

PIVOT is a word for our times. As we adjust to this new reality, organizers and movements insist that we not go back to “normal,” and instead seize the moment to forward our collective visions for social justice. “Normal” was never tolerable, just, or liberated. **Instead, let’s Free Them All, Stop the Deportations, Defund the Police, Reclaim the Land, and Unplug the Empire.** The path forward requires the leadership of Indigenous Peoples from the Global South. As the media over-values and over-transmits the impacts of coronavirus on the Global North, **it is imperative that we listen to frontline organizers in Guatemala to expand our analysis globally and to find direction in our vision.**

FIVE LESSONS FROM OUR PARTNERS

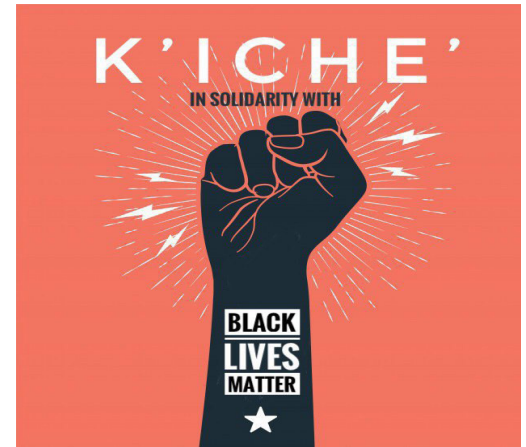
- 1. The pandemic highlights structural plagues.** The disease isn’t just COVID-19; it’s racism, classism, and colonialism. Indigenous Peoples, rural communities, women, and queer people have less access to water, food, and medical care than the white, mestizo, and urban minority. “How can you wash your hands if you have no water?” our partners ask.
- 2. Organized communities are prepared for emergencies.** Many people take solace in their ancestral medicines, Indigenous authorities, and spirituality. Communities ignored by the colonial state are organizing autonomous actions, like food distribution, sanitation, monitoring their community entrances, and more.
- 3. Responses vary across regions and authorities.** In Patzún, where the first major outbreak happened, all movement was stopped for weeks while other parts of the country operated as normal. Indigenous authorities in communities like Santa María Tzeja implemented a complete quarantine days and weeks before world leaders took meaningful action. But some areas, especially the border with Mexico, have faced heavy militarization in the name of quarantine enforcement.

In southeastern Guatemala, the Xinka Parliament and CODIDENA are sharing public health information and distributing much-needed food and supplies. **Their fight against the Escobal mine hasn’t let up, either.** They’ve denounced Pan American Silver, the current mine owner, for falsifying support for its widely-opposed mine by exchanging food for community members’ signatures and personal information.

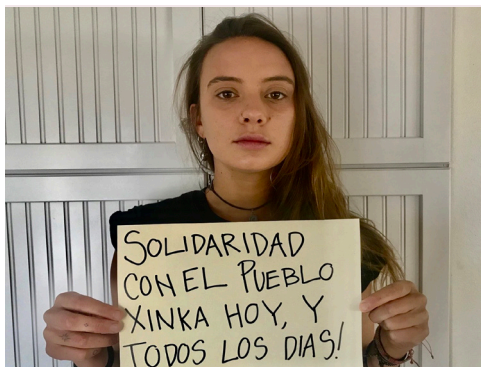


4. The judicial system is not just. Criminalized water protectors like Bernardo Caal face increasing health risks as they remain in prison on made-up charges, while convicted war criminals attempt to walk free. In a win for transitional justice, however, nine war criminals were recently denied their attempt to get conditional freedom through house arrest.

5. The corrupt are taking advantage. As in the U.S., the Guatemalan congress has spent its time lining their pockets instead of supporting the half of Guatemalans in poverty. President Giammattei classified resource extraction as essential, opening the door for corporations to push through highly-contested extractive projects while communities are prevented from protesting.



TAKE ACTION: bit.ly/COVIDnisgua



HOW WE'RE PIVOTING:

For the safety of our partners, volunteers, and staff, physical accompaniment has been suspended and we have created a remote accompaniment program. Our new protocol allows us to talk with partners about current events, their well-being and security, and respond to their needs. Our team of Internacionalistas are averaging 20 in-depth secure calls per week.

**NO safe third country agreements with Central America!
NO deportations during the pandemic! NO deportations ever!**

Contrary to its own public health recommendations, the U.S. continues to deport people during the pandemic. Outbreaks of COVID-19 have occurred in detention centers across the U.S., where tens of thousands of people are forcibly detained with little access to health care. **Now, many migrants face deportation to countries where they are unlikely to receive the medical attention they need.**

The safe third country agreements, also known as Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs), with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador give the U.S. power to deport asylum-seekers to these countries **even if people are not from there.**

The ACAs are suspended due to the pandemic, but could be reinstated at any time. We invite you to:



sign the petition



write your congresspeople



send a letter to the editor

MORE INFO & RESOURCES:
bit.ly/nosafethird

Photo captions: Page 1: Members of CODIDENA hand out food and supplies (Credit: CODIDENA).

Page 2: A graphic by Andrea Ixchú expresses Maya K'iche' solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Below, Isa Villalón, a former Internacionalista accompanier, holds a sign in solidarity with the Xinka People.