

# Rights Action

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September 2022

## Honduras painstakingly rebuilding democracy & rule of law

## Guatemala gutting democracy & rule of law

### HONDURAS

After President Xiomara Castro won the November 27, 2021 elections, putting end to 12 years and 7 months of the corrupt, repressive, U.S. and Canadian-backed Honduran narco-regime, Grahame Russell wrote:

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*It is hard to overstate the amount of death, destruction and suffering caused by this regime, from the day of the military coup (June 28, 2009) through to the January 27, 2022 inauguration of President Xiomara Castro of the LIBRE party.*

*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 government, since the 2009 coup.*

*The incoming government inherits a treasury, a government, State 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."*

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### Nothing easy

We invite you to read these articles/reports analyzing challenges the new government is facing, providing updates on community defense struggles Rights Action supports.

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#### Socialist President Xiomara Castro Is Trying to Revive Democracy in Honduras

By Hilary Goodfriend, July 22, 2022

<https://jacobin.com/2022/07/honduras-socialist-president-xiomara-castro-democracy-libre-party>

With a mandate for transformation and high popular expectations, Castro faces significant challenges in a context of profound systemic crisis. The 2009 military coup that ousted Castro's husband, democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya of the Liberal Party, plunged Honduras into chaos. The ensuing far-right regime was sustained by military force and brazen electoral fraud.

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#### The Survivors of Cayos Cochinos

By Carlos Martinez, El Faro news, July 31, 2022

<https://elfaro.net/en/202207/centroamerica/26304/The-Survivors-of-Cayos-Cochinos.htm>

A moving report about historic and on-going racism, repression and land-theft against the indigenous Garifuna people of Honduras, about tourism imperialism, with a particular focus on the spectacle of the filming of the Supervivientes (Survivors Spain) reality TV show.

*(continued)*

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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

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## “We Don’t Even Know Where the Remains of our Loved Ones Are”

By Allison Lira, August 3, 2022

<https://nacla.org/honduras-mining-azacualpa>

The embattled Azacualpa community continues to resist the ever-expanding, illegal mine of U.S. company Aura Minerals, desecrating a 200-year-old cemetery, destroying communities and mountains.

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## U.S. Trained Special Forces Involved in Drug Trafficking and Gangs in Honduras

By Karen Spring, June 10, 2022

<https://www.hondurasnow.org/new-documents-highlight-u-s-trained-special-forces-involved-in-drug-trafficking-and-gangs/>

A sobering reminder how the narco-dictatorship was empowered and enabled by the “international community”, led by the U.S. government.

## GUATEMALA

The articles above (and others found at [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)) highlight the challenges Honduras’ new government is confronting one by one, pushing hard in a positive direction for the first time in 13 years.

The same cannot be said about Guatemala, whose repressive, ‘open-for-global-business’ regime is enabled and empowered by governments of the U.S., Canada and Europe, the World Bank and IMF, and countless global companies and banks.

**Weaponizing the legal system:** Since 2016, this “international community” has watched in silence as the regime carries out a systemic campaign of weaponizing the legal system to persecute and criminalize mainly indigenous land, environment and indigenous rights defenders across the country, together with a campaign to criminalize or force into exile dozens of judges, lawyers and prosecutors working on crimes against humanity, war crimes and organized crimes trials, including drug traffickers who have infiltrated all branches of the government and institutions of the state.

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## “We are spectators of how a country is going down the drain”

Prensa Comunitaria, June 20, 2022

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/guatemalan-regime-using-criminal-law-to-persecute-judges-prosecutors>

Persecuted Judge Miguel Angel Galvez explains:

*“We return to the issue of instrumentalizing criminal law, making the law a monopoly of a group of people. In this context, justice is a matter of power and not control of power. This is worrying, because it means that we are spectators of how a country is going down the drain.”*

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## Stop the criminalisation of indigenous human rights defender María Choc, one of hundreds of cases of ‘criminalization’ of land, environment and indigenous rights defenders

By Lazar Konforti, June 1, 2022

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/stop-criminalisation-of-guatemalan-indigenous-defender-mara-choc>

Focusing on one case Rights Action supports, this article explains why the elites are weaponizing the legal system to try and jail and silence Maria Choc.

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## Maya Q'eqchi' land & environment defenders vs Mining: A 60-year human rights & justice struggle. Action & funds needed

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/qeqchi-land-environment-defenders-vs-mining>

A special funding appeal for the land and environment defense, justice and human rights struggles – including the defense of Maria Choc – that Rights Action supports, since 2004, in the Maya Q'eqchi' territories of eastern Guatemala.

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## The Exile of Guatemala's Anti-Corruption Efforts

By Jonathan Blitzer, The New Yorker, April 29, 2022  
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-exile-of-guatemalas-anti-corruption-efforts>

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## Funding appeal from FAMDEGUA

Despite the persecution and weaponization of the legal system, the Family Members of the Disappeared in Guatemala continue to support crimes against humanity and war crimes trials – including the Military Diary.  
<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/raising-funds-for-military-diary-crimes-against-humanity-trial>

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## FORCED MIGRANCY & REFUGEE FLIGHT CONTINUE

With no hope, in the foreseeable future, of addressing let alone transforming the underlying causes, forced migrants and refugees continue to flee Central America, and are again in the news.

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## 53 forced migrants and refugees die gruesome death in Texas

By Grahame Russell, Rights Action, July 1, 2022  
<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/53-forced-migrants-refugees-die-gruesome-death-in-texas>

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## The White House's Plan to Stem Migration Protects Corporate Profits, Not People

By Brigitte Gynther & Azadeh Shahshahani, August 2, 2022  
<https://inthesetimes.com/article/kamala-harris-joe-biden-migration-root-causes-central-america-corporate-profit>

In response to the on-going forced flight of so many, the U.S. government put forth President Biden's plan "to address the root causes". The writers explain how this latest economic/ political plan – endorsed by the "international community" – will further entrench the reasons people are forced to leave home and country.



## "Jim Deva Prize for Writing That Provokes"

Rights Action is pleased that **TESTIMONIO: Canadian Mining in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala** is a finalist for the Jim Deva Prize, awarded annually for "writing that challenges or provokes the ideas and forces that shape what society can become."

### What does TESTIMONIO provoke?

By Grahame Russell, July 19, 2022  
<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/finalist-for-jim-deva-prize>

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Canadian CourseReadings:

<https://canadiancoursereadings.ca/product/testimonio/>

Rights Action is also pleased that **Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism**, by Harsha Walia (<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/border-and-rule-by-harsha-walia>), is also a finalist for the Jim Deva Prize, and recommends her book.

*"Colonial coups, capitalist trade agreements, climate change and oppression [are] the primary drivers of displacement from Mexico and Central America."*

<https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/border-and-rule>

<https://www.haymarketbooks.org/authors/961-harsha-walia>

# Educational Fact-Finding Delegation To Guatemala

**November 5-13, 2022**

If you are an educator / writer / journalist, and interested in learning more about and writing about the range of issues addressed in **TESTIMONIO: Canadian Mining in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala**, please consider joining this trip led by Grahame Russell (Rights Action) and Professor Catherine Nolin (UNBC), co-editors and writers of the book.

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/announcingeducational-fact-finding-delegation-to-guatemala>

## Your funds at work

Most every land and environment defense struggle, and human rights and justice struggle that Rights Action supports in Guatemala and Honduras plays itself in these inter-generational conditions of government and economic elites corruption and repression ... all enabled by and beneficial to the so-called "international community".

Your funds at work (September 1, 2022):  
<https://rightsaction.org/where-your-donations-go>



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**Rights Action**