

Rights Action

info@rightsaction.org • www.rightsaction.org • September 2011

No More Politics and Business as Usual with War Criminals and Repressive Regimes (This is how the unjust global economy works)

Dear friends & supporters,

It is not easy, but it is necessary to keep on struggling and working for the rights and well-being of a majority of Guatemalans and Hondurans, who continue to live in conditions of exploitation and poverty, racism and repression.

They live in violent, unjust societies dominated by wealthy minority elites linked to their own militaries, and linked to the governments of the USA and Canada and to a host of American and Canadian businesses and investor interests.

Receiving donations only from individuals and private foundations in the USA and Canada, Rights Action continues to support and work with amazing people and groups in Guatemala and Honduras, as well as in El Salvador and Chiapas. We are clear in our vision that these are "our" problems we are struggling to transform and remedy, not "their" problems alone.

Thank-you for your on-going donations and trust as we pursue this aim and struggle of creating a local-to-global

economic and political order based on mutual respect and benefit, based on equality inside and between nations, and based on living in harmony with Mother Earth.

Please continue to send us any of your questions, comments and suggestions

Annie Bird (annie@rightsaction.org)
Grahame Russell (info@rightsaction.org)

Thank-You Karen and Until Soon...

After 3 years of great work, activism and commitment with Rights Action in Guatemala and Honduras, we say thank-you very much to Karen Spring, who returns to Canada to complete her studies. We wish Karen all the best, and look forward to many more years of good work and struggle for another world is necessary and possible.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS:

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

CANADA

Rights Action
552-351 Queen St E,
Toronto ON M5A 1T8

UNITED STATES

Rights Action
Box 50887
Washington, DC
20091-0887

CREDIT CARD DONATIONS

www.rightsaction.org.

DONATIONS OF STOCK

Contact info@rightsaction.org

BOARD

(United States)

Annie Bird
Iain Guest
Grahame Russell
Jim Schrider
Julie Stewart
Michael Willis

BOARD

(Canada)

James MacDonald
Wayne Rosen
Merran Smith
John Tynnela

FULL-TIME STAFF

Annie Bird
Grahame Russell

PART-TIME STAFF

Matthew Simpson

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Mary Schrider
Eliza Strode
Jim Schrider
Rosalind Gill



PLEASE JOIN OUR DELEGATIONS TO ...

Honduras and Guatemala • January 2012 (exact dates TBD)

Mining, Biofuels & Militarization: US Military Aid & Canadian-American Economic Interests

Over the past five years, Guatemala and Honduras have seen a surge of investment in sugar cane and African palm plantations spurred by international financing mechanisms promoting biofuel production. In a similar way, mining companies are taking advantage of benefits provided by so-called “free trade” agreements to use destructive extraction techniques which endanger communities and destroy watersheds.

This has generated land conflicts, evictions of indigenous and campesino communities, destruction of food production, undermining food sovereignty. The response has been militarization with police, military and private security contractors, generating the highest levels of human rights abuses that the region has seen for decades.

Fenix nickle mine in El Estor (formerly owned by HudBay Minerals), Cerro Blanco gold mine in Asuncion Mita (owned by Goldcorp Inc), Chabil Utzaj sugar cane company in the Polochic Valley, are just a few of the projects that campesinos and indigenous communities are resisting in Guatemala. In the wake of the June 28, 2011 military coup in Honduras, the United States is promoting the remilitarization of Central America through the Central American Regional Security Initiative.

DELEGATION LEADER: Led by Annie Bird, co-director of Rights Action since 1995, this trip to will enable participants to learn first-hand about community development and indigenous and human rights struggles, about the unjust global “development” model, and about how to be involved, in North America, with political and legal activism in support of global justice and equality.

FOR INFORMATION: Annie Bird, 202-680-3002, annie@rightsaction.org

* * *

Guatemala • March 10-17, 2012

Dams, Mining & African Palm Production vs. Community Development, Environmental Justice & Human Rights

“Chixoy” Hydro-Electric Dam: 30th Anniversary Of The Rio Negro Massacres

The timing of this delegation over-laps with the 30th anniversary of the March 13, 1982 “Rio Negro” massacre – one of 5 massacres that killed some 450 Maya Achi villagers, to help make way for the construction of the “Chixoy Dam”, a “development” project of the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank in partnership with the Guatemalan military regimes of the day. We will visit with surviving family and community members in the remote mountainous village of Rio Negro.

Nickel Mining & Production Of African Palm & Sugar For Diesel Bio-Fuel: Repression & Forced Evictions Of Mayan Qeqchi Peoples

The delegation will also visit with Mayan Qeqchi communities suffering repression and illegal evictions at the hands of nickel mining companies (going back almost 40 years), and producers of African palm trees and sugar for production of diesel bio-fuel.

Delegation Leader

Led by Grahame Russell, co-director of Rights Action since 1995, this trip will enable participants to learn first-hand about community development and indigenous and human rights struggles, about the unjust global “development” model, and about how to be involved, in North America, with political and legal activism in support of global justice and equality.

COST: US\$750. This covers 7 nights of hotel; 2 meals a day for 7 days; transportation in-country; trip organization, guiding, translation; honorariums for some people & communities we meet with. Participants pay for their own travel to and from Guatemala.

DATES: Arrive in Guatemala City on Saturday March 10; depart on Saturday March 17. (There are no delegation activities planned for these dates) If delegates want to come earlier or stay later, to see more of Guatemala, that is obviously their decision.

FOR INFORMATION: Grahame Russell, info@rightsaction.org, 860-352-2448

No More Politics & Business as Usual with War Criminals In Guatemala

Allegation letter submitted to Juan Méndez, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Calling for Investigation into Genocide, Torture and Disappearances

With your trust and financial support, Rights Action has, since 1995, supported Guatemalans as they courageously work and struggle for memory and truth, and for justice for the genocide and other war crimes of the recent past.

Despite this amazing work, the leading candidate for the September presidential elections is ex-General Otto Perez Molina, ... showing how little Guatemala has changed structurally. Guatemala is still dominated and abused by the economic, political and military elites that were the intellectual authors of the State repression, terrorism and genocide of the 1970s, 80s and early 90s.

ALLEGATION LETTER: On July 6, 2011, three human rights activists (Annie Bird, Rights Action; Jennifer Harbury, attorney; Kelsey Alford-Jones, Guatemala Human Rights Commission-USA) submitted a formal Allegation Letter to Juan Méndez, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture. The Letter calls for an investigation into the role that Guatemalan presidential candidate ex-General Otto Perez Molina played in the commission of genocide, torture and disappearances in Guatemala during the worst years of State repression and terrorism in the 1980s.

On August 22, 2011, the Letter was re-submitted along with the names of hundreds of people and organizations from many countries signing on, in support.

WATCH (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdV1WJJEH&feature=email>) – a Democracy Now interview (in English and Spanish)



Ex-General Otto Perez Molina, leading presidential candidate for September 2011 elections, alleged author of war crimes in Guatemala, particularly in the 1980s. ©Grahame Russell/2011

with Francisco Goldman about how Otto Perez Molina is also accused of being one of the intellectual authors of the 1998 assassination of Bishop Juan Gerardi.

On request, we can email you the Allegation Letter, along with the 100s of sign-on persons and groups. You can also find it at www.rightsaction.org. Please re-send the Letter to your own organizations, listservs, social networks, etc, and please send copies to your own politicians and media.

The underlying aim to all of this is that of demanding and struggling for: No more business and politics as usual with war criminals in Guatemala (or anywhere). This goes for governments, companies, investors, the World Bank, the United Nations, etc.

No More Politics and Business as Usual with Repressive Regimes

Canada is Becoming More Gringo than the Gringos

Canadian Prime Minister 'Greeted' With Resistance To "Free Trade" Agreement

On August 12, members of the Honduran Women's Collective (CODEMUH), Council of Indigenous and Popular Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), Bishop Monseñor Luis Santos, Rights Action and female workers from Gildan's sweatshops, met in the central plaza in San Pedro Sula to protest the arrival of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to sign the so-called "Free Trade" Agreement (FTA) with Honduran regime leader Pepe Lobo.

- **The rhetoric of the Canadian government:** Praising Honduras' so-called return to democracy and respect for human rights
- **The reality:** Harper went to Honduras to promote the expansion of Canadian business and investment interests, despite the fundamental lack of democracy, despite on-going State repression and human rights violations

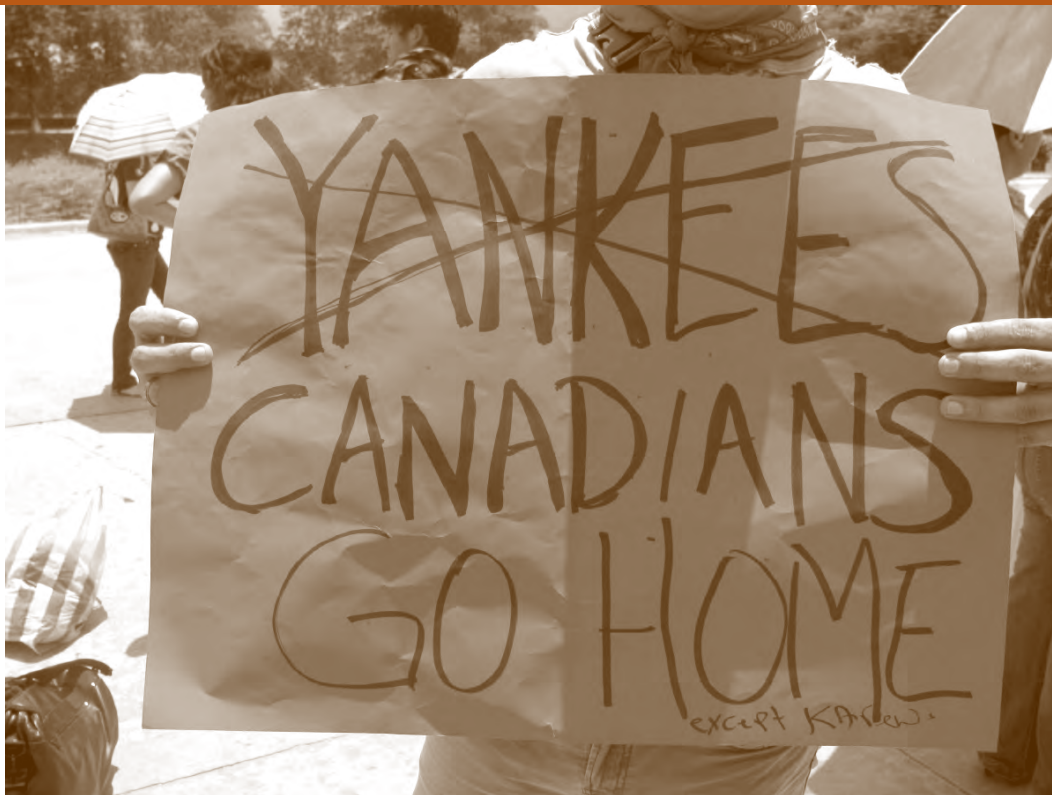
Canada Is Becoming More Gringo Than The Gringos

Canada's business and investment interests in Honduras have grown since the June 28, 2009 military coup that Canada and the United States (alone in the western hemisphere) supported, both directly and indirectly.

During a recent protest against Canadian tourism investments along Honduras' north coast that are resulting in rights violations and forced displacements of Indigenous-Garifuna communities, a Garifuna woman said: "Canada is becoming more gringo than the gringos."

After the June 28, 2009 military coup, the post-coup regime staged the November 2009 "elections" (that were fraudulent with widespread repression the day of the elections) and then staged the January 2010 installation of the current regime headed by Pepe Lobo.

What the coup achieved was the re-concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the undemocratic Honduran oligarchic elite, known as *golpistas* (coup perpetrators),



August 12, 2011, in front of the ExpoCentre in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, where Canadian Prime Minister Steven Harper signed a so-called “free trade” agreement with the Honduran regime. ©Karen Spring

who have long proven willing to accommodate American and increasingly Canadian investment and business interests, while exploiting and using repression against their own people.

The visit of Prime Minister Harper made a clear and dismal statement about Canada’s real interests in Honduras that have nothing to do with human rights and democracy. Simply put, Harper’s visit was to promote Canada’s economic interests in Honduras – mining, *maquiladora* sweatshops, tourism, and ‘privatized’ model cities. The FTA further entrenches the rights of Canadian investment and business interests.

Canadian Military Support

As if human rights violations and health and environmental harms being caused by Canadian business and investment interests in Honduras were not enough, the Canadian government sent 150 Canadian soldiers to Honduras to participate in military training sessions. As the Honduran people suffer the highest levels of State repression in recent decades, committed with impunity by the army, police and privatized security forces, Canada’s contribution to the reinforcement of Honduras’ armed forces is the last thing needed.

Formal Inquiries

Rights Action asks Canadians and Americans to join us in continuing to support courageous community based organizations in Honduras, resisting the repression and impunity of the military and police backed regime, seeking to restore their democracy and respect for the rule of law.

We also seek your support in demanding the establishment of Congressional and Parliamentary inquiries into Canadian and American post-military coup investment and business interests in Honduras, given that it is these economic interests that led the US and Canadian governments to effectively support the military coup and the repressive post-coup regime.

Your Money at Work: Emergency Response Funding

As is known, on an on-going basis Rights Action channels donations and grants to community organizations in Guatemala and Honduras (and in El Salvador and Chiapas, to a lesser extent) that are designing and carrying out their own community development, environmental defense, human rights and justice projects and struggles.

To date in 2011, we have channeled over \$330,000 to our partner groups for their projects. A hugely important part of this funding work is providing funds, on short notice, to victims of repression and/or disasters. Below, a summary people, families and organizations we have provided emergency funding to in 2011.

- **January 28, Honduras:** \$80 to MCA campesino organization, for emergency health needs of Selia, wounded during violent, illegal evictions - related to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **January 28, Honduras:** \$186 to MUCA campesino organization, for emergency protection needs of Juan, victim of an illegal detention and torture - related to his organizing work in opposition to repression and evictions due to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **February 01, Guatemala:** \$200 for family of Diodora, a Mayan Mam woman shot due to her refusal to sell her plot of land to the Goldcorp Inc. open-pit, cyanide leaching mining operation.
- **February 04, Honduras:** \$1030 to OFRANEH (leading Garifuna indigenous organization) for legal defense needs of Alfredo, facing trumped up criminal charges due to his work in opposition to illegal incursions of international tourism business-investor interests into Garifuna communities and territories.
- **March 07, Honduras:** \$245 to MUCA campesino organization, for emergency protection needs of Juan, victim of an illegal detention and torture, due to Juan's organizing work in opposition to repression and evictions due to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **March 08, Honduras:** \$492 to MCA campesino organization, for emergency house re-building work in community of Guadalupe Carney – burned by wealthy landowner to make way for production of sugar cane and African palm for production of diesel bio-fuels.
- **March 15, Guatemala:** \$2060 for emergency food, shelter and medical supplies for hundreds of Mayan Qeqchi families illegally evicted from communities and homes (burned to the ground) in the Polochic Valley, to make way for production of sugar cane and African palm, for production of diesel bio-fuels. Includes funds for family of Antonio Bec Ac, Mayan Qeqchi campesino shot dead.
- **April 07, Guatemala:** \$715 for health needs of a Mayan Mam woman and leader in opposition to the harms and violations caused by Goldcorp Inc's open-pit, cyanide leaching gold mining operation.
- **April 07, Guatemala:** \$655 for emergency political and humanitarian response work to illegal evictions of Mayan Qeqchi communities and homes (burned to the ground) in the Polochic Valley, to make way for production of sugar cane and African palm.

- **April 20, Honduras:** \$160 to MCA campesino organization for food and health needs of illegally jailed Isabal, due to his organizing work in opposition to repression and evictions due to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **April 27, Honduras:** \$2050 to Siria Valley Environmental Defense Committee for emergency health needs of community members harmed by Goldcorp Inc's open-pit, cyanide leaching gold mine.
- **May 25, Honduras:** \$30 to COPINH for trip to State and society re-founding meeting, in opposition to the post-military coup regime.
- **May 25, Honduras:** \$55 to OFRANEH to purchase a recorder for radio interviews done by local Garifuna community radio.
- **May 25, Honduras:** \$25 to OFRANEH so that member can travel to meeting of National Resistance Front.
- **May 25, Guatemala:** \$760 for family of Oscar Reyes, a Mayan Qeqchi man shot dead during illegal evictions of communities and homes (burned to the ground) in the Polochic Valley, to make way for production of sugar cane and African palm.
- **May 28, Honduras:** \$85 to MCA campesino organization for food and health needs of illegally jailed Isabal due to his organizing work in opposition to repression and evictions due to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **June 01, Honduras:** \$50 to family of Abel for health harms caused by Goldcorp Inc's cyanide leaching, open-pit gold mine.
- **June 01, Honduras:** \$50 to family of Eder for health harms caused by Goldcorp Inc's cyanide leaching, open-pit gold mine.
- **June 06, Guatemala:** \$780 for family of Maria Margarita, a Mayan Qeqchi woman shot dead during illegal evictions of communities and homes (burned to the ground) in the Polochic Valley, to make way for production of sugar cane and African palm for diesel bio-fuels.
- **June 20, Honduras:** \$500 to Rigores Community for food, meds and shelter after illegal and violent destruction of community due to production of African palm for diesel bio-fuel markets.
- **June 20, Honduras:** \$110 to Rodolfo for meds related to blood poisoning caused by Goldcorp's open pit, cyanide leaching mine.
- **June 23, El Salvador:** \$560 for family members of a targeted killing in the Cabanas region due to opposition to Pacific Rim's gold mining interests.
- **July 01, Guatemala:** \$450 for health attention for Mayan Qeqchi woman who suffered miscarriages due to being victim of a gang-raping in 2007 by soldiers, police and private security guards hired by HudBay Minerals nickel company.
- **July 22, Guatemala:** \$130 for family of Diodora, Mayan Mam woman shot due to her refusal to sell her plot of land to the Goldcorp Inc. open-pit, cyanide leaching mining operation.
- **July 22, Guatemala:** \$270 for family of German, Mayan Qeqchi man left paralysed after being shot by private security guards hired by HudBay Minerals.
- **July 25, El Salvador:** \$312 for exhumation of bodies of war crime victims, covered by a mudslide in Morazan department.

– continued on the following page

Continued from the previous page

- July 25, Guatemala: \$1030 for family of Melecio Chen, a Mayan Achi man and survivor of the Rio Negro massacres (caused by the opposition of the community to being forcibly evicted to make way for the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank funded Chixoy dam), killed by gangs, possibly related to organized crime.
- July 25, Honduras: \$100 to COPINH for food for protest in defense of territory, forests and rivers.
- July 29, Honduras: \$540 to Siria Valley Environmental Committee for community and legal defense of 31 people facing trumped-up criminal charges for their community defense work related to Goldcorp Inc's cyanide leaching, open-pit gold mine and illegal logging.
- August 08, Guatemala: \$530 to Carlos Chen (survivor of the Rio Negro massacres caused by the opposition of the Rio Negro community to being forcibly evicted to make way for the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank funded Chixoy dam) for health emergency of children.
- August 08, Guatemala: \$320 for emergency support for Ramiro Choc, a Mayan Qeqchi political prisoner.
- August 22, Haiti: \$1710 for operation of orphanage housing orphans from the 2010 earthquake.
- August 23, Guatemala: \$280 for family of German, Mayan Qeqchi man left paralysed after being shot by private security guards hired by HudBay Minerals

Thank-you for your trust in and support for this work.



RightsAction

Box 50887
Washington, DC 20091-0887



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WASHINGTON, DC
PERMIT 735