



## **GHRC ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **EDUCATION**

*We provide reports and educational materials to the international community related to human rights in Guatemala and offer ways in which our supporters and allies can affect positive change.*

**Delegations** GHRC coordinates visits for groups of scholars and activists to meet with our Guatemalan partners, learn about the human rights situation, and get involved.

In **January** we led a delegation with a group of students from American University which met with several of our partners in Guatemala City and visited the site of the Rio Negro massacre to hear from survivors of the internal armed conflict. The students have remained involved, working with GHRC to host a public presentation at American University with survivors of the

In **May** we led a portion of a delegation of students from Loyola University, coordinating meetings with six human rights organizations and the communities of San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc.



In **August** we led a delegation entitled *Women in Resistance: Our Bodies, Our Land and Mother Earth* meeting with 18 women's and land rights organizations. On returning to the US, the delegates collected books and arts supplies for organizations they met with, posted blogs and published articles about their experience to raise awareness, and used their new knowledge to better serve their Guatemalan clients in the US.

#### **Public Presentations**

Throughout the year, GHRC staff held public presentations in Washington, DC on topics including immigration from Guatemala, women human rights defenders and militarization, reaching hundreds of students, activists, and supporters.

In addition, in **late April, early May** we organized a speaking tour focused on militarization and threats to justice with Guatemalan security analyst Iduvina Hernandez, presenting to 20 groups on the west coast of the US and in Washington, DC. Iduvina also spoke several times on radio and television, and met with US government officials.

In **September** we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner and the presentation of the first ever Alice Zachmann Human Rights Defenders Award. The recipients of the award were the Communities in Resistance of San Pedro Ayampuc and San José del Golfo, for their non-violent anti-mining movement. GHRC also coordinated public presentations and advocacy meetings for the community representatives.

In **November** we brought survivor Yolanda Oqueli to Ft. Benning, GA and with her presented to thousands of activists at the School of the Americas annual vigil about attacks on environmental activists in Guatemala.

**Publications** We published *El Quetzal* with news and analysis from Guatemala twice this year in English and Spanish, which we distribute to over 600 people in printed form and over 6,000 electronically.

We also regularly post updates, news, and analysis to our listserv, which reaches over 8,000 people, our Facebook page, which reaches over 1,400, and our Causes page, which reaches over 24,000 people.

**Press** Staff have been interviewed by Al Jazeera English, the Associated Press, the LA Times and the New York Times, and quoted in numerous local US and Guatemalan news outlets about current human rights concerns.

## ADVOCACY

*We advocate for government policies in Guatemala and the US which support human rights, protect Guatemalans striving to uphold those rights, and contribute to positive, systemic change.*

### Militarization

In **February** we coordinated and spoke at a US congressional briefing with US partners on concerns about patterns of militarization and threats to justice under the new administration in Guatemala. We also created an online action to email US Members of Congress, asking them to maintain the ban on US funding to the Guatemalan army. Our supporters sent 2,111 emails and the ban remained in place for the year.

In **October** we collected over 10,000 petition signatures denouncing the massacre of protesters in Totonicapán, which were delivered to the Guatemalan President's Office and the Interior Ministry.

### Criminalization and Impunity

In **January** we coordinated a letter from several organizations expressing support for the *Instancia de Ataques contra Defensores*, and successfully pushed for involvement of human rights groups in the institution.

### Truth, Justice and Historic Memory



*Edgar Pérez receiving award from the ABA*

In **April** we nominated human rights lawyer Edgar Pérez for an award from the American Bar Association's Section for International Law. The ABA selected Mr. Pérez, and GHRC accompanied him to New York for the ceremony and organized meetings with key human rights organizations.

Also in **April**, we set up meetings for and accompanied the head of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) with several US government representatives to push for continued funding for the CICIG, which were successful; the US will maintain the level of funding for next year.

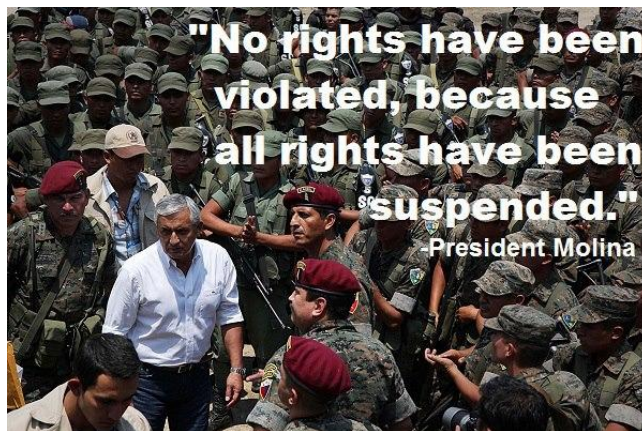
In **September** we coordinated a Facebook and twitter campaign denouncing the Clinton Foundation's invitation for President Otto Pérez Molina to attend a conference in New York, focused on the President's iron fist policies and denial of Guatemala's brutal genocide.

In **December**, as a result of GHRC's work to engage the ABA, we successfully supported the filing of an Amicus Brief with the Guatemalan Constitutional Court on the non-admissibility of amnesty laws in cases of crimes against humanity. GHRC contributed to the debate on amnesty with a press release and other media work.

### Access to Land and Natural Resources

In **March** we delivered over 2,200 petition signatures to the Guatemalan government requesting food aid and other support for the 800 indigenous families evicted in the Polochic Valley. As a result of this petition as well as GHRC's ongoing support with their case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the families received six deliveries of food and have been promised land.

In **November and December**, we coordinated a successful email and call campaign targeting the mining company Kappes, Cassidy & Associates, as well as the Guatemalan Government, calling for an end to attacks on the communities in resistance in San José del Golfo. We accompanied the emails with direct talks with the US Embassy in Guatemala to advocate for dialogue and the full respect of the communities' right to protest. A tense calm has been maintained since then.



*Part of GHRC campaign targeting the Clinton Foundation*



### DIRECT SUPPORT

*We provide support to human rights defenders threatened or attacked for their work.*

#### Asylum

Throughout the year, GHRC provided affidavits in 10 cases of Guatemalans applying for asylum and testified in three more. At least two applicants received asylum based on domestic violence they had suffered in Guatemala and were allowed to remain in the US. The other cases have been continuously postponed.

#### Scholarships

In **January** we provided scholarships to 18 children of human rights defenders who have been attacked or killed for their work to enable them to continue their education.

#### Voiceless Speak Fund

We also distributed funds to five Guatemalans living in the US who work to educate the public about human rights abuses in Guatemala and organize members of their community to advocate for the rights of Guatemalans in the United States.



*Scholarship recipients and their family*

#### Human Rights Defenders Fund

In **March** we provided funds to witnesses of the murder of anti-mining activist Adolfo Ich, which made it possible for them to attend a judicial hearing.

In **May** we contributed funds to assist with the transportation costs and medical expenses for indigenous activists who were shot for their opposition to a hydroelectric dam in their community.



*Yolanda Oquelí speaking in San Jose del Golfo.  
Photo:mimundo.org*

In **July** we provided funds to Yolanda Oquelí to help cover costs of a safe-house for her and her young children.

In **August** we hired a researcher to compile evidence of rights violations and criminalization in the case of leaders arrested for their opposition to a hydroelectric dam in their community. All of the leaders have since been released, and the prosecutor was taken off the case because of mismanagement and illegal interrogation.

In **December** we funded a meeting of organizations and community members evicted in the Polochic Valley in 2011 to analyze their current needs and craft strategy to move forward with advocacy efforts.



### STRATEGIC PLANNING

In early 2012, we initiated an in-depth strategic planning process to analyze the current context in which GHRC works and to develop goals as well as a strategy to meet those goals over the next three years. The process included interviews with partner organizations in Guatemala and the United States, as well as with members of the board and staff and major donors. In addition, we distributed a questionnaire to our supporters and the responses we received shaped the resulting plan. As part of the strategic planning process we modified our Mission Statement and articulated our organizational values.

#### **Mission**

*The Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA (GHRC) is a non-profit, grassroots, solidarity organization dedicated to promoting human rights in Guatemala and supporting communities and activists who face threats and violence. GHRC documents and denounces abuses, educates the international community, and advocates for policies that foster peace and justice.*

#### **Values**

GHRC strives to uphold the following values in our work:

- *The equal worth and dignity of all persons*
- *Transparency, honesty, integrity*
- *Solidarity with the vulnerable and marginalized*
- *Non-violence*
- *Social Justice*

#### **Framework**

In analyzing the work carried out by GHRC we decided to change the framework for our work – moving from distinct program areas to four core strategies: Analysis, Education, Advocacy and Direct Support for Human Rights Defenders. We will also maintain two long-standing programs: The Voiceless Speak Fund and Asylum Support.

#### **Goals:**

We identified broad goals which we hope to achieve in the next three years in each of our strategic areas.

#### **I) Analysis**

Goals: To be a “go-to” organization for U.S. Congressional offices, activists and organizations when seeking information on the identified thematic areas. In addition, we aim to incorporate a gendered lens into all analysis undertaken by GHRC.

#### **II) Education and Outreach**

Goal: to broaden the reach and deepen the impact of our education efforts by working collaboratively with other organizations and effectively utilizing resources at our disposal.

#### **III) Advocacy**

Goal: To increase the effectiveness of our advocacy with decision-makers in Guatemala and the United States and have a greater impact on policy decisions that relate to human rights.

#### **IV) Direct Support to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)**

Goals: To increase our profile amongst HRDs, guarantee that we will have funds available to offer support, and assist HRDs in accessing other available resources when we are unable to offer assistance.





*In addition, we identified five themes which will guide our strategic work.*

- 1) **Militarization:** GHRC will continue to monitor and denounce militarization and U.S. support for Guatemalan armed forces in the name of citizen security and the war on drugs. We will push to maintain the Congressional ban on direct funds to the Guatemalan army and facilitate avenues for communities to denounce abuses.
- 2) **Truth, justice, and historic memory:** GHRC will support Guatemalans' right to truth, raise awareness about efforts to recover and preserve historic memory, and advocate for justice as an integral part of reconciliation.
- 3) **Access to land and natural resources:** GHRC will document and denounce violations that arise from transnational extractive projects and other land conflicts and provide support in a number of paradigmatic cases.
- 4) **Women's rights:** GHRC will continue to raise awareness about violence against women, including brutal femicides, and the structural barriers confronted by women victims. We will work with women's organizations and community leaders to support and promote their proposals for positive change at the local and national levels.
- 5) **Criminalization and impunity:** GHRC will expose abuses within the Guatemalan judicial system that include increasing criminalization of community activists and ongoing impunity for perpetrators of violence. We will push for institutional strengthening and a just application of the rule of law.

## FINANCIALS

Income FY 11-12*		Expenses FY 11-12	
Grants	\$ 60,557	Fundraising	\$ 9,968
Individual Contributions	\$ 55,597	Admin	\$ 26,005
Delegations	\$ 25,065	Programs	\$ 139,530
Speaking Tours	\$ 7,203	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 175,503</b>
Affidavits	\$ 3,714		
Merchandise	\$ 2,424		
Other	\$ 1,881		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 171,810</b>	* GHRC's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30	

