

“WE MUST NOT BE DISCOURAGED”



An interview with Dolores Cu on the pandemic, women’s leadership, and hope.

There is so much horror in the world. And, as those of you who have accompanied us over the last four decades know, **there is so much resilience, creativity, and care in the resistances against this violence.** NISGUA has the unique privilege of learning directly from our partners, to feel and share their joy alongside their dignified rage. **In this newsletter, we invite you to join in conversation with Doña Dolores, to honor the visionary tactics that social movements are employing during the pandemic, and to take a breath of fortifying Ixcán air before continuing on in struggle.**



DOLORES CU

is a Maya Q’eqchi’ women’s rights defender, genocide survivor, and board member of the **Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR)**. She represents the Ixcán region for the AJR, providing direct grassroots analysis and coordinating and providing emotional support for Ixcán-based AJR associates, all of whom are also genocide survivors.

>> How do you view the leadership of women in the AJR?

I am a woman who suffered from violence during the war. **That is why I like to support the other women who cannot express everything they have felt.** To encourage both women and children, as well as to teach them about their rights. That is why I work with the women in the three communities of the AJR in Ixcán. **That’s the work, but I like it.**

I used to feel discouraged because I thought that I was the only one who had suffered, but I realized that I am not the only one who suffered during the war, that there are other people, but they do not want to speak. **I am going to support the other women, so that people accept that we as women have the right to express our opinions, to speak, to break the silence, so that what we went through, the violence, may stop.** We have to fight for others, for ourselves, and for our children.

>> How are the communities organizing in the context of the pandemic, and how have the government's current actions affected survivors?

I tell my comrades: **we have to work, we have to plant, we have to consume what we have, fight for the family, eat what we grow.** The situation is hard - those who don't have land, where are they going to plant? It is very sad because I do not know what will happen, and the government is borrowing a lot of money, and who is going to pay for it? The people. People are worried, and we must encourage each other. **We as the board of directors feel sad that the genocide case was stalled [due to the pandemic].** We ask ourselves, what are we going to do? **That's why all of you over there give us encouragement, knowing that we are not alone.**

New tactics in trying times

>> AJR 2020 general assembly

Due to the pandemic, **the AJR is going to hold its first ever digital assembly.** Doña Dolores says:

*We are a little sad that the assembly will be digital. Speaking through devices just isn't the same as speaking to someone in person. However, there are many elderly people that have to stay in bed, many associates that would not be able to meet, but now they will be able to listen on their cell phones. **The assembly will be able to come to their homes.***

>> Social media



In this tweet, the AJR shared a video of women declaring **"We want courts, not mafias."** The tweet reads, "From our villages we condemn the attack on the [Constitutional Court] and the congress-people who fold to mafia interests. We demand judicial independence."

>> Read more at bit.ly/technicalcoup

>> What is your vision for the future?

The dream that I have for myself and for my Association is that **I want to fight, I want to see justice reach the people, I want to see what the AJR is going to do in five years,** I want to see the fight of women and the change we are going to make. I believe that we are going to be able to fight for justice - we have to organize ourselves well as victims and not be discouraged because the fight will continue. **We appreciate your struggle over there, we continue in the struggle forever, we must not be discouraged.**

>> TAKE ACTION AT bit.ly/COVIDnisgua