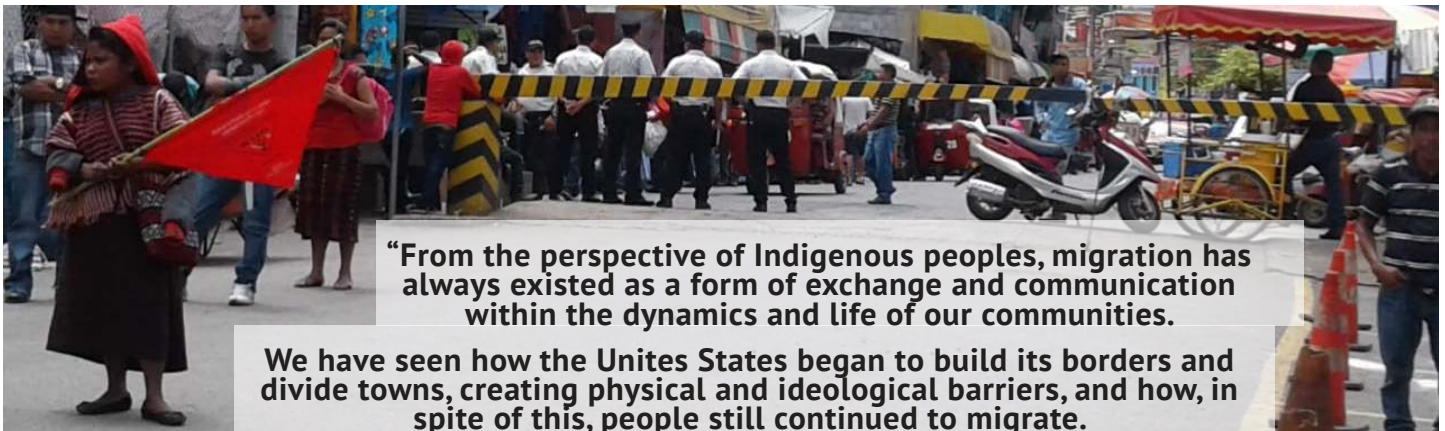




Guatemala resists U.S. border imperialism

The War on Drugs and other U.S. foreign policy disasters have moved the southern U.S. border further and further south for decades. In July, the Trump administration accelerated this push south by declaring Guatemala a “third safe country,” weeks after militarizing the border department of Huehuetenango with U.S. troops. Two weeks later, movements fighting corruption and defending land and historical memory were dealt another blow with the election of another far-right president.



“From the perspective of Indigenous peoples, migration has always existed as a form of exchange and communication within the dynamics and life of our communities.

We have seen how the United States began to build its borders and divide towns, creating physical and ideological barriers, and how, in spite of this, people still continued to migrate.

**The first violator of rights is the Guatemalan state, which has increased its violence against the Indigenous population who are defense of land and their rights.”
-Silvia Raquec Cum, Maya Kaqchikel, Migration Program Coordinator, Pop No’j Association**

Trump extends border further south: Guatemala is not a safe country

On July 26, the Trump administration again caused mass confusion, endangered Guatemalans and immigrants, and did nothing to address the root causes of forced migration by signing the “safe third country” agreement with Guatemala. The agreement gives the U.S. power to deport asylum-seekers to Guatemala even if they are not from there. By deporting asylum-seekers to countries they are not from and to places where they may face danger, the U.S. denies them protection and violates international refugee law. In 2018 over 30 human rights defenders were assassinated, and in 2019 the number has already passed 10—a stark indicator of just how unsafe Guatemala is for those who might seek asylum.

The Departmental Assembly of Peoples of Huehuetenango (ADH) makes the following demands:

1. Repeal the “safe third country” agreement
2. No invasions by extractive industries, military forces, and other countries
3. Our borders must continue to be an open path for the survival of Indigenous people, with respect to the networks and historical ties that have united the Indigenous people of Guatemala and Mexico
4. Audit all agreements signed by Jimmy Morales
5. Respect for Indigenous Peoples’ decisions made in community consultations

Cover image: Community members march through Huehuetenango to protest the militarization of their territories. Middle image: Protestors shut down the Mesilla Guatemala-Mexico border crossing in protest of the “third safe country” agreement. Photo credit: ADH.

Elections 2019: The worse of two evils wins the presidency

On August 11, Guatemala held runoff presidential elections, in which significant voter exclusion continued and little more than 40% of registered voters participated. **Taking 58% of the vote, the far right-wing candidate Alejandro Giammattei defeated centrist neoliberal Sandra Torres.** Giammattei is outspokenly against gay marriage, in favor of the death penalty, and opposes the renewal of CICIG. While acting as prisons director in 2006, he was accused of overseeing the extrajudicial killing of seven prisoners. **Although Giammattei stated that there are portions of the “safe third country” agreement he would change upon his inauguration, he will be under great pressure to comply with the Trump administration’s racist policies.** His connections to former military officials and political leaders leave Guatemalan society with little confidence for change.



Gringos go home: Huehuetenango rejects U.S. militarization

In May, the U.S. sent troops to Huehuetenango in a supposed attempt to dissuade immigration. Soldiers first arrived in the region under the pretext of providing humanitarian assistance. Shortly after, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security arrived in Guatemala, where he signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Guatemalan Interior Minister. The agreement committed to more cooperation between U.S. and Guatemalan security and intelligence forces, **promising to send “a sizable force of [federal] agents and investigators to Guatemalan regions bordering Mexico.”**

Communities in Huehuetenango did not stand for this invasion. In protest of the lack of consultation about a foreign military in their territories, they took to the streets. On July 11, peaceful demonstrators gathered at three strategic locations—the local Guatemalan military base, a building that U.S. soldiers were building, and the regional governor’s office—to send a clear message: “GRINGOS GO HOME.” **Huehuetenango was one of the departments that most suffered from the genocide in Guatemala, and many of the protestors were survivors of massacres.** They reminded soldiers that their presence is a violation of the 1996 Peace Accords and a revictimization of survivors of state terror.

TAKE ACTION: Say no to imperialist extractivism!

One cause of forced migration is investment in extractive megaprojects to the benefit of transnational corporations and to the cost of the health and wellbeing of Guatemalans. **Today, we invite you to defend community consultations, support Indigenous Xinka communities, and reject imposed natural resource extraction.** Visit <http://bit.ly/consultationPAS> to tell Pan American Silver (PAS) to respect the Xinka People’s right to consultation!



Left-hand image: Community members deliver their demands to a Guatemalan military commander in Huehuetenango. Right-hand image: Protestors shut down the Mesilla Guatemala-Mexico border crossing. Photo credit: ADH. Bottom image: An ADH sign reads, “The interference by the United States buries the people’s peace.”