what with the legal challenge to the validity of their mining license and the court order to suspend their mining operation, we are again living terror and fear in our communities and families.

For me, my family, my children living through this – it feels again like this is a war that the company its private security are doing against my community. They have been shooting their guns just so much. Bullets were flying over my community of La Union, by my home where I am with my children. We threw ourselves on the ground. My grand-children were shouting – ‘Mama, they are going to kill us.’ I said ‘No, children, but we need to stay together here.’ We were hugging one another, crying, suffering.

Around 9pm, July 25, a caravan of vehicles drove into La Union, on the here on the edge of El Estor. We were afraid. It was like this that Hudbay Minerals/CGN’s ‘hitmen’ (private security guards) entered our community when they killed my husband Adolfo [Ich] on September 27, 2009. Now again a caravan of vehicles drove right to the spot where he was killed.

At 10pm, another caravan of luxury vehicles drove on the little dirt road right by my house. We passed the entire night in fear.

Early this morning [July 26], there was flurry of shooting on our community soccer field, in front of my house, where German Chub was shot by Hudbay/CGN’s ‘hitmen’ on September 27, 2009, just before they killed my husband.

All this shooting has been so terrifying. I shouted at my children to hit the ground again. Everyone was shouting. My animals in the yard were running around like crazy. My god. I am suffering deep anxiety, but I can’t go to my doctor. I am afraid of leaving my house and Community.

Family and community members gathered in my home. I told them I needed to get out of El Estor. They told me no, don’t leave us. We will be watching out for you.

It is so sad to see my people, my children crying, my own children ... I feel weak and don’t have the strength I need.

Today, around 2pm, helicopters came again and were flying low over La Union. Honestly Grahame, we are living through times just like the attacks of 2009.

I write this at night. Now, all is sad and silent. Everyone is hunkered down in their homes. There are so many police, soldiers, security guards.

This is what I wanted to inform you about, this little summary. Please support me and support us. Do not leave us alone. We need your prayers, your support and your Solidarity. I am so sad and I don’t know what to do.

Angelica

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Rights Action holds Solway Investment Group/CGN responsible for this violence and these threats that are occurring.

Switzerland! Any chance of lawsuits or criminal trials against Solway Investment Group for all this?

**Emergency funds needed for:** Security measures for Mayan Q'eqchi' human rights and environmental defenders, including members of the "Gremial" (Union of artisanal fisherpeople); for lawyers working on the legal challenge to the mining license and working to release from jail and trumped up charges, Mayan Q'eqchi' community defenders.

(Since 2004, Rights Action has been funding community, territorial and environmental defenders, and justice struggles in this Mayan Q'eqchi' region of El Estor. Since 2017, Rights Action has been funding the Union of Artisanal Fisher-people and the legal work of Rafael Maldonado.)

### **Hudbay Minerals lawsuits - Canada**

Meanwhile, the precedent-setting Hudbay Minerals lawsuits in Canada (seeking justice for mining repression against 13 Mayan Q'eqchi' plaintiffs in the El Estor region between 2007-2009) will be back in court in Toronto, September 17, 2019. (See: [www.chocversushudbay.com](http://www.chocversushudbay.com))

### **Mynor Padilla criminal re-trial - Guatemala**

The re-trial of Mynor Padilla – former head of security for Skye Resources and Hudbay Minerals, former Lieutenant-colonel in the Guatemalan army – for the murder of Adolfo Ich and aggravated assault of German Chub begins in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, on September 10, 2019.

### **Background**

- *"Is justice possible in Canada or Guatemala for Hudbay Minerals mining repression?"*, by Grahame Russell, June 12, 2019, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/is-justice-possible-in-canada-or-guatemala-for-hudbay-minerals-mining-repression>
- *"Guatemala's Constitutional Court orders suspension of Swiss-based Solway Investment Group's mining operation in Guatemala"*, <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/guatemalas-constitutional-court-orders-suspension-of-swiss-based-solway-investment-groups-mining-operation-in-guatemala>

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### **More information**

- Legal challenge against mining license in Guatemala and legal defense of community defenders: Rafael Maldonado, [areapoliticallegal@gmail.com](mailto:areapoliticallegal@gmail.com), +502 5834-5834
- Hudbay Mineral lawsuits (Canada): Cory Wanless, [cory@waddellphillips.ca](mailto:cory@waddellphillips.ca), and Murray Klippenstein, [murray.klippenstein@klippensteins.ca](mailto:murray.klippenstein@klippensteins.ca). [www.chocversushudbay.com](http://www.chocversushudbay.com)
- Criminal trial against Hudbay's former head of security (Guatemala): Grahame Russell, Rights Action, [grahame@rightsaction.org](mailto:grahame@rightsaction.org)
- About Mayan Q'eqchi' human rights, environmental and land defenders: Rights Action, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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

To support the Mayan Q'eqchi' people and their community defense and justice struggles, [make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:](#)

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