

We Raise Our Voice...We Cannot Remain Silent! The Women Speak Out Tour Comes To Fayetteville

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"The army arrived at ten in the morning...they surrounded the house shooting...they entered my mother's house and hit her...they cut off her nose, ears and mouth...the army tied my hands behind my back...they hung my sister...they raped us in front of my three children..."

Maria Teresa Sic de Mendoza, a Maya Achi woman speaking on the genocidal assaults launched against the Mayan people in Guatemala by the U.S. backed government there in the early 1980's



"On January 8, 1982, the army arrived in our village...They called a meeting with the people, they said there would be presents for the children, women, and men but they only had a few dolls. The army had a list of names, they called the names of thirty-two men, leaders in the community. They called the names of my father and two brothers."

"They shut these people in the clinic. There, they were tortured. They cut off their noses, ears and mouths. They took them up the hill from the clinic and choked them with sticks around their necks. They left them half buried. My mother stayed crying, because they killed my father."

In a brutal civil war that began (in Guatemala) after a CIA sponsored coup in 1954 and turned to mass genocide in the 1980's, military officials and other state security forces, with the full support of the US government massacred many thousands of

indigenous peoples."

NISGUA Fact Sheet

On October 25, Maria Teresa Sic de Mendoza came to Fayetteville to speak truth about what had happened to her, her family and her people under the genocidal policies of a US backed government in Guatemala. Part of the 2003 Fall Tour "Women Speak Out", sponsored by NISGUA, the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Senora Mendoza spoke to a hushed audience at Nature's Water.

As her words were read in English by Mosha Newmark, more than one person present wept. When Senora Mendoza spoke, with translation by accompanier Jael Humphrey, of the Center For Human Rights Legal Action, her pain, her anger and her call for justice were heard by everyone in the room. For those who planned and initiated the massacres of the Mayan people are still free. And one of them, Rios Montt is now running for president in Guatemala in an election campaign already marked with bribes, intimidation, violence and corruption.



But this is not a story of victims suffering helplessly at the hands of a brutal Guatemalan government supported by the United States. This is the story of survivors uniting to demand justice. And it is the story of what ordinary Americans, in Fayetteville Arkansas, can do to support this call for justice in Guatemala.

For Senora Mendoza is a member of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation, a coalition of 23 indigenous communities who endured genocidal assault in the early 80's and who are now banding together to bring those responsible to account for crimes against humanity.

They are speaking out, to inform Guatemala and the rest of the world about what was done to them. They are working within the Guatemalan legal system to bring those responsible to court. They are exposing the

ugly history of presidential candidate Rios Montt as an architect of genocide. And they are striving to bring honest, informed, and truly free elections to Guatemala.

And there are concrete things that the citizens of Fayetteville can do to support that work, through the NISGUA network. Here's what you can do:

Become a Human Rights Monitor

NISGUA is looking for volunteers to monitor the human rights situation in villages of returned refugees or organizations facing threats or attacks in Guatemala. The Guatemalan Accompaniment Project (G.A.P.) trains human rights monitors for situations where communities still fear the military or organizations fear reprisal for their political work. The accompanier's physical presence can provide them with a measure of security. This requires a minimum commitment of six months.

Tell the Arkansas congressional delegation to participate in election monitoring in Guatemala

Given the history of fraud, intimidation and corruption in Guatemalan elections, the office of Cass Ballenger (R-NC) is organizing an observation delegation in the first weeks of November to evaluate the electoral situation on the ground. How many members of Congress from Arkansas are planning to go?

Get involved with the NISGUA network

Campaigns range from local actions, to national call-in protests, to urgent action mobilizations.

Organize a fundraiser for NISGUA

The national office has many ideas about how local people can raise funds to support the work in Guatemala.

For decades, the American government has supported those committing atrocities around the world, in the name of the American people. Now, ordinary Americans have the opportunity to speak for themselves, to directly support justice instead of atrocity. What will you do?

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See also:

<http://nisgua.org/>

<http://www.justiceforgenocide.org/>