

Rights Action  
June 21, 2015

## **62 Year-old Oswaldo Ochoa Confronts The Nexus Of Corruption, Repression and Impunity**

**That stretches from the Guatemalan military, economic and political elites, to the U.S. military, the U.S. and Canadian governments, the global mining industry, the World Bank, IMF and Inter-American Development Bank**

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**Anti-Corruption, Repression and Impunity Protester Cheered in Guatemala City**

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-33214298>



62-year-old Oswaldo Ochoa was met by cheers and applause from crowds of supporters on his arrival in Guatemala City, after a 200km (125-mile) march in protest against corruption, repression and impunity.

Mr. Ochoa, who said he had been inspired by Gandhi, wants social, political and agricultural change. A series of corruption scandals forced the resignation of Vice President Roxana Baldetti last month.

Wearing a straw hat and a Guatemalan flag around his neck like a cape, Mr Ochoa, known as "Quixote", left his home city of Quetzaltenango a week ago. He said he was joining a growing movement of Guatemalans who have been demanding the resignation of President Otto Perez Molina.

Mr Ochoa was on hunger strike during his journey, only drinking tea and juices. He got blisters on his feet and said he lost more than 4kg (9lbs) in weight.

In the capital, he called on all Guatemalans to rise against impunity and allegedly corrupt politicians who have enriched themselves with public money.

President Perez Molina, who has the backing of the army, says he has done nothing wrong and will not leave office before his term expires next January.

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### **These Are American & Canadian Problems**

Arguably, the biggest obstacles to ending corruption, repression and impunity in Guatemala, are the U.S. and Canadian governments, global businesses and investors (including the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank - IDB), and the U.S. military.

Power and wealth of the Guatemalan elites have long come from their political, economic and military relations with the “international community”, particularly from the U.S. government and military, and never from any sort of valid democratic processes.

This is not a simplistic argument. The elites of Guatemala are responsible for the repressive, exploitative and comprehensively unjust situations in their country. However, whenever the people of Guatemala overcome the systemic fear and repression, the poverty, corruption and impunity, to garner enough people-power to demand and bring about peaceful change, their elites – backstopped by the U.S. and Canadian governments, global businesses and investors, World Bank, IDB, and the U.S. military – violently quell the legitimate demands for democratic change, and the unjust status quo is kept in place.

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- <http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/rights-action-june-2015-newsletter-streets-honduras-guatemala-demanding-comprehensive>

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