Take Action to Demand Justice for Assassination of Xinka Leader
Noé Gómez Barrera

On Saturday October 28, 2023, Xinka community leader, 69-year old Noé Gómez Barrera was murdered in the department of Jutiapa, Guatemala. Mr. Noé, much loved and respected by the community, was a member of the ancestral authorities of the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala, and since 2002 fought for Xinka rights in Jutiapa against the company Renewable Energy Alternative (Alternativa de Energía Renovable in Spanish). In recent weeks, he participated actively in the indefinite National Strike for democracy against the efforts of the “Covenant of the Corrupt” to remain in power following the election of Bernardo Arévalo whose inauguration is scheduled for January 14, 2024 and who has committed to end corruption in the country.

This criminal act takes place in the context of violence, threats and heightened security risks for territory defenders in Guatemala, including specifically in Xinka territory of Jutiapa, Santa Rosa and Jalapa. During recent years, the Xinka people have maintained a broad and ongoing struggle to defend their health, water, forests, lands, and territory against the threat of megaprojects including the Renewable Energy Alternative company, as well as the Escobal mine owned by Canadian mining company Pan American Silver, which is currently subject to a consultation process. For their commitment to the defense of collective rights, the Xinka people have faced intimidation, defamation, criminalization, attacks, and assassinations, such as what has just once again tragically taken place.

In September of this year, U.S. Congresswoman Cori Bush and 12 other members of the U.S. Congress sent a letter to the U.S. Department of State in which they expressed profound concern for the security of the Xinka people. The Representatives called for the State Department to play an active role to ensure an effective response to any further act of repression against the Xinka people. Also, since mid October, the Ancestral Indigenous Authorities of Guatemala have requested precautionary measures from the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) given the risks they face for exercising their rights.

Following the brutal assassination of Mr. Noé, the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala has called on the Guatemalan Public Prosecutors Office to take action and to investigate this crime, stating: “Stop the criminalization and violence against Xinka leaders and human rights defenders.”

We express our solidarity with the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala and the human rights defenders who are part of the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa, who exercise and work for the full enjoyment and respect for their fundamental collective and individual rights.

We urge:

- Guatemalan authorities to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for this atrocious act of violence.
- The Inter American Commission on Human Rights to immediately grant precautionary measures to protect the Ancestral Authorities that are leading the National Strike in Guatemala.
- The U.S. Department of State in coordination with its Embassy in Guatemala to advocate of the immediate investigation into this assassination and for those
responsible to be brought to justice; for the prompt implementation of the precautionary measures in favor of the Ancestral Indigenous Authorities at risk for exercising their right to peaceful protest, as well as for the five Xinka leaders who requested precautionary measures from the IACHR in 2021; as well as to publicly denounce the violence against Ancestral Indigenous Authorities and reaffirm the importance of protections for peaceful demonstration and the rights to self-determination and free, prior and informed consent.

- The government of Canada in coordination with its Embassy in Guatemala to pay special attention to the risks that the Ancestral Indigenous Authorities face, particularly the Xinka People who are peacefully demonstrating in defense of life and democracy. We also call on Canada to continue to publicly express concern for the situation in Guatemala in order to ensure respect for democratic governance.

Sincerely,

Latin America
Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA)
Grupo Regional para una Transición Energética Justa en América Latina y el Caribe (GRTEJ ALC)
Argentina
Asamblea no a la mina Esquel
H.I.J.O.S. Córdoba
H.I.J.O.S. La Matanza
H.I.J.O.S. Regional Necochea
H.I.J.O.S. La Plata
H.I.J.O.S. Bahía Blanca
H.I.J.O.S. Escobar Campana Zárate
H.I.J.O.S. Concordia
H.I.J.O.S. Ciudad de Buenos Aires
Germany
H.I.J.O.S. Alemania
Australia
Aid/Watch
Brasil
Environmental Defender Law Center
Instituto Cordilheira
Canadá
Associates Sisters of Providence
Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network (ARSN)
Amigos de la Tierra
Maritimes- Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network
BC Casa/Cafe Justicia
Comité para los Derechos Humanos en América Latina (CDHAL)
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Choosethical
Decolonized International Solidarity Network DISN Tkaronto- Iximulew
Education in Action
Rights Action
Friends of the Earth Canada
Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire sur les territoires de l'extractivisme (GRITE)
Plataforma Canada Guatemaltecs Exiliadxs por Terrorismo de Estado
RATTMAQ
Montreal Elders for Environmental Justice
Plataforma Guatemaltecos-Guatemaltecas Exiliados por Terrorismo de Estado
Todos por Guatemala Montréal
KAIROS Halifax
MiningWatch Canadá
Mining Justice Alliance
Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN)
Saint Mary's University
Solidaridad sin fronteras Sherbrooke
GRAN (Grandmothers Advocacy Network)
SLAM (Solidarité Laurentides Amérique centrale)
Colombia
Colectivo y semillero Pacha Paqta
Semillero y Colectivo de Investigación, Acción Pedagógica y Abogacía Popular (Universidad Industrial de Santander)
Grupo de Investigación en Derechos Colectivos y Ambientales (GIDCA)
Chile
Mujeres por el Maipo
Ecuador
Cabildo por las Mujeres de Cuenca-Ecuador
Yasunidxs Cuenca
Yasunidos Guapondelig
España
Salva la Selva
United States
Alliance for Democracy
Colectivo Guatemalteco, Los Angeles CA
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)
Cooperation Operation
Center for Human Rights and Environment (CHRE)
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN)
Environmental Defender Law Center
Earthworks
Due Process of Law Foundation
Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Program
International Rivers
New Hampshire/Vermont Guatemala Accompaniment Project
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
Nicaragua Center for Community Action
Denver Justice and Peace Committee (DJPC)
McCain Institute
Global Labor Justice-International Labor Rights Forum
St. Louis Interfaith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA)
Feminist Task Force
Loretto Link
McCain Institute
North American Congress on Latin America
Unitarian Universalist Society of West Burke
GuateMaya LA Mujeres en Resistencia
Resistencia Comunitaria
Religious community of Sisters
Quechua Collective of New York
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
Maryknoll Sisters
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Oxfam
Santa Elena Project of Accompaniment
Servicio Internacional para los Derechos Humanos (ISHR)
France
Collectif Guatemala
Guatemala
AMERINDIA GUATEMALA
Asociación Colectivo Noj
Asociación Procrece
American Friends Service Committee
Concejo Maya Komon Ajq’ijab’
Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC)
Parroquia Sangre de Cristo
Red Nacional por la Defensa de la Soberanía Alimentaria REDSAG
H.I.J.O.S. Guatemala
Latin America Solidarity Committee—Milwaukee
Trinity Lutheran church
Protection International Mesoamérica
María Tecun
Observatorio de Industrias Extractivas
Honduras
Cehprodec
Holanda
H.I.J.O.S. Holanda
Liberia
Natural Resource Women Platform
Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD)
México
Espacio de Encuentro de las Culturas Originarias
ARTICLE 19 México and Central América Office
Otros Mundos Chiapas
Geocomunes
Bios Iguana A.C.
Red Mexicana de Afectadas/os por la Minería (REMA)
Frente Popular en Defensa del Soconusco (FPDS)
H.I.J.O.S. México
Perú
H.I.J.X.S de Perú
UK
Roots2Justice
London Mining Network
South Africa
The Gaia Foundation
Suiza
International Platform against Impunity
KM207 Guatemala-Suiza
Uganda
AfricanDefenders (Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network)
Oil Refinery Residents Association-ORRA
Tasha Research Institute Africa