

Rights Action

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December 2021

**“A triumphant day.
A day of many tears”**

End of the U.S./Canadian-backed Narco-regime in Honduras

12 years and 5 months after a U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup ousted Honduras' last democratic government, actual democratic elections took place. The drug-trafficking, military-backed candidate supported by the U.S. and Canada did NOT win!

It is hard to overstate the joy of most Hondurans, after 12 years and 5 months of systemic human rights violations and exploitation, repression, corruption and impunity, under a regime supported and 'legitimized' by the U.S., Canada, and by other governments and actors in the so-called "international community".

It is hard to overstate the amount of death and suffering, destruction and loss caused by this regime, from the day of the coup (June 28, 2009) through to the November 28, 2021 election of incoming President Xiomara Castro of the LIBRE party. In 2009, Xiomara was the "first lady" of Honduras, married to President Mel Zelaya who was ousted at gun-point, along with his government.

It is impossible to know exactly how many 100s of 1000s of Hondurans were forced to flee into exile, trying to find safe haven in Mexico or the U.S. from the ravages of this regime, since 2009.



Shout out to supporters and activists

Rights Action thanks our donors and supporters who kept on funding the work and struggle of our Honduran community partner groups, as they suffered repression, corruption

(continued)

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and human rights violations, as they kept fighting for the restoration of their democracy and rule of law, for the well-being of their communities and country, for Honduras' self-determination.

A shout out to grassroots NGOs and organizations across the U.S. and Canada working to pressure the U.S. and Canada to stop supporting and 'legitimizing' this regime.

Shout out to Honduran people

Mostly, a shout out to the majority Honduran population, to community-based organizations and NGOs, to courageous community leaders and to the LIBRE party for persevering, despite 12 years and 5 months of repression and political persecution.

Like many of our Honduran friends and partner groups, Rights Action feared the worst on election day. We feared that once again the Honduran regime, with carte blanche support from the U.S., Canada and "international community", would fraudulently steal the elections, as they did in 2009, 2013, 2017.

But the clarity of vision, courage and strength of the Honduran majority won out. President elect Xiomara Castro – first women president in Honduran history – won a resounding victory.

Nothing will be easy

The incoming government inherits a treasury, State institutions and judiciary hollowed out and/or corrupted by the regime headed by narco-trafficking President Juan Orlando Hernandez and the National Party. Organized crime infiltrated most branches of the government and State, including the military and police.

The incoming government will receive little real support from Honduras' traditional economic elites that were, in their majority, fully in support of the 2009 military coup.

President Xiomara's government will receive little real support from the U.S., Canada and "international community". Pretty speeches aside about respecting the sovereignty of other countries, promoting democracy and human rights, etc., this cabal of wealthy, powerful nations and international actors will continue to pressure her government to try and ensure Honduras remains 'open-for-global-business'. Translated: Ensuring unfettered access to Honduran resources and exploitable labour by global companies, banks and investors.

The Honduran majority population has already begun the hard work to take their country back, to start re-building their communities, local economies and governing institutions.

It remains an urgent and timeworn challenge for the people and institutions of the cabal of rich, powerful countries – primarily the U.S. and Canada in this case – to start to hold our governments, companies and banks politically and legally accountable each and every time they intervene in, 'legitimize' and do 'business-as-usual' with corrupt, repressive, anti-democratic regimes in Honduras, and beyond.

Read: "Elections in Honduras: The challenge of ending twelve years of neoliberalism", by Giorgio Trucchi, <http://www.tortillaconsal.com/tortilla/node/13443>

View: "Bertha Zúniga Cáceres, daughter of assassinated Berta Cáceres, on next steps in recovering democracy in Honduras after historic left victory", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yg55GURdKmU>



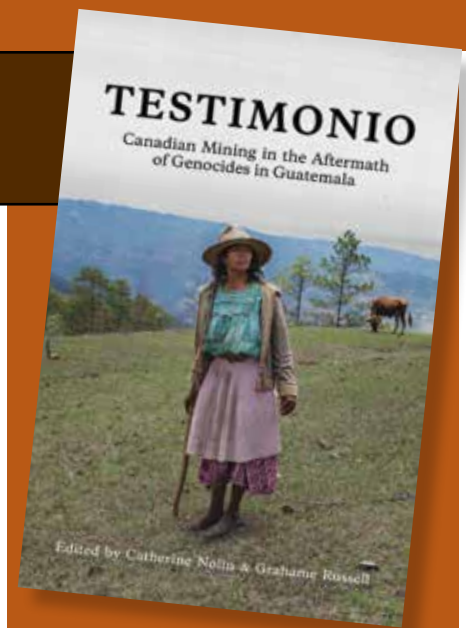
Published by **Between The Lines**
October 2021

Ten years ago, I had the privilege of touring the sites of several Canadian mining operations in Guatemala, including the infamous Marlin mine owned by Goldcorp Inc., and the now ever more infamous Fenix Mine, then owned by Canadian company Hudbay Minerals. I was the guest of Grahame Russell of Rights Action who has tirelessly worked for mining justice in that country for many years.

Successive Guatemalan governments have given the green light to hundreds of foreign mining companies, many of them Canadian, who destroy the local vegetation, pollute waterways and endanger the lives of local communities and Indigenous People. I met with many courageous people who were victims of this system. The price paid by those who oppose these mines is horrific, including beatings, killings, imprisonment, gang rape and constant threats and intimidation by Guatemalan police and military, by company security guards and by local thugs supportive of the mines. I was deeply moved both by their stories of courage and of Grahame's unstinting support.

So, reading *Testimonio* was a very personal experience for me and brought back the outrage I felt at the governments of Guatemala and Canada for allowing these atrocities to continue. The book tells the story of what the UN has called 'state planned and carried out genocide' against Guatemala's Indigenous People during the 36-years of government repression against the Guatemalan people and military conflict with a small armed rebel group, and the book tells the story of the continuation of human rights abuses even after the formal "peace accords" were signed in 1996. It is a very powerful indictment of a system of oppression and environmental destruction that continues to this day. *Testimonio* serves as a challenge to Canadians to call out our governments for not putting a stop to these abuses by our mining industry and calls to us to take action. A must read.

Maude Barlow
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Order books: <https://btlbooks.com/book/testimonio>

Bulk purchases:
karina@btlbooks.com

Watch the October 25th Book Launch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7ZeNaMaFtk>

Organize public presentations:
Grahame Russell (info@rights-action.org), Catherine Nolin (Catherine.Nolin@unbc.ca)

More information:
www.testimoniothebook.org



Maya Q'eqchi' land and rights defender Angelica Choc speaks

Angelica Choc – widow of assassinated Adolfo Ich and one of 13 plaintiffs in the Hudbay Minerals lawsuits in Canada – denounces history of mining related violence & corruption in Maya Q'eqchi' territories, from INCO (1960s, '70s, '80s), to Hudbay (2004-2011), to Solway Investment Group (2011-present).



Rights Action video, November 28, 2021
Espanol, with English sub-titles: <https://youtu.be/qA5i2DzrS5k>

Your funds at work, 2021

In 2021, Rights Action sent **\$312,000** of your donations and grants to partner organizations, communities and individuals, mainly in Guatemala and Honduras.

<https://rightsaction.org/where-your-donations-go>

Funds are used for:

- human rights and justice struggles
- land, territory and environmental defense struggles; and
- emergency and disaster response work.

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To support land, human rights and environmental defender groups in Honduras and Guatemala, and their emergency response work, make check to “Rights Action” and mail to:

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