

Maria Cuc Choc, criminalized Q'eqchi' land defender in Guatemala, speaks to international community

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/maria-cuc-choc-criminalized-land-defender-in-guatemala-speaks>

- **View:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUaCAeOwuo0>

Maria Choc is sister-in-law of Adolfo Ich, a land and rights defender killed in 2009 while denouncing mining related harms and violations. She is sister of Angelica Choc, widow of Adolfo Ich, now leading justice struggles in Guatemala and Canada for the death of her husband. And, Maria is the sister of Ramiro Choc, who spent 6 years in jail as a political prisoner – criminalized on malicious charges for his land and rights defense work.

Since 2018, Maria has been facing three malicious criminal charges herself, for crimes she did not commit: aggravated usurpation, illegal detention and threats. This is how the Guatemala regime files malicious charges to criminalize and imprison land and human rights defenders.

“These criminalization processes damage each one of us, in body, spirit and mind, and they harm us economically. These ‘false charges’ trials also affect and endanger our loved ones, daughters and sons.”

On May 19, Maria must appear in court again to face these corrupted criminal charges. Since 2007, Maria Cuc has worked with Rights Action, in one capacity or another. Since 2010, Maria has been a strong supporter of the 13 Q'eqchi' plaintiffs, including her sister Angelica, in the landmark Highbay Minerals lawsuits in Canada. Since her illegal capture in January 2018 on these malicious charges, we have supported her legal defense and family security costs.

**“To be an interpreter is not a crime. Rather, it is a human right.
Defending your territory is not a crime, rather it is defending the
habitat of humanity”**

By Maria Magdalena Cuc Choc

El Estor, Izabal, April 21, 2022

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