

Rights Action  
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## **THE WORLD BANK AND INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK MUST ACCOUNT FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE GENOCIDES IN GUATEMALA**

Even as the genocide verdict in Guatemala has been “over-turned” by the very partial Constitutional Court, it is important to focus attention on, and one day hold to account other governments – particularly the United States – and other international actors, such as the World Bank and IDB, for how they contributed to and benefitted from the genocides and crimes against humanity in Guatemala.

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## **GUATEMALA'S GENOCIDE CONVICTION IS HISTORIC - BUT RIOS MONTT CAN'T GO DOWN ALONE**

By Nick Dearden, Jubilee Debt Campaign, May 17, 2013  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/nick-dearden/guatemalas-genocide-conviction\\_b\\_3285587.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/nick-dearden/guatemalas-genocide-conviction_b_3285587.html)

Former Guatemalan military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide this week. It's time to go after those who funded him.

The historic judgement by a Guatemalan court this week against one of that country's most brutal military leaders - Efraín Ríos Montt - is unprecedented. Ríos Montt has been sentenced to 80 years for genocide and crimes against humanity during his 1982-3 rule of Guatemala, a period in which the state was effectively at war with its own people.

Ríos Montt didn't act alone, however, and throughout the longer period of terror, loans from international institutions like the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) continued to flow into the country.

The most notorious World Bank/ IDB loans funded the Chixoy Dam, a hydroelectric project constructed in the Mayan Achi region of Rabinal in the Guatemalan highlands. The construction of this dam engendered serious opposition from the local indigenous population, who faced relocation. That opposition was ended when security and paramilitary forces conducted a series of massacres that left over 400 people dead and countless more displaced, tortured, raped or left starving.

Although the World Bank and IDB loans were crucial to the construction of the dam, their internal evaluations make no mention of the massacres or the other violations, including loss of lands and property. In fact, so pleased were the banks with the Chixoy hydroelectric dam that, in 1986, they authorised another loan to the project, again making no mention of the human rights catastrophe that had taken place.

Although those who survived the Chixoy massacre will doubtless be pleased that Ríos Montt has been convicted, they have still received no reparations for what they went through, including losses. A reconciliation process involving the banks and the government seems to be going nowhere.

The World Bank originally lent \$117 million to fund the project. According to the World Bank's website, to date \$165 million has been repaid of which \$91 million is interest and charges. If it wasn't for the impunity these public banks enjoy, criminal charges would surely have been brought against them for their Guatemala loans. The least that can be expected is that money that was 'repaid' to the Banks is now given back, to fund reparations claims for the survivors of the massacre and victims of other violations - and used to heal a society still scarred by violence, racism and deep inequality and poverty.

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