

via email: <a href="mailto:hpineda@mp.gob.gt">hpineda@mp.gob.gt</a> <b>Licda. Hilda Pineda</b> Prosecutor Human Rights Section of the Public Ministry	via email: <a href="mailto:fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com">fiscalgeneralmp@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:carrecis@mp.gob.gt">carrecis@mp.gob.gt</a> <b>Lica. María Consuelo Porras Argueta</b> Attorney General of Guatemala
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June 21, 2021

Dear Prosecutor Pineda and Attorney General Porras:

We are deeply disturbed alarmed by the arrest of **21 members of the Chicoyogüito community** during a peaceful demonstration in Cobán, Alta Vera Paz Department, on June 9. The peaceful protest, to ask the authorities for the return of their ancestral lands, was violently repressed by agents of the National Civil Police. Several people were beaten and injured. During the detention of the 21 men, due process, including the right to be brought promptly before a competent judge, has been violated.

In 1968 the Q'eqchi families of the community of Chicoyogüito (municipality of Cobán) in Alta Verapaz were dispossessed and uprooted from their land by the Guatemalan state. In their place, the government built Military Base #21, a center where the army carried out forced disappearance, torture, execution, and burial of hundreds of indigenous men, women, and children.

For 53 years, the surviving families have asked state institutions for the return of their lands, to return to their homes, and to dignify the memory of the victims. Their just demands have fallen on deaf ears. Moreover, for seeking the restitution of their lands, the families have been threatened and persecuted. Their constitutional right to demonstrate and protest peacefully has been continually denied.

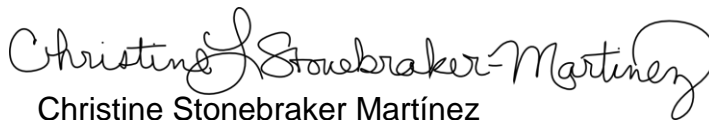
We urge the government of Guatemala to

- immediately release the 21 people arbitrarily detained
- comply with ILO Convention 169: "Indigenous peoples shall enjoy the full measure of human rights and fundamental freedoms, without hindrance or discrimination."
- respond to the basic demands of the community of Chicoyogüito to respect the right to life, the right to existence, and the right to their territory.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-coordinators



Christine Stonebraker Martínez

copies: Alfonso José Quiñónez Lemus, Ambassador of Guatemala to the US ~ email, US mail  
Lic. Augusto Jordán Rodas Andrade, Prosecutor for Human Rights, Guatemala ~ via email  
IAHCR: Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur for Guatemala, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
IAHCR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
OACNUDH: Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala ~ via email  
US State Department: Guatemala Desk in Washington, DC; William Popp, US Ambassador to Guatemala, in care of human rights officer Sarahann Yeh ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

18 JUN 2021\_GHRC-USA\_Guatemala

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**