

**From:** RightsAction [info@rightsaction.org]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 03, 2005 11:23 AM

**To:** info@rightsaction.org

**Subject:** GUATEMALA -- Urgent Action -- CRIMINALIZATION of PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE for RIGHTS and REPARATIONS

February 3, 2005

**GUATEMALA - urgent action:**

**Antonio Vasquez Xitumul**, Mayan-Achi leader of the "Coordinator of Communities Affected by the Chixoy Dam", detained. This is the 2nd detention of a leader of the "Coordinator" in less than two weeks.

**NEEDED:** Letters and phone calls made to the Guatemala government, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. Funds also needed. See below.

If you want on / off this elist: info@rightsaction.org.

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**CRIMINALIZATION of PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE for RIGHTS and REPARATIONS**

On January 20, Rights Action reported that Carlos Chen - another leader of the Coordinator - was detained on trumped up charges of:

1. Detención ilegal con agravantes específicos, amenazas y coacciones frente a los dos operadores de la represa
2. Allanamiento contra el INDE
3. Actividades contra los servicios públicos
4. Actividades contra la seguridad interna de la nación

1. Illegal detention of and threats against Chixoy Dam operators
2. Break and entry into INDE property
3. Actions against State property
4. Actions against the internal security of the nation

Guatemalan authorities are using the legal and penal systems as tools of repression against leaders of communities that are demanding compensation and reparations for the loss of life, home, property and community caused by the Chixoy hydro-electric dam, funded and overseen by the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the Guatemala government.

On September 7, 2004, over 1000 members of Mayan-Achi communities negatively affected and/ or forcibly displaced by the Chixoy hydro-electric dam project participated in a peaceful protest at the site of the Chixoy dam. The 1975-1985 Chixoy dam project was funded and overseen by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, in partnership with the military regimes controlling Guatemala at the time. Repression, related to the construction of the dam, included the massacres and killings of over 400 children,

elderly, women and men, forced displacements from home and community, loss of land and more.

On September 8, the communities ended the protest, after signing an agreement with representatives of the Instituto Nacional de Electrificación, (INDE), State Electricity Institute, other government authorities and observers from the Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos, PDH. This agreement was to set up a 'discussion table' to assess all the damages and losses caused by the Chixoy dam.

On September 14, INDE representatives formally presented a complaint to the Ministerio Público, Public Prosecutor's Office, in Cobán against the leaders of the "Coordinator of Communities Affected by the Chixoy Dam" - the same leaders with whom they had signed the agreement: Carlos Chen, Juan de Dios García, Domingo Sic, Rafael Santiago Fernández, Félix Alonso Raymundo, Antonio Vásquez Xitumul, Víctor Lem Colorado.

#### **ACTION:**

Please email -- and then phone -- the officials below, demanding that all charges be dropped against all 7 men, and that Antonio Xitumul be released immediately.

Please insist to the WB and the IDB that this is their business. These are politically motivated charges to block community efforts to demand reparations and compensations for loss and suffering due to the Chixoy dam. The WB, IDB and Guatemala government have the duty to negotiate compensation and reparations in good faith.

#### **CONTACT ADDRESSES:**

##### **-- WORLD BANK**

James Wolfensohn, President, World Bank, e: cunit3@worldbank.org, f: 202-522-3031

Attention to: Minneh Kane, Asst. to President, F: 202-522-1677, E: mkane@worldbank.org

Attention to: Jane Holden, Asst. to President, e: jholden1@worldbank.org, f: 202-522-7700

Vice-President David de Ferranti, E: Ddeferranti@worldbank.org

Carmen Gadala, External Affairs Officer, E: cgadala@worldbank.org

Jane Armitage, Country Director, Central America, E: Jarmitage@worldbank.org, T: (202) 473-0121

Mario Marroquin, Guatemala City, E: mmarroquin@worldbank.org

Neeta Sirur, Country Manager for Guatemala, E: Nsirur@worldbank.org

Irma Yolanda Avila, civil society and indigenous peoples specialist, Guatemala City, E: iavilaargueta@worldbank.org

##### **-- INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**

Jorge Sapoznikow, Division: Modernization of the State and Civil Society, T: 202-623-1416, E:

jorges@iadb.org

John Ferriter, public relations officer, T: 202-623-1394, E: johnfe@iadb.org

**-- GUATEMALA GOVERNMENT**

President of the Republic of Guatemala, Oscar Berger Perdomo, Fax: 011 502 2221 4423 / 2239-0090

Lic. Frank LaRue, COPREDEH - Comision Presidencial de los Derechos Humanos, E: coprekeh@guate.net

Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo, Embassy of Guatemala in USA, E: [ambassador@guatemala-embassy.org](mailto:ambassador@guatemala-embassy.org), F: 202 745 1908

**-- UNITED NATIONS**

Martha Doggett, UN Department of Political Affairs, T: 212-963-5055, E: doggett@un.org

**NEEDED:**

Funds for the community-based, Indigenous organizations in the area affected by the Chixoy dam. To contribute tax-deductible funds, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

\* United States: 1830 Connecticut Av, NW, Washington DC, 20009.

\* Canada: 509 St. Clair Ave W, box73527, Toronto ON, M6C-1C0.

On-line donations: USA and Canada: [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org).

Wire funds to Rights Action: contact [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org), 416-654-2074.

**BACKGROUND information** about these issues: 416-654-2074, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org).

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