

## **Threats made by employee of CGN (co-defendant with Hudbay Minerals in lawsuits in Canada) against Lote 8 women plaintiffs in Hudbay/CGN lawsuits; Armed men suspiciously shadowing Angelica Choc**

<http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/threats-made-by-cgn-against-plaintiffs-in-hudbaycgn-lawsuits>

Leading up to the November 2017 trip to Canada of the Q'eqchi' plaintiffs to be cross-examined by opposing lawyers in the Hudbay Minerals/CGN (compania guatemalteca de niquel) lawsuits, Rights Action is concerned about a meeting a CGN employee had with Lote 8 villagers, making intimidating statements related to the participation of the Lote 8 women in the lawsuits in Canada. Moreover, unidentified armed men have been suspiciously and threateningly following Angelica Choc (widow of Adolfo Ich and a plaintiff in the lawsuits) and members of her family and close friends.



(Angelica Choc and 9 of 11 plaintiffs from Lote 8)

### **September 17, 2017 - CGN meeting with Lote 8 community**

On this day, Rafael Artola (employee with CGN) called for and had a meeting in Cahoboncito (home community of some Lote 8 extended families) with a group of male community leaders, one of whom informed Angelica Choc of what the CGN representative said. Artola asked the men to persuade the women to withdraw their lawsuits in Canada; told them the women could be imprisoned if they continued with their claims; attempted to get the cellphone numbers of Rosa Elvira and Margarita Caal (two of the plaintiffs) so that he could urge them to meet with some sort of “commission” that had been “sent from the courts of Canada” and that was visiting Guatemala. Artola said that if community leaders succeeded in convincing the women to withdraw their demands, the long-standing issue of title to Lote 8’s land could be settled by CGN right away. This is not the first time CGN has held intimidating meetings like this, over the past few years.

### **Armed men suspiciously following and shadowing Angelica Choc, family and friends**

(Reported by Angelica Choc, October 14, 2017)

*“Receive many blessings and may your work be filled with success. Grahame, I am writing you now to tell you a little about the situation that I am going through with my family and companeros. It’s very unfortunate and sad that we must suffer this way. The only thing I have done is defend my rights – the rights of the Indigenous peoples that are being violated and abused of by the CGN mining company and their owners from other countries. It is my right to seek justice and they cannot prevent me from doing so. Because of all of that, I am being followed and harassed, intimidated and under close watch.*

*These last days I have seen strange vehicles by my house, as well as unfamiliar armed men. I have been followed and harassed. For example, on October 11, 12, and 13, I participated in a meeting of representatives of community radios – and the vehicles were there as well, and armed men were walking around where I was. I felt fear, I felt intimidated, harassed, and I had to leave immediately with the help of some of companeras, to get back to my house.*

*I told my family about everything. During the evening of October 12, I called my brother Ramiro Choc to see how he was doing, and was shocked to learn that he too was suffering everything I was suffering. He was taken to a safe place thanks to the help of his companeros. We ended our conversation that night – I said “rest my brother, if god is with us, who can be against us. He responded Amen.”*

*Thank God, woke the next morning on October 13, we did some work around the house and taking care of our small animals. We needed to buy corn and some other things and our companero Juan Jose Tun went to the offices in front of the Municipality of El Estor to process the paperwork to get his NIT (tax I.D. number). I went with my son Jose Manuel to buy things but we needed help to bring back the corn, so I called Juan Jose and he responded “I am surrounded by armed men – they are following me, you should be careful.” “We’re on our way”, I told him but then Jose Manuel said to me “Mom, let’s get out of here, there are unfamiliar people around us here”, and he was right, so I said “be calm, let’s go see Juanjo”.*

*Well, we got to where Juanjo was – I just let him know that we were close by. So when he was done with that administrative procedure, he headed out in our direction. He hadn’t noticed us and just like he had said, we saw the armed men – starting to walk towards him. So I called out to him – I said we are here and he turned towards us and came with us. The armed men then pretended they weren’t following. Jose Manuel told him “get on your bicycle – you go ahead and we will follow in the motorcycle.” I told him that we should be calm.*

*All of this and much more has happened with my family and I think that this is all due to my struggles as a defender. Well, my struggle continues, I am Guatemalan, an Indigenous woman, my only dream is to live with peace and tranquility in our communities, that’s what I want. Let’s hope the state will look after our safety.*

*That is all for now, Grahame. We are focusing on what needs to be done today – I need your support more than ever, I feel sad for my children, I know I have done nothing wrong. I hope to be in contact with you often. Call me if there’s anything.”*

**September 17, 2016 – Attack on Angelica’s home**

This recent spate of suspicious intimidations is occurring just before the pending trip of the plaintiffs to Canada, and one year after unidentified men open fire on Angelica's small home in El Estor, late on the night of September 17, 2016, while she slept inside with two young children. Nothing ever came of the criminal investigation into that attack.

Not only is Angelica Choc a plaintiff in the Hudbay/CGN lawsuits in Canada, she is a private-prosecutor in the courageous criminal trial in Guatemala against Mynor Padilla (former lieutenant-colonel in the Guatemala army, former head of security of Hudbay/CGN) for the targeted killing of her husband, Adolfo Ich, and the shooting-paralyzing of German Chub (who is also a plaintiff in the lawsuits in Canada); furthermore, Angelica is a well-respected leader, along with members of the El Estor Gremial de Pescadores (union of artisanal fisherpeople) as they protest and denounce on-going environmental harms and human rights violations by CGN's mining operation.

### **Holding Hudbay/CGN responsible**

As stated above, CGN is co-defendant in the Hudbay Minerals lawsuits. Rights Action holds Hudbay and CGN partially (if not wholly) responsible for these on-going acts of intimidation and suspicious harassment, and for any further direct physical attacks that might occur. Rights Action believes that Hudbay Minerals must take all measures to ensure that CGN employees and any people (armed or unarmed) associated with CGN let the Q'eqchi' villagers in and around CGN's mine site, including the plaintiffs and witnesses in the lawsuits and their families, are left alone to live in peace.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Hudbay Minerals**

25 York St #800, Toronto, ON M5J 2V5  
(416) 362-8181  
[www.hudbayminerals.com](http://www.hudbayminerals.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Hudbay Minerals/CGN lawsuits in Canada**

[www.chocversushudbay.com](http://www.chocversushudbay.com)

### ***Defensora***

An award-winning 40 minute film (by Rachel Schmidt, 2013) documenting Maya Q'eqchi' peoples' struggle in Guatemala to reclaim ancestral lands and to seek justice in Canadian and Guatemalan courts for murder, shootings and rapes committed by police, soldiers and private security guards working for Canadian mining company Hudbay Minerals and its Guatemalan subsidiary CGN. View: <https://vimeo.com/75725049>

\*\*\*\*\*

Funding appeal: \$20,000. (All donations welcome)

### **Precedent-Setting “Hudbay Minerals” Lawsuits Are Advancing**

Funds raised will pay for many of the costs of the 13 plaintiffs and two companions from their home communities in rural, eastern Guatemala, to Toronto and back again. Hudbay will incur some of the expenses. Our costs include: in-Guatemala travel; in-Canada travel; food and lodging in Guatemala (near airport); acquiring passports & visas; purchasing extra clothing and footwear (for people who live in one of the hottest regions of Guatemala); family stipends to leave food and care-givers for children staying at home; two Rights Action trips to Guatemala in October, to help prepare the plaintiffs for the trip and accompany them.

## **Tax-deductible donations (Canada & U.S.)**

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

Credit-Card Donations: [www.rightsaction.org/donate/](http://www.rightsaction.org/donate/)

\*\*\*\*\*

More information

Grahame Russell

[grahame@rightsaction.org](mailto:grahame@rightsaction.org)

1-416-807-4436

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

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

\*\*\*\*\*