

Our 2021 Accomplishments

In our 40th year, we kept learning that community is the only way forward. NISGUA still stands strong through the storms of pandemic and fascism because our root system is forty years of comrades who believed in each other enough to imagine a better future. Our branches are the hundreds of people we connect with for advice and mutual support. And our leaves the generations to come, who will one day live in right relationship with each other and Mother Earth. It's been a hard year. It's been a hard four decades. **And yet, as we continually learn and re-learn: shared struggle is worth it.** Every time. Always.

2021 in numbers:



- **1432 signatures** on petitions and campaigns
- **1257 registrants and attendees** for our virtual events
- **624 remote contacts** with our partners in Guatemala
- **62 human rights defenders** we directly accompany
- **47 publications:** Solidarity Updates, original reports, blog posts, and translations

Above, a roadblock in the Ixcán region during the National Strike. The signs read: "Ixcán present in the fight, we demand the resignation of Alejandro Giammattei and Consuelo Porras," "Resist to Live, Resist to Advance," "Resign Giammattei! Porras Out!," and "The people united will never be defeated." Photo credit: Anonymous. Below, a section of graphic notes by Adriana Contreras Correal.

After nearly a year and a half of grassroots organizing, we achieved our primary campaign goal of terminating the illegal and inhumane ACAs. **The ACAs threatened to transfer tens of thousands of asylum seekers to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador so that they could supposedly apply for asylum there.** In the months that the ACA with Guatemala were in place, only about 2% of impacted migrants chose to apply for asylum there. **We give gratitude to the late Rubén Herrera,** General Coordinator of the Departmental Assembly of Peoples of Huehuetenango (ADH) and the visionary behind this successful campaign.

Campaign success!
Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) terminated



Guatemala Accompaniment Project (GAP) *Internacionalista*

Our GAP *Internacionalista* program seeks to dissuade violence against our Guatemalan partners and connect them to movements in the U.S. for Indigenous sovereignty and immigration justice.

In 2021, we maintained constant communication with NISGUA's partners to monitor their security and activate emergency responses when necessary. We provided remote accompaniment to land, water, and justice defenders in Guatemala, working on issues ranging from the resistance to the Escobal mine to the Military Diary transitional justice case.

GAP *Internacionalista* at a glance:



- Emergency response to the January attack on **Julio González**, a Xinka water protector
- **Six meetings** with U.S. state offices to share partner demands
- **Monitoring** partner travel to hearings, protests, and commemorations
- A **statement condemning the Guatemalan NGO Law**, signed by 73 organizations

Nico Estrada, former *Internacionalista*, holds a sign in solidarity with the resistance against the Escobal mine.

Solidarity with Indigenous Migrants

We continue to coordinate a coalition of nearly fifty Central and North American organizations to stop Title 42 expulsions of asylum seekers and deportations during the pandemic. **The coalition is crucial and unique in the larger migrant solidarity movement given its specific focus on Indigenous leadership and migrants.** We were honored to organize two webinars featuring Indigenous leaders that reached over 1500 people. Together, we gathered over 1300 signatures on a petition demanding the end of Title 42 and deportations, along with protections for Indigenous migrants.

Learning into accessibility

With gratitude to our teachers of disability and language justice, **this year we held our most accessible events ever.** Both webinars featured simultaneous interpretation between English and Spanish, closed captions, and recordings in Maya Mam. "Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights in Migration" also featured graphic notetaking by Adriana Contreras Correal (a section of her work is to the right, and the entire image is on nigua.org). We have been excited to share our accessibility learnings with comrades across the movement.

In "On our own terms: Indigenous perspectives on forced displacement & immigration systems" Mercedes Say (Maya K'iche', International Mayan League and National Council of Indigenous Peoples in Diaspora) introduces (clockwise from top right) Dr. Floridalma Boj Lopez (Maya K'iche'), Natali Segovia (Quechua/Peruvian, Water Protectors Legal Collective and Comunidad Maya Pixan Ixim), and Gerónimo Ramírez (Maya Ixil, International Mayan League).



"NISGUA's work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples is exactly what we need. The webinar that they organized, "Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights in Migration" demanded a huge amount of work, which we don't have capacity to do. By taking on that coordination work so that we can speak publicly, they empower Indigenous peoples."

-Luis Marcos (Q'anjob'al Maya, Co-Executive Director of Comunidad Maya Pixan Ixim and Ambassador of the Akateko, Chuj, Popti and Q'anjob'al Maya to the Omaha Nation)

Following the strength of life and land defenders

Despite the challenges of remote work, we maintained close relationships with partners who are water and land protectors. This included:

- **Two digital events** attended by 52 people
- Translation of **nine partner statements** from Spanish to English
- Remote accompaniment and **monitoring of direct actions** in real time
- **Weekly communication** through calls, messaging, and videoconferences

“We immensely value the support that NISGUA gives, and their commitment to us, the ADH. What we like the most is that we are synchronized together in the strategies of the peoples’ struggles. Despite the pandemic not allowing for accompaniment in-person, our collaborations have been immense and worthy of applause through constant communication, distribution of information, moral support, and translation of our statements.



**-Departmental Assembly
of Peoples of
Huehuetenango (ADH)**

Left: A sacred fire burns in Maya Mam territories during a ceremony on September 10 in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the ADH. Photo credit: ADH

Spreading our branches into 2022

After almost two years of remote accompaniment and months of careful consideration, we are excited to reopen our Guatemala City office in 2022. **We return with gratitude and rage.** Gratitude for staff’s access to vaccines, being steps closer to seeing our comrades in Guatemala, and for the transformative digital organizing that we’ve accomplished during this time. Rage for the global inequities that have kept our Guatemalan counterparts in seemingly endless waves of illnesses and deaths, and for the global oligarchy’s use of this crisis for personal gain. **We recommit to our four decades strong practice of radical hope.**

Please stay tuned for critical updates as we reopen our offices and welcome a new cohort of *Internacionalista* volunteers next year!