

# SOLIDARITY BEYOND HEADLINES: NISGUA'S 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

NISGUA will celebrate its 45th anniversary next year — a milestone made possible by relationships grounded in trust, respect, and solidarity. We listen, we show up, and we meet needs. As long as the people of Guatemala call for solidarity and the people in the U.S. answer that call, NISGUA will continue to stand with them — beyond headlines and news cycles.

NISGUA Internacionalista accompanies Xinka People presenting their community consultation results. Photo by NISGUA, May 2025.

## Accomplishments in Numbers

### Justice and Accountability

- **9 court hearings**, accompanying survivors, witnesses, and legal teams.
- **6 major public events**, preserving memory and mobilizing for justice.
- **6 field visits**, fostering relationships with survivor associations and communities.

### Defense of Life and Territory

- **18 field visits**, including various overnight shifts.
- **3 major community events**, providing accompaniment, language interpretation, and conducting interviews.
- **2 emergency support responses**, providing on-the-ground assistance when urgently needed.

## Making Sense of the World

This year, voices from across our network shared stories and reflections that keep our movements connected and alive. We are grateful for the collective knowledge shared!

#### Where Joy Meets Struggle

Mother Earth Festival  
(Part 1 & 2)



Neoliberalism & Forced  
Migration

How to Keep Fighting a  
Mine for 17 Years



Marco Rubio and the  
Future of Internationalist  
Solidarity



## NISGUA 2026 Calendar

This year we celebrate the  
harvests of resistance and  
organizing!



Don't wait—purchase a powerful  
calendar for your wall or to gift one to  
someone you love!



## Art and Community: Antidotes Against Oblivion

While the pattern across the Guatemalan judicial system is obstruction of justice, our partners continue to build memory and justice from below. Using art as the language of memory, they educate and train new generations with dignity, creativity, and determination.

A powerful example is **FAMDEGUA's School of Memory and Art**, a large-scale initiative by our long-time partner. This project involves painting murals in various historic sites and organizing exhibits of their historical archive in national museums. The project shares the history of collective struggle from the perspective of survivors and victims.

At the opening exhibit, "Student Movements and Trade Unions," FAMDEGUA member Alejandra Cabrera shared:



Mural at FAMDEGUA's office, created with Dexpierte Collective. Photo by NISGUA, May 2025.



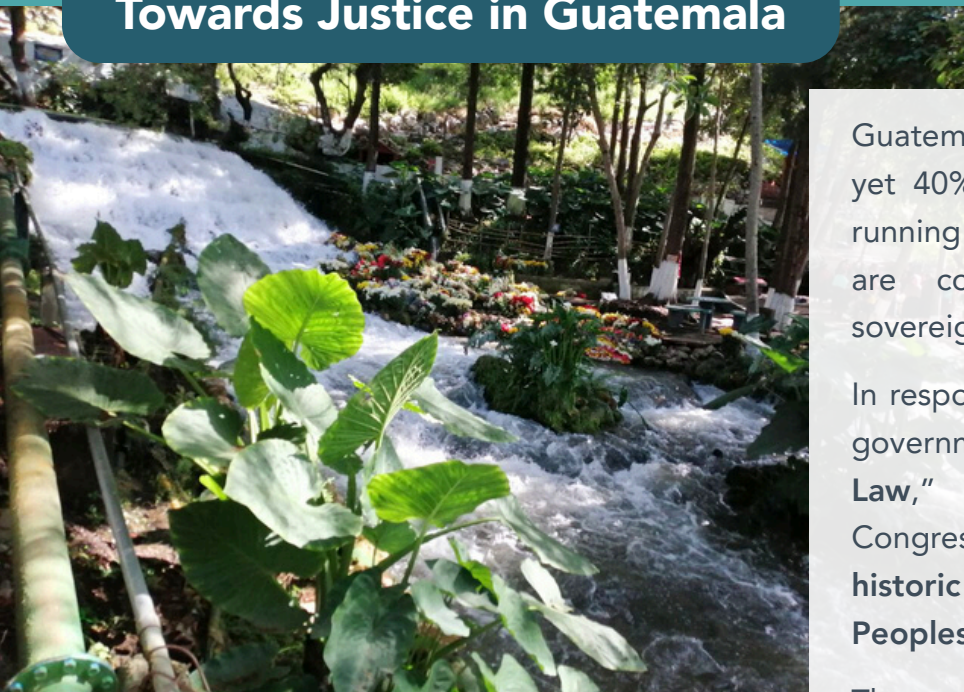
*Here is part of our history, different from the official narrative imposed upon us which denies genocide and denies sexual violence. The basis of our documentary [efforts] are not only archives or newspapers. It's also our feelings... We always remember the searching women, those who searched from day one, demanding the return of our relatives who were still alive at the time.*



Mural painted at FAMDEGUA's entrance as part of the Days of Color and Rebellion, honoring the memory and the struggle of families of the disappeared. Photo by NISGUA, May 2025.



## The Water Law: An Urgent Step Towards Justice in Guatemala



Floral offering in the sacred San Juan River, Aguacatán, Huehuetenango. Photo by NISGUA, July 2023.

Guatemala is rich in rivers, lakes, and rainfall — yet 40% of its population still lacks access to running water. More than 90% of surface waters are contaminated, affecting health, food sovereignty, and life itself.

In response to this deepening crisis, the current government is working to present the “**Water Law**,” as it is commonly known, before Congress. If passed, the law would mark a historic achievement, transforming Indigenous Peoples’ ability to defend this vital resource.

Three of NISGUA’s partners participated in the consultation process that helped shape the proposal. We asked them to share their perspectives on what this law could mean for their communities and the future of water in Guatemala.

“The Water Law is very important if our voice as Indigenous People is taken into account, because we recognize and understand the importance of this common good. The equitable access to this vital liquid is both just and necessary. [...] there is no mention of mining in any of the points, and the perspective of women is not considered with a differential approach, because we are the ones responsible for bringing water to our homes.”

Wendy Urías,  
Women's Commission of the Xinka Parliament

“For the first time in Guatemala's history, civil society and Indigenous People are being included in the construction of a Law. The Water Law aims to make water a subject of rights [...] and declare the country's water bodies public domain—entities that cannot be privatized, hoarded, or contaminated. [...] My concern is that with the new Congressional Board of Directors for 2026, approval of this Law may be delayed.”

Elson Pérez,  
Diocesan Commission for the Defense of Nature (CODIDENA)

“[Regarding] water consumption, [the Water Law] must include very explicit articles that govern and regulate water use by mining companies, hydroelectric plants, and industries of all types. [...] It must also regulate owners of monocultures, who are the true culprits of unmeasured water consumption. Regarding conservation, Indigenous internal regulations and community autonomy must be taken into account; thanks to them, with their own ways and customs, we still survive with oxygen and sacred water.”

Víctor Sales,  
Assembly of the Peoples of Huehuetenango (ADH)



## The Xinka Example: Generations in Struggle from Guatemala to North Carolina

This year we were thrilled to organize a speaking tour with Sheny Lemus, respected Xinka leader from the **Diocesan Commission in Defense of Nature (CODIDENA)**. In Guatemala, CODIDENA has played a key role in the broader Xinka struggle to protect water and land by stopping the Escobal mine, which is owned by the transnational Pan American Silver.

In collaboration with North Carolina partners like Witness for Peace Southeast and Iximché Media, NISGUA facilitated presentations and exchanges with hundreds of people—creating space to explore new collaborations with CODIDENA and to share the inspiring story of the Xinka People.

*This is not a tale where minority communities are helpless in the face of oppression. "What do we do if they don't listen to us at the local level? We organize, protest and demand our rights." Lemus spoke with a fire in her voice.*

— Hail Zulueta, *The Nubian Message*



Meeting between CODIDENA and the Haw River Assembly at the Haw river, Pittsboro, NC. Photo by Iximché Media, October 2025.

**The Xinka People are an example to the world.  
The world needs to know them.  
The world needs to stand with them.  
The world needs to learn from them.**

**Don't just take our word for it—read the coverage coming from North Carolina!**



"A Tale of Taking Back the Land"  
in *The Nubian Message*



"Human rights defender gives  
keynote on Xinka Indigenous  
people and environmental  
struggles in Guatemala"  
in *Today at Elon*



Radio interview of CODIDENA's representative, Sheny, on the internationally broadcasted radio program "Vientos del Sur," Carboro, NC. Photo by NISGUA, October 2025.