

Rights Action

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December 2016

“The emperor isn’t wearing anything at all”

“We have not inherited the earth from our mothers, fathers and ancestors; We are borrowing it from future generations and all life forms.”



Rabinal, Guatemala

Perhaps one silver lining deriving from the recent U.S. elections is they may result in that many more people seeing that “the emperor isn’t wearing anything”, as the child cried out in the tale “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Andersen.

The U.S. holds itself out as the “exceptional”, “indispensable” nation. Canada holds itself out as the “humanitarian peace-keeping” nation. Both claim to be “forces for good” on the planet, forever respecting and promoting peace, human rights and democracy around the world.

These slogans have always been wrong. As people and countries, we must get beyond their mindless and harmful repetition.

(continued)

- **MATCHING DONOR:** Until December 31, an anonymous supporter will match (up to \$40,000) tax-deductible donations in Canada and U.S. To donate, see below.
- **FUNDING SUMMARY:** Groups and individuals Rights Action sent funds to in 2016: go to www.rightsaction.org for Excel document summary.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS:

Make checks payable to “Rights Action” and mail to the appropriate US or Canadian office.

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GET INFORMED/ GET INVOLVED

Speakers: Invite us to give presentations in your community about these issues

Educational Delegations:

Form your own group or join one of our educational-solidarity delegation seminars to Guatemala and Honduras to learn more about these issues and struggles

Daily News:

- www.democracynow.org
- www.upsidedownworld.org
- www.dominionpaper.ca
- www.rabble.ca

Get on/off listserv:

www.rightsaction.org

[www.facebook.com/
rightsaction.org](http://www.facebook.com/rightsaction.org)



The world recently learned that Fidel Castro, a revolutionary leader of Cuba, died at the age of 90. He is clearly one of those people who most helped expose, over the past decades, that the emperor isn't wearing any clothes. *Rights Action* sends our respects to Fidel's family and loved ones. We give thanks to Fidel for a life well lived.

“There is ample reason why (Fidel) is vilified in the U.S. [and Canada. Rights Action edit] and yet remains a huge hero throughout the Third World. By defying Yankee imperialism for 50 years, instituting the best health care, child immunization and literacy systems in the Western Hemisphere, exporting doctors to countries in need all over the globe, and being an unrepentant advocate of the poor and exploited, it is no surprise that millions will mourn his passing ... ”.

— Tom Morello, of the band Rage Against the Machine

The underlying causes of human rights violations, environmental destruction, war and repression across the planet go beyond elected leaders, particular political parties in power, and country borders. The causes are historic and systemic, and play themselves out from the local to national, regional and global levels. The U.S. and Canada – neither great nations nor awful – are oftentimes responsible for human rights violations, environmental destruction, war and repression in other countries ... in places like Honduras and Guatemala.

Increasingly, people are seeing that the emperor wears no clothes.

“A transformation is sweeping the globe. People everywhere are actively and loudly coming together to tell corporations and governments, “no more.” No more downplaying the consequences of unfettered growth. No more socializing the hazards and privatizing the profits. No more ignoring the wishes of ordinary people. The commons sustains all life, culture and economies. Wise stewardship, and localized decision making is needed now.”

—Greenpeace

2016 has been, in most ways, a typical, hard and sometimes quite sad year of work and struggle in Honduras and Guatemala, in support of people and communities suffering and resisting environmental harms, human rights violations and repression, many of which were caused by global (mainly U.S. and Canadian) corporations and investors, by the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (controlled by the elite G-8 nations), and by U.S. military involvements and “drug war” interventions.

“The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist. McDonald’s cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. The hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley’s technologies is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.”

— Thomas Friedman

Predictably, sadly, many people were killed for resisting and denouncing violently imposed global economic interests. People like Berta Caceres, the wonderful and empowering community and Mother Earth defender from western Honduras. People around the world have been empowered by Berta's life and world vision that is anti imperialist, pro human rights, pro environment and Mother Earth, anti patriarchy, and anti greed and privatization-driven capitalism.

“Action is the mother of hope.” — Pablo Neruda

Rights Action learned much from Berta. We share her vision and understanding. We grieve and lament her death, and the killings and wounding of so many more.

2016 is also a year when increasing numbers of North Americans began to get directly involved in Mother Earth defense, resource extraction related struggles, resisting harmful U.S and Canadian corporate and investor activities abroad, in places like Guatemala and Honduras, and inside our borders.

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.”

— Martin Luther King

Slowly, but surely, ever more North Americans are learning about and rejecting a global political, economic and military order wherein our governments, companies and investors export harms, violations, war and repression, while importing the profits and benefits. In recent months, attention has focused on the Standing Rock water, territory and community defense struggle against the private profit interests of the Dakota oil and gas pipeline constructed by the Energy Transfer Partners company and its investors. This struggle is particular to North Dakota and, at the same time, similar to many community, land and Mother Earth defense struggles that Rights Action supports in Honduras and Guatemala, that people and groups are involved with around the world.

“The Earth is not dying – it is being killed. The people killing it have names and addresses.” — Utah Phillips

Increasingly, North Americans understand that our governments, companies and investors are imposing a sometimes harmful economic development model in Guatemala and Honduras, in other countries of the global south, at Standing Rock and elsewhere across Canada and the U.S.; and that our banks, pension funds and private funds invest in and profit from all of the above.

“Our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may – in ways we prefer not to imagine – be linked to their suffering. The wealth of some may imply the destitution of others.” — Susan Sontag

As we carry on supporting courageous work and struggle in Honduras and Guatemala, we keep in mind these words from Noam Chomsky:

“There are no magic answers, no miraculous methods to overcome the problems we face, just the familiar ones: search for this understanding, education, organization, action ... and the kind of commitment that will persist despite the temptations of disillusionment, despite many failures and only limited successes, inspired by the hope of a brighter future.”

Thank-you for your donations to Rights Action. I welcome your questions and comments.

Grahame Russell
info@rightsaction.org

Ps – I can send you, by email, copies of the news articles, reports, interviews and films referenced below



Margarita Caal & Angelica Choc, Mayan Q'eqchi' women and victims of mining related rape and murder – Angelica is widow of murdered community leader Adolfo Ich – are plaintiffs in the Hudbay Minerals lawsuits in Canada.

DONATIONS:

Laptops,
Digital Cameras,
iPhones

If folks have used laptops, iPhones and/or digital cameras, that are of decent quality, that you would like to donate to Rights Action, that we would then give to our partner groups, let us know by email (info@rightsaction.org) and we can take it from there.

Solidarity-educational trips to Guatemala and Honduras, 2017

Guatemala, Saturday March 25 – Saturday April 1

Why Central Americans Flee North, Decade After Decade. Understanding the Human Rights, Poverty, Repression, Corruption & Impunity Crisis in Guatemala /
Information: info@rightsaction.org

Honduras, Saturday May 27 – Sunday June 4

Honouring the Life, Work & Struggles of Berta Caceres /
Information: Cara-Lee Malange, Mir Peace Centre, CMalange@selkirk.ca

Three main elements of Rights Action's work

Economic (& Material) Support: Week in week out, year in year out, Rights Action channels as much funds as we can (as well as computers, cameras and iPhones) to our partner groups on the front-lines of their own community, human rights and environmental defense struggles.

Solidarity & Reporting: We take educational delegations, journalists and filmmakers to visit with people and communities resisting the harms, violations and repression. Enabling face to face connections are crucial, as they humanize and personalize the issues, and the follow-up reporting helps shine more lights on the underlying north-south causes of the harms, violations and repression.

Education & Activism: We support education and activism work aimed at exposing and holding accountable U.S. and Canadian governments, companies and investors – and the U.S. military –, if and when they cause, directly or indirectly, the harms, violations and repression our partner groups are suffering and resisting.

Some Updates – Work and struggle Rights Action supports and is involved with

- We encourage folks to join our listserv (go to www.rightsaction.org) and follow our work on facebook (www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org) to receive regular updates from a variety of sources about the issues and struggles we support and are involved with.

Justice for Berta Caceres and Gustavo Castro

On March 3, 2016, assassins broke into the home of Berta Caceres in Honduras and killed her. They also shot her colleague Gustavo Castro; incredibly, thankfully, he survived. The killing of Berta was denounced around the world, received massive attention and, 9 months later, no justice has been done.

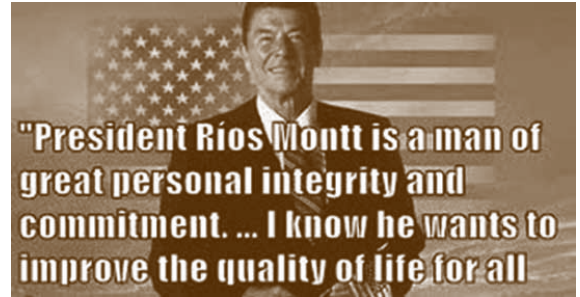
Since the 2009 U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup, hundreds of Hondurans have been murdered for political reasons. The country has become the 'murder capital of the world' and 'repression, corruption and impunity capital of the Americas'. The regime's killing of Berta sends a message throughout Honduras, and Central America, that they can assassinate people as well known as Berta, and get away with it.

Rights Action will continue to fund Berta's family and her organization COPINH as they seek justice for her assassination and struggle for serious reform of the State and society; we will continue to do what we can to hold the U.S. and Canadian governments to account for supporting the 2009 military coup and doing 'business as usual' with the political, military and economic elites while turning a blind eye to corruption, impunity and repression.



Justice for crimes against humanity in Guatemala

Former U.S. trained and backed general Efraín Ríos Montt is again facing genocide charges, this time as part of the “Dos Erres” massacre trial. Rights Action funds FAMDEGUA, the Association of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared of Guatemala, one of the oldest victims’ rights organizations, and a civil party in the Dos Erres lawsuit. No matter how long it takes, support must be provided to courageous Guatemalan victims of the U.S. backed genocides, massacres and disappearances of the 1970s, 80s and 90s. There is no time limit on struggles for truth, memory and justice. (Information on genocide and war crimes trials: <https://www.ijmonitor.org/category/guatemala-trials/>)



Hudbay Minerals lawsuits in Canada / Criminal trial in Guatemala

Since 2004, Rights Action has supported Q’eqchi’ communities in Guatemala suffering and resisting harms, violations and repression linked to Skye Resources and Hudbay Minerals. Since 2010, we have supported the 11 Q’eqchi’ women from the Lote 8 community (gang-raped during a violent eviction of their community in 2007), German Chub (shot and paralyzed by Hudbay security guards) and Angelica Choc (widow of Adolfo Ich, murdered by Hudbay security guards) as they seek justice in Canadian courts. The precedent setting Hudbay lawsuits proceed very slowly, but surely, spearheaded by these plaintiffs and Klippensteins Barristers and Solicitors.

We also support Angelica and German in a courageous trial in Guatemala against Mynor Padilla, former Colonel in the Guatemalan Army and former head of security for Hudbay, for the murder of Adolfo Ich and shooting of German.

Guatemalan women’s claims put focus on Canadian firms’ conduct abroad, New York Times, April 3, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/world/americas/guatemalan-womens-claims-put-focus-on-canadian-firms-conduct-abroad.html?_r=2

Mayan families’ quest for justice against Canadian mining company Hudbay, Toronto Star, June 19, 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/06/20/the-mayans-vs-the-mine.html>

How a Guatemalan murder trial could forever change Canadian overseas mining, Toronto Star, June 20, 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/06/20/how-a-guatemalan-murder-trial-could-forever-change-canadian-overseas-mining.html>

Canadian & American tourism ~versus~ Garifuna people in Honduras

Since 1998, Rights Action has supported the courageous work of OFRANEH (Organization of Fraternal Black and Garifuna People of Honduras) representing Garifuna communities along the north coast in defense of culture and values, collective and individual rights, lands and the environment. OFRANEH members have been attacked, threatened, jailed, shot and killed by Honduran government forces and private sector thugs with economic interests (African palm production, tourism, oil and gas, hydro-electric dam projects) in Garifuna territories.

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Since the U.S. and Canadian backed 2009 military coup, there has been a renewed invasion of Canadian and American tourism operators and investors “acquiring” Garifuna lands through corruption, graft and repression. The situation is tense and tenuous.

Canadian ‘porn king’ and Caribbean paradise, Toronto Star, November 20, 2016,
<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/11/20/the-canadian-porn-king-and-the-caribbean-paradise.html>

Recent reports on work and struggles Rights Action is involved with

The US and Canada Have Blood on Their Hands in Honduras

By Grahame Russell, October 22, 2016

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/The-US-and-Canada-Have-Blood-on-Their-Hands-in-Honduras-20161022-0010.html>

Angelica Choc: 7 Years Fighting Canadian Mining Impunity in Guatemala

Photos James Rodríguez / Text Grahame Russell

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/7-Years-Fighting-Against-Canadian-Mining-Impunity-in-Guatemala-20161018-0021.html>

Canada Is Not Honduras’ Friend: Coups, Repression and Profits

RadioFree Winnipeg interview with Grahame Russell

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/Canada-Is-Not-Honduras-Friend-Coups-Repression-and-Profits-20161105-0013.html>

The Bones of the Dead Are Not Safe: Stop Aura Minerals’ Honduran Mine Expansion

By Emilie Smith, August 27, 2016

<https://canthesebonespeak.wordpress.com/2016/08/27/tearing-up-holy-land/>

Endless Consequences: Another Victim of the Genocidal Chixoy Dam Project

By Grahame Russell, July 5, 2016

<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=5fd01922d6>

Mining Impunity & Call for Law Reform in Canada

<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=3d99426d47>

In May 2016, Professor Catherine Nolin and Grahame Russell completed a visit to Guatemala to re-examine community struggles related to: Goldcorp Inc, Hudbay Minerals, Tahoe Resources, KCA-Radios Gold.

“We continue to be astounded by the deafening silence and/or denials by the Canadian and U.S. governments, by the Guatemalan government, and by the mining companies and their investors about the widespread repression, human rights violations and environmental harms caused by mining in Guatemala, and by the context of corruption and impunity within which mining companies operate.”

— Catherine Nolin & Grahame Russell

Honduras: Blood and the Water

- View: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/faultlines/2016/09/honduras-blood-water-160920064355648.html>

Investigation into death of Indigenous, anti imperialist, feminist, environmental activist Berta Caceres

Hudbay Mineral's Hoax (Flin Flon Flim Flam)

- View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7aacPtEI8s>

51 minute film documents Hudbay Minerals mining in Guatemala, Peru and Canada, and plans to construct the Rosemont copper mine in the Santa Rita Mountains of Arizona.

How Can Angelica Choc and German Chub Get Justice?

- View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIt5geTIJc&feature=youtu.be>

3 minute report by Steven Schnoor documents how the Judge ordered a "security detail" for Mynor Padilla, former head of security for Hudbay and former Colonel in the Guatemalan Army), who is in jail and on trial for murder of Adolfo Ich and shooting of German Chub in September 2009.

Four Men Arrested For Murder Of Berta Caceres

- View: http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=16262

TheRealNews interview with Grahame Russell, May 4, 2016

Canadian 'Porn King' on Trial in Honduras

- View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWqoB5GTfm8>

8 minute report by Lazar Konforti documents how, on November 13, 2015, Randy Jorgensen, aka "The Porn King", appeared in court on charges of illegally appropriating ancestral Garifuna lands. The court ruled partially in Jorgensen's favour. OFRANEH and local communities claim judicial corruption and appealed the ruling.

Lote Ocho: Defending Maya-Q'eqchi' Territory

- View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuuJSIztTK8&feature=youtu.be>

5 minute film by Lazar Konforti documents how private security forces employed by Canadian company Hudbay Minerals, along with Guatemalan police and soldiers, destroyed the Maya-Q'eqchi' community of Lote Ocho, burning 100 homes to the ground, destroying personal property and food, and gang-raping 11 women villagers. Community members rebuild homes and community, even as they face the threat of another illegal eviction.

Conversation with Miriam Miranda of OFRANEH about Garifuna People in Honduras

- Listen: <http://tortillaconsal.com/tortilla/es/node/18085>

Recorded by Warwick Fry (Latin Radical), June 9, 2016, in office of OFRANEH in Sambo Creek.



Miriam Miranda, leader of OFRANEH

They Cut Me In Half

- View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXElOwBUn0E>

5 minute film by Lazar Konforti documents how German Chub, a young Maya-Q'eqchi' father, was left paralysed from the waist down after being shot by Mynor Padilla, head of security for Hudbay Minerals in Guatemala. One lung was also permanently damaged and the bullet remains lodged next to his spinal column.

Repression in Honduras: Violent and fraudulent elections; role of Canadian government and corporations in support of military-backed regime

- Listen: <http://freecityradio.tumblr.com/post/62852946429/free-city-radio-2-audio>

CKUT "free city radio" interview with Grahame Russell

Genocide Trial in Guatemala

- Listen: <http://vensol.blogspot.com.au/2013/06/former-president-on-war-crimes-charges.html>

Warwick Fry (Australia) interview with Grahame Russell (June 3, 2013) who was in Guatemala for trial of former US trained and supported general Efraim Rios Montt accused of war crimes, including genocide.

Please share this newsletter far 'n' wide



Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)

Matching Donor: Until December 31, an anonymous supporter will match (up to \$40,000) tax-deductible donations in Canada and U.S. To donate, see below.

To support community, human rights and environmental defense organizations and their work and struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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- Canada: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/rights-action/>
- U.S.: <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations> (click on NetworkForGood)

To donate stock: write to info@rightsaction.org for instructions



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