



## ASOCIACIÓN BUFETE JURIDICO POPULAR

RABINAL, BAJA VERAPAZ

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### **Open letter to the Guatemalan public and the international community**

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has ruled once again that the Guatemalan state is responsible for several severe violations of human rights committed against the Maya Achi population from the communities of Chichupac, Xeabaj and Chijom, Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, during the internal armed conflict. Those impacted were civilians and noncombatants in the conflict.

The victims and their families who experienced harassment, persecution, sexual violence, forced disappearances, execution, forced displacement and the massacre of Chichupac, Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, as well as the Asociación Bufete Jurídico Popular de Rabinal declare:

1. We are satisfied with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' ruling, issued on November 30, 2016, in which the Guatemalan state was condemned for crimes committed against the Maya Achi population of Chichupac, as well as neighbouring communities. The court not only ruled in our favour in terms of the harms we suffered, but also dignifies us as a community and as victims.
2. As the ruling affirms, we Maya Achi inhabitants from the community of Chichupac, as well as neighbouring communities, were forced to leave our territories because of the massacre on January 8, 1982 and because of the violence prevalent in the area. These acts were committed by agents of the state's security forces, and included massacres, executions, disappearances, sexual violence, and persecution by the military, as well as the state security forces who set fire to our homes, stole our belongings and provisions, destroyed our crops and stole or killed our animals.
3. Since that time, 35 years have passed and only now are we receiving justice through the Inter-American Court. Justice has been denied to us by our own country, where the truth continues to be denied. For that reason, we demand that all provisions outlined by the Inter-American Court be complied with, without delays, especially the specification that the Guatemalan state should remove all obstacles maintaining impunity in the case, and move forward with the investigations necessary to determine and sanction those responsible for the human rights violations which are the focus of this case.
4. Lastly, we want to affirm our desire for a peaceful Guatemala which is free from impunity, racism and discrimination; with justice, truth, reparation and dignification of all the victims of the armed conflict, which in our municipality of Rabinal constituted genocide.

For life, justice, and peace.

Rabinal, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala

December 27, 2016