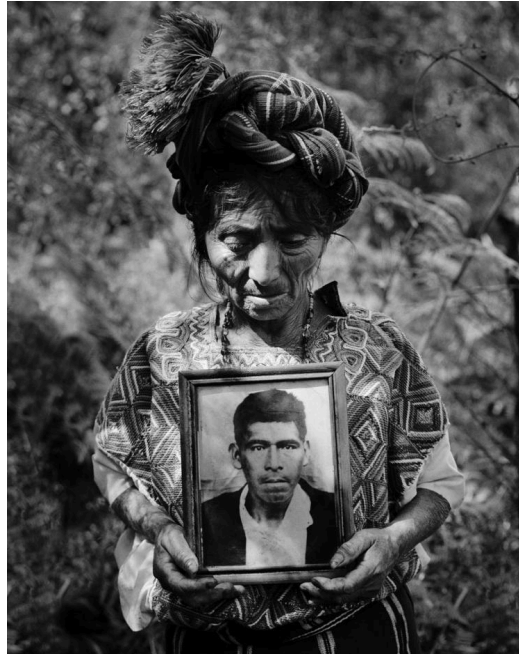


Ixil Genocide Case Digital Toolkit

The **Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA** invites you to stand with the **Ixil Mayan communities** of Guatemala during the closing days of the **genocide** trial against former military officer **Manuel Benedicto Lucas García**.



Source: Jonathan Moller

Who is Manuel Benedicto Lucas García?

Manuel Benedicto Lucas García is a retired military officer who served as **Chief of Staff of the Guatemalan Army from 1981-1982**, during Guatemala's internal armed conflict (1960-1996). During his command, Guatemalan security forces carried out a **"Silent Holocaust,"** whereby thousands of Guatemalans were systematically exterminated as part of a ruthless, **US-backed military campaign** against campesinos and Indigenous groups demanding basic human rights and agrarian reform.

The Guatemalan government claimed that the target of its operations in the Ixil area of the Quiché was the Guerilla Army of the Poor (Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres, or EGP), part of the small, leftist armed insurgency. But in practice, the military in its attacks went far beyond EGP members, accusing all Ixil Mayans of being part of the "internal enemy" and launching a genocidal campaign explicitly targeting Indigenous communities.

While the Guatemalan judiciary ruled in 2018 that the military's actions constituted **genocide**, the case led to zero convictions. Despite tens of trials opened against the perpetrators of the genocide, **not a single military leader involved has been convicted**. As such, the trial of



Manuel Benedicto Lucas García represents one of the last chances for the Ixil Mayan people to obtain justice.

The Case

Lucas García is accused of personally ordering the **killing** of at least **1,771 people** in Guatemala's Ixil Mayan region. Under his command, his forces carried out over 30 massacres, destroying 23 entire villages.



Source:History Collection

The Ixil genocide case began in April 2024. Over the past months, dozens of Ixil Mayan witnesses and experts have presented their testimonies against Lucas García. The case is set to conclude in the coming weeks.

Previous Attempts at Justice

Former President of Guatemala Efraín Ríos Montt and former Head of Military Intelligence José Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez have both faced trial for their role in the Guatemalan genocide. However, Montt's death in 2018 ended the criminal process against him, while Sánchez's trial concluded with an acquittal. **As of today, the perpetrators of Guatemalan Genocide enjoy total impunity.**

Goals of the Campaign

1. **To raise awareness** about the Guatemalan Genocide, which has gone down in history as the “Silent Holocaust” due to the lack of international outcry and recognition.
2. **To show Solidarity** with the victims and their families, who after 40 years have still been stripped of justice.
3. **To put pressure** on the Guatemalan judiciary and public officials to finally serve justice and convict Manuel Benedicto Lucas García of genocide.



How to engage:

Please post on your social media channels to bring attention to the Ixil genocide case. We have provided a series of graphic aids to be posted on any and all platforms, which can be accessed with the following link:

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGUZjL_f6k/VFZ9Y30L6XiS_opiVoiPCA/view?utm_content=DAGUZjL_f6k&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=editor

We have also provided captions to accompany the graphics:

Platform	Caption
Facebook/Instagram	<p>Have you heard of the #SilentHolocaust? Between 1981 and 1983, thousands of Indigenous and campesino Guatemalans were massacred by the Guatemalan Armed Forces, which accused them of sympathizing with leftist rebels located in the countryside. This ruthless campaign of extermination, which explicitly targeted Ixil Mayan communities of the Ixil triangle, was armed and funded by the #UnitedStates, which feared the spread of communism in Central America.</p> <p>More than four decades later, the victims and their families have had little access to justice. Although the Guatemalan court system officially recognized the killings as a #genocide in 2018, NONE of the individuals responsible have been convicted.</p> <p>That can all change with the ongoing trial of Manuel Benedicto Lucas García, the Chief of Staff of the Guatemalan Armed Forces from 1981 and 1982. He stands accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, forced disappearances, and sexual violence.</p> <p>By sharing this post, you put pressure on the Guatemalan judiciary to finally serve justice after decades of impunity. Furthermore, you show your solidarity with the victims of this hemisphere’s forgotten genocide. This weekend, tell the world:</p> <p>#IStandWithTheIxil</p> <p>#Guatemala #genocide #warcrimes #USA #justice #solidarity #Indigenouspeoples #humanrights</p>
Twitter	<p>The Guatemalan military committed a genocide, exterminating 1,771 Ixil Mayans—5.5 percent of the Ixil Maya population—in 17 months.</p> <p>Now, the architect of that genocide is finally facing justice in court. Learn more about the case, and show support with the hashtag: #IStandWithTheIxil</p>



For a useful summary of the trial, in English and Spanish, see

Tara John and Ivonne Valdes, “Un juicio de alto nivel por genocidio reabre viejas heridas en Guatemala, 40 años después de la matanza de indígenas,” CNN en Español, April 14, 2024, <https://cnnspanol.cnn.com/2024/04/14/juicio-genocidio-guatemala-matanza-indigena-trax>

About the Guatemala Human Rights Commission

Since its founding in 1982 by Sister Alice Zachmann, GHRC’s work and vision have been guided by a deep commitment to solidarity and a bold approach to advocacy, principles that placed GHRC at the forefront of the international struggle for human rights in Guatemala. For nearly four decades, we have contributed to positive, systemic change: denouncing torture, forced disappearances, massacres, and US involvement in these atrocities; monitoring the implementation of the Peace Accords and developments in US policy toward the region; and addressing patterns of abuses, such as violence against women and attacks against human rights defenders. GHRC in 2017 began a project to link legal and human rights experts in Guatemala with the legal and human rights communities in Honduras, facilitating work on key cases, which GHRC’s adept analysis and advocacy in Washington supports. For more, visit our website at: <https://www.ghrc-usa.org/>

