

## **Elena Choc Quib has died Killed by cancer, and by the indifference, power and wealth of a faraway Canadian mining company, its investors and government supporters**

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/elena-choc-quib-has-died>

Elena – a courageous, Maya Q’eqchi’ land, rights and community defender, mother, sister, daughter - died at 4am, October 18, 2020, in El Estor, surrounded by family and other Q’eqchi’ community defenders.



Lawyers Murray Klippenstein and Cory Wanless, with (L-R) Amalia Cac Tiul (and baby), Carmela Caal Ical, Elena Choc Quib and Angelica Choc - in Klippensteins office, preparing for week of depositions (examinations for discovery) in Toronto, November 2017.

To be honest, Elena – one of 13 plaintiffs in the landmark Highbay Minerals lawsuits – died of historic and on-going racism, impoverishment and violence, of greed and disdain of the powerful and wealthy in Guatemala, and beyond.

And to be very clear, the deep poverty that marked Elena's life was worsened measurably by the illegal, violent evictions that she and her entire community of Lote 8 suffered in January 2007, evictions carried out on behalf of the Canadian mining company Skye Resources (soon after amalgamated with Hudbay Minerals). Since then, they have not been able to return to their own land.

On top of all this, it was during these illegal evictions that Elena and 10 other women villagers were gang-raped by roving gangs of mining company security guards, Guatemalan police and soldiers, paid for and acting on behalf of Skye Resources (Hudbay Minerals).

It is this sexual violence against Elena and the other women that is being litigated in the Hudbay Minerals lawsuits, along with two other cases of mining company violence: the killing (a targeted killing, I believe) of the widely respected land, rights and community defender Adolfo Ich, and the shooting-paralyzing of a young campesino man German Chub.

For 10 years, Elena, the other Lote 8 women, German Chub and Angelica Choc (widow of Adolfo Ich) have been seeking justice and reparations in Canadian courts for the illegal evictions, sexual violence, killing and shooting they suffered at the hands of a powerful, global mining company, its investors and government supporters.

For ten years, Hudbay has spent (how many?) millions of dollars on a team of well-connected corporate lawyers (Faskens law firm) who have fought Elena and the plaintiffs (and their wonderful lawyers Murray Klippenstein and Cory Wanless) every legal step of the way, dragging out and slowing down the lawsuits, furthering impoverishing the 13 victims and their families, while raking in untold amounts of money – 'earnings', they say – to do whatever they can to wear down the plaintiffs.

They wore out Elena Choc Quib.

The immediate cause of Elena's death was cancer. But, ultimately, Elena was killed by the historic poverty and violence, corruption and impunity of Guatemala's racist elites, and she was killed by the casual indifference and impunity of a wealthy, powerful, faraway Canadian company, its investors and government supporters.

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For the past few weeks, Rights Action has supported emergency health work – spearheaded through Angelica Choc, providing the medical support Elena needed. This support could not save Elena's life, but allowed Elena to die with much less pain, supported by medical staff, accompanied by family and other Hudbay Minerals lawsuits plaintiffs.

Now, support will be provided to Elena's family for a commemoration of her life, ceremony and burial.

Soon, attention will be paid to getting support to Elena's family – focusing particularly on providing for her youngest children.

And all along, support for Elena's extraordinary justice struggle in Canada – along with the 12 other plaintiffs – will continue. As indifferent and callous as Hudbay Minerals management and board are to the suffering of others they caused in faraway places where they never have been, in pursuit of personal enrichment, Elena's struggle will not go away.

If and when one day, justice is achieved in these lawsuits, Elena's family will receive their due reparations.

Grahame Russell, Rights Action

(Grahame works with Rights Action. Since 2004, Grahame has worked with and supported mining-harmed, Mayan Q'eqchi' communities of eastern Guatemala, including supporting all aspects of the landmark justice struggles of Elena and the 12 other plaintiffs since 2010.)

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### **General information**

About Mayan Q'eqchi justice and territorial defense struggles related to Hudbay's former mining operation in Guatemala, now owned and operated by Solway Investment Group:  
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### **Hudbay Minerals ARCHIVES**

<https://rightsaction.org/hudbay-minerals-archives>

### **EVICTING LOTE OCHO: How a Canadian Mining Company Infiltrated the Guatemalan State**

The Intercept, September 26, 2020

<https://theintercept.com/2020/09/26/hudbay-skye-canada-mining-guatemala/>

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## **Support funds for family of Elena Choc Quin**

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