

TARGETS OF THE STATE

DIGNITY, JUSTICE, AND CRIMINALIZATION IN GUATEMALA



NISGUA

Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala

People in Guatemala are facing new waves of criminalization. The most visible of these are the twenty-two anti-corruption prosecutors and judges currently in exile in Washington. But in reality, all people struggling for truth, justice, dignity, and life are targets of the state. They are harassed, slandered, arrested, and exiled in attempts to stop their work toward a dignified and just Guatemala.

Collective historical memory tells us that everyone resisting the violent political and economic systems of the moment becomes a target. But it also tells us that despite criminalization, the people will always struggle to create collective justice regardless of whether the state is on their side or not. Today, that spirit of resistance and dignity lives on.

"The ADH is deeply concerned that there is criminalization happening for the benefit of the Corrupt Pact. We strongly condemn and reject the way in which this criminalization has been carried out... t's all severely concerning, what may happen in the future."

- Victor, Departmental Assembly of the Peoples of Huehuetenango (ADH)



Photo of a Plurinational strike in Guatemala City. July 19th, 2021 by Juan M. Rosales S. Twitter and Instagram: @juanmrosales39

IMPACTS ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

For decades, NISGUA's partners have sought justice and accountability for the crimes of the past. Guatemala's elites have always attempted to interrupt that search. For example: The president, the attorney general, and right-wing organizations are currently leading campaigns of slander and criminalization against important actors connected to transitional justice cases, such as Judge Miguel Ángel Gálvez, who oversees the "Military Diary" case. Using the judicial system to disrupt processes of justice and truth undermines democracy, perpetuates impunity, and endangers those in search of justice who cannot appeal to an unbiased judicial system.

"AJR sees with concern how attacks that in the past were against the civilian population are being repeated... They want to scare us and intimidate us. More than 25 years have passed and the Peace Agreements have not been fulfilled. Many transitional justice cases remain frozen in court, and we do not see justice in favor of survivors. Now more than ever we need international support and solidarity to speak out in favor of the civilian population, the victims, and the survivors of the war."

- Violeta, Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR)



Background photo: Faces of armed conflict victims during the Military Diary Case trial in Guatemala City by CPR-Urbana. Twitter: @puebloresiste. Instagram: @cpr.u. Facebook: @cpr.urbana

Photograph of Chortí Mayan ancestral stick during the Community Assembly in Chiquimula 2016. by Roderico Yool Díaz. www.rodediaz.com

IMPACTS ON DEFENSE OF TERRITORY

NISGUA's partners who defend land and life, mostly Indigenous and Black folks, are especially targeted groups because of alliances between private foreign investment firms, the Guatemalan oligarchy, and the Guatemalan state. As criminalization against actors within the judicial system increases, partners seeking legal protection in their struggles against megaprojects expressed feeling vulnerable. They also expressed concern over the criminalization of journalists, because sometimes journalists are the only outlets for the voices of land and water protectors to be heard by the national and international communities.



Photo in Santiago Atitlán, 2022 by NSGUA staff

TRANS-TERRITORIAL TABLE

In the midst of a crisis of criminalization, we celebrate the joy of resistance by sharing with you the participants of NISGUA's Trans-Territorial Table, an initiative to connect grassroots leaders and fund their projects, which you can read about below. The participants of the Table are living proof that dignity cannot be criminalized and collective justice cannot be stopped!



Holistic Agricultural Cooperative "Tinamit Tolimán", Esdras Cumes, Vivian Cuc
Mural to Raise Conscience on Value of Coffee

Tinamit Tolimán coffee cooperative exists to defend families from the terrible economic, social and environmental impacts of transnational corporations in their region. The cooperative is based on care for land, community solidarity and good quality coffee. This mural will record their story.



Coordinator of Communities Affected by TRECSA (CCAT), Ana Laura Rojas Padgett
Grassroots Strategies to Defend Life

An electrical grid megaproject by TRECSA, a Guatemalan subsidiary of Colombian *Grupo Energía Bogotá*, is destroying land and is imposed on communities without their consent. CCAT is leading a popular education campaign so that the people can respond accordingly.



B'q'ol Q'esal Tenam Naab'a' (Indigenous Council of Nebaj), Otto Cuéllar, Feliciano Herrera
The Historical Struggle of the Ixil People

B'q'ol Q'esal Tenam Naab'a' will produce a short educational video for indigenous Ixil youth to learn about the historic(al) struggles of the Ixil people, with special emphasis on how elders and authorities protect land, culture, and promote Indigenous self-determination.



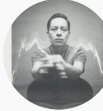
Rebeca Lane & Menstruating Guatemala Collective
"In Search of Our Voices and Autonomies": Menstrual Education and Rap

This is a workshop on girls' bodily autonomy to teach them about patriarchal violence, the dignity of menstruation, and the power of hip-hop/rap to help articulate their voice. It concludes with the production of a music video based on the experiences of the workshop.



Casa Qatzij Collective, Maggie García, Xelani Luz, Andrés Conteris, Carmen Perez
"A Puro Tubo Quieren Poner el Tubo:" A Documentary in Defense of Mother Earth & Lake Atitlán

This documentary will show the harms of the Mega Collector, a neoliberal megaproject in Lake Atitlán that commodifies water and may contaminate the lake, and the need for mass popular mobilization by local Indigenous communities to protect Mother Earth.



Leo García
Photobook: McArthur Park, Los Angeles

Leo will create a photobook of Guatemalan migrant life in Los Angeles, focusing on McArthur Park, a historic gathering place for Central Americans that is now under threat from gentrification, to portray both the struggles and the dignity of migrants.



United Petén Front Against Dams, Humercindo and Manuel Martínez. Defense of the Usumacinta River and Dignified Development

Hoping to stop the construction of hydroelectric dams along the Usumacinta River, the longest river in Central America, which borders Mexico, this campaign will gather Indigenous Guatemalan and Mexican communities to educate them and discuss the next steps to defend the territory.



Guatemaya L.A. Collective: Women in Resistance
Women in Struggle Strengthening Trans-Territorial Solidarity

After two years of online organizing, Guatemaya will host an in-person event in Los Angeles to relaunch publicly. They will also create a website to facilitate access to networks and events of migrant women's solidarity and struggle for women who recently migrated to the U.S.



Diego Petzey
The Resistance and Healing of the Maya Tz'utujil People of Lake Atitlán

Diego is gathering the elders of his community to hear their stories of ancestral resistance to, and healing from, the violence of capitalism, neoliberalism and the Eurocentric nation-state. He will then create a mural that portrays their stories as a way to archive Maya Tz'utujil resistance.



Purchase your calendar here:
bit.ly/nisgua-calendar-2023

