



BULLETIN #3

Third Day of Trial of Abelino Chub Caal CONTRA ABELINO CHUB CAAL

Wednesday, April 23, was the third day of the trial of Maya Q'eqchi land defender Abelino Chub in the High-Risk Court "A" in Guatemala City. He has been criminalized by banana and palm oil companies Inversiones Cobra and CXI that operate in El Estor, Izabal and the Guatemalan State. Abelino is accused of leading a mobilization on August 7, 2016, into the Plan Grande Farm (*finca*) where the group supposedly set fire to palm trees. He is accused of arson, aggravated land occupation and criminal conspiracy.



On the third day of the trial, four expert witnesses proposed by the defense, lawyers Jovita Tzul and Juan Castro from the Indigenous Peoples' Law Firm, gave the findings of their reports.

The historical-anthropological expert, Jorge Diego Vasquez Monterroso, presented, "History and Cultural of the Q'eqchi' people in the Murcielago farm, El Estor, Izabal."

Ramon Cadena, legal expert and Regional Direction of the International Commission of Jurists presented his report on criminalization of human rights defenders.

The expert report entitled, "Ancestral Rights, Territorial Dynamics, Dispossession and Defense of the Maya Q'eqchi People in the community of Plan Grande, El Estor, Izabal," was presented by geographer, Dr. Jennifer Casolo.

A political-historic expert testimony was offered by Dr. Harald Waxenecker entitled, "Social power relationship and appropriation of natural resources and the land in El Estor, Izabal."

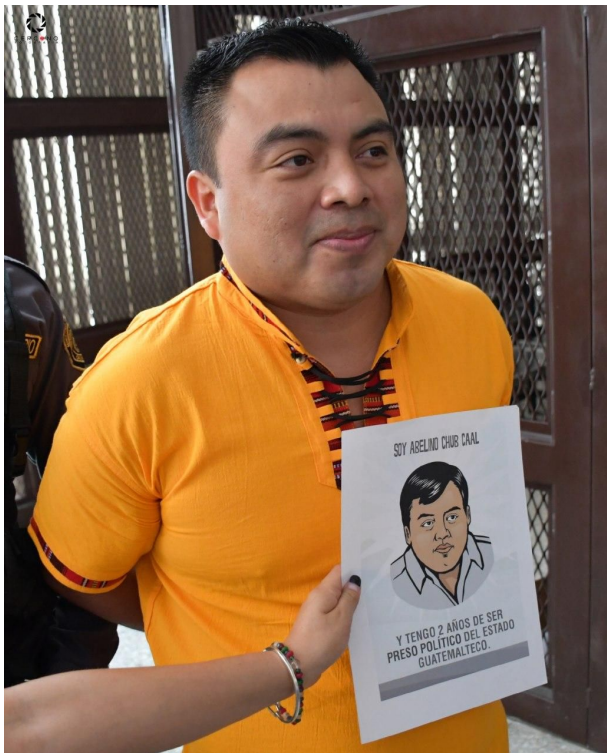
Each expert was important to prove to the Court the historic settlement and resettlement of the Q'eqchi People in the lowlands of Izabal in the last century and all of the 19th century before large industrial size farms started to be created in the region. In addition, they showed the historic and geographic actions of the Q'eqchi People in the territory, determining the cultivation, dispossession and defense processes of the lands reclaimed by the Plan Grande



Community from the time of colonization until the present. They were able to show the unequal and disproportionate power relations that have had an influence on the allocation and sale of the property and the irregular actions of the Guatemalan state, as well as how privileges and these irregularities led to the appropriation of the lands. They also showed Abelino Chub's leadership role and the important service he has given to the community where he has worked as a social promoter and mediator of conflict in defense of territory. They showed the way that criminalization processes worked against human rights defenders and the role of legal institutions work to allow these processes to happen.

Abelino Chub's brother-in-law testified about him being at his home in San Pedro Carcha, Alta Verapaz on Sunday, August 7, 2016, the day he was accused of leading the occupation of the Plan Grande Farm in El Estor, Izabal.

During their conclusions, public prosecutor Judith Villagran asked for the arson and criminal conspiracy charged to be dropped due to lack of evidence and for Abelino to be convicted and sentence to three years in jail for aggravated land occupation. Carlos Manuel Ovalle, the private prosecutor for CXI and Cobra Investments asked for the arson charges to be dropped and for Abelino to be convicted of land occupation and conspiracy.



The trial will continue on Friday, April 26 at 8:30am with the conclusions of Abelino Chub's defense. The High-Risk Court "A" will give its verdict.

Follow the live transmission tomorrow:

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Or, listen live at: paraqueseconozca.blogspot.com

Stand with Abelino in his struggle for freedom!

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