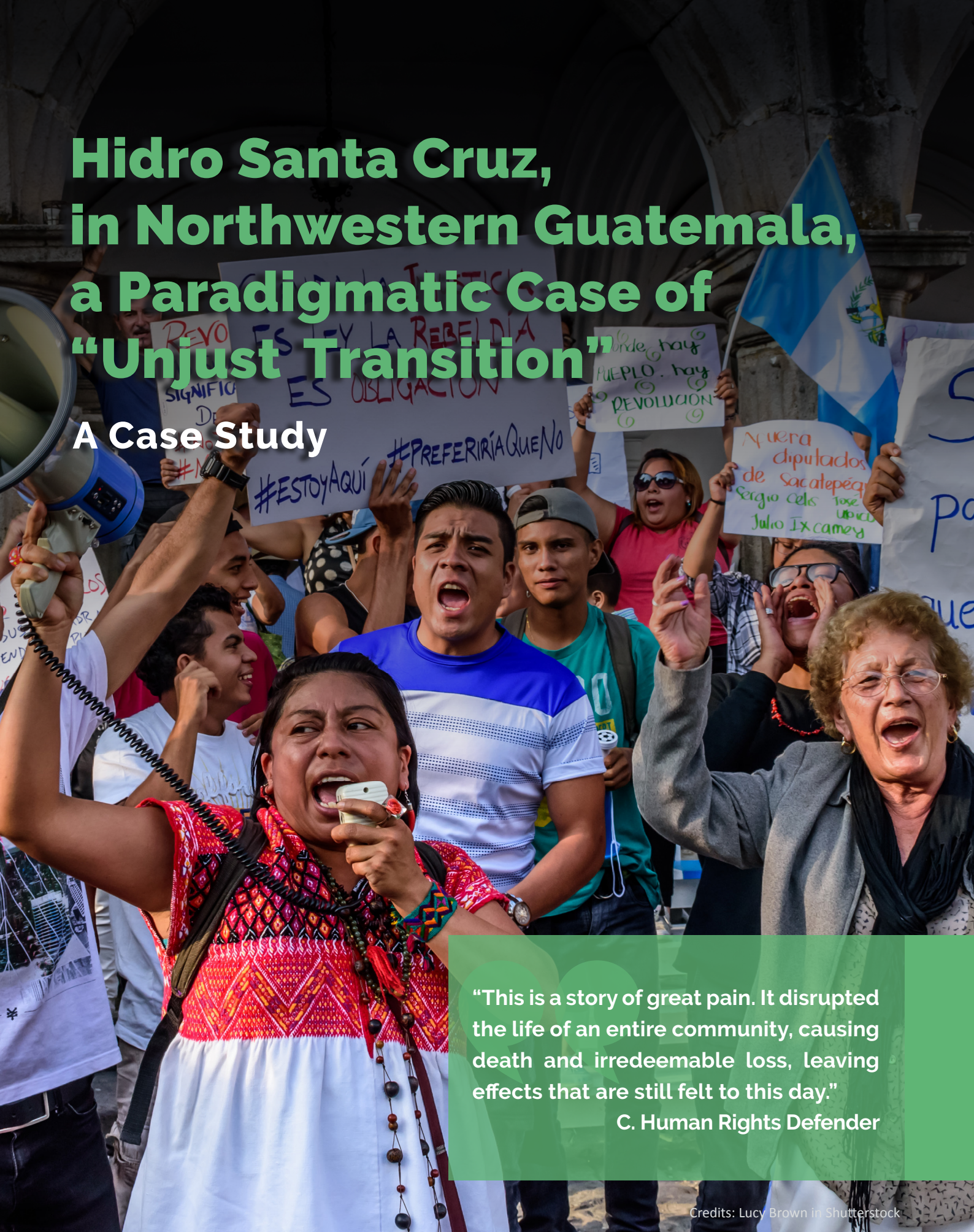


Hidro Santa Cruz, in Northwestern Guatemala, a Paradigmatic Case of “Unjust Transition”

A Case Study



“This is a story of great pain. It disrupted the life of an entire community, causing death and irredeemable loss, leaving effects that are still felt to this day.”

C. Human Rights Defender

Credits: Lucy Brown in Shutterstock



solidar

ABSTRACT

Guatemala's central plateau is characterised by its mountainous areas with their very high water potential, making it attractive for investment in the energy sector, both domestically and internationally. Although hydroelectric power can be a viable alternative for an energy transition in Guatemala, its development in the country has been done without considering historical, social or environmental factors and without benefiting local communities.

To the northwest of these mountains lies the municipality of Barillas, where 86% of the population identifies as Mayan, mainly from the Q'anjob'al linguistic community. During the '90s, (often opaque) licenses for setting up megaenergy projects were granted in this area, that had a strong negative impact on local communities.

This document summarises the case of the concession and attempt, by a European company, to establish a hydroelectric plant with no consideration for the local context, and the negative impacts that it had on the social fabric.



Credits: Irma Carrera on Shutterstock

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. BACKGROUND: TOWARDS CLEAN (OR LUCRATIVE) ENERGY IN A POST-CONFLICT COUNTRY	5
3. Q'AN B'ALAM, DEFENDING THE RIVER FROM THE SERPENT	8
4. IMPACTS ON THE POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT	9
5. THE NEED FOR GREATER CONTROLS ON TRANSNATIONAL CAPITAL	11
6. CONCLUSION	12
7. TOWARDS A GLOBAL JUST TRANSITION	13
8. REFERENCES	14



Credits: Peter Batarseh on Shutterstock

The following case study is carried out in the framework of the *Global Just Transition campaign*, which calls on the EU to promote a socially and environmentally just transition not only in the European Union but also worldwide.

While environmental and climate action and social justice are two sides of the same coin, if policies for them are not planned and implemented in a coherent and inclusive manner, the European green transition can lead to environmentally and socially harmful impacts in the Global South. For example, Global South countries will need to adapt to new European standards developed in the framework of the European Green Deal and cope with negative spillover effects of the European production and consumption patterns. This is why since 2022, SOLIDAR has been working with its members and partners to collect views and approaches of just transition from Global South's civil society organisations, including trade unions, indigenous rights defenders, and feminist collectives. The Global Just Transition campaign is a joint action of *Solidar Suisse*, *Movimiento por la Paz* (MPDL), *Olof Palme International Center* (OPIC), *FOS*, and *SOLIDAR*, together with their partners from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Through their different testimonies, we will show the incoherences and negative consequences that this lack of focus on the external dimension has on partner countries.

We call on the EU to adopt a Global Just Transition approach in its relations with Global South countries and to turn the current EGD and its successor into a Global Green Deal to ensure policy coherence, accelerate the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and of the Paris Agreement's objectives, and guaranteeing a fair distribution of the costs and benefits of the European green transition between Europe and partner countries.

1 INTRODUCTION

Hydroelectric power is a viable option for Guatemala's energy transition, due to its geography and abundant natural resources, allowing the country to produce and export large amounts of electricity to Central America. However, many areas of the country, especially indigenous and remote areas, still lack access to electricity. This is due to an "unjust" energy transition model that has dispossessed local communities of their rivers and criminalized community leaders who oppose these projects.

This document summarises the case of the concession and attempt, by a European company, to establish a hydroelectric plant in northwestern Guatemala, in the historical region of the Q'anjob'al Maya people. This initiative negatively impacted the social fabric and was undertaken with no consideration for the local context.

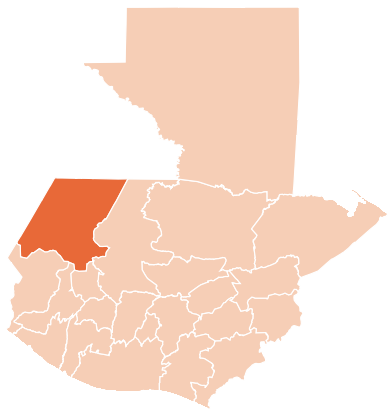
This study was carried out through *Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty* (MPDL), which has had a constant and active presence in Guatemala (as well as in other countries in the region) since 1996, after the signing of the Peace Accords, with the primary aim of achieving respect for human rights and promoting a culture of peace in the country. To this effect, MPDL prioritises its actions in democratic governance, focusing on the eradication of violence against women and the consolidation of peace as central axes of its development strategy.

Documentary sources were used to prepare this study; the MPDL work team provided some, and three community leaders from Barillas, who witnessed the conflict in their community provoked by the installation of a hydroelectric company, were interviewed. In their interviews they state that two of them were imprisoned and the third suffered political persecution and exile from his community. Similarly, interviews were conducted with people who have supported the struggle in Barillas, members of civil society organisations, people in the media, academia and human rights activists¹.

1 The references section includes a list of people interviewed.

2. BACKGROUND: TOWARDS CLEAN (OR LUCRATIVE) ENERGY IN A POST-CONFLICT COUNTRY

The central plateau of Guatemala is characterised by mountainous areas that are very rich in water resources and energy potential, which have made it attractive, both for domestic and international investments. This attractiveness increased during the 1990s, with the privatisation of many public companies, particularly those in the energy sector. The municipality of Barillas lies to the north of these mountains, at the western end of what is known as the Northern Transverse Strip. This is an area of great biodiversity, owing to the high humidity and fertile soils characteristic of the northern lowlands.



In 2023, the municipality has an estimated 130,700 inhabitants², of which 86% identify as Mayan. The majority of this population belongs to the Q'anjob'al³ linguistic community. It is important to remember here that indigenous communities in the northwest of the country have suffered from racism ever since European colonisation. Native populations that survived extermination were ousted from their

territories, stripped of their livelihoods and their way of life and relationship with ecosystems were permanently altered. Several centuries later they were the victims of bloody state terrorism during the civil war, especially in the decade after 1975.⁴ One interviewee for this study states, "There was political violence from 1978 to 1985, followed by a period of relative peace"⁵. After 1996, when the Peace Accords were signed, the neoliberal economic model made it easy to continue to implement dispossession policies.

In 2015, United Nations members adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, which include a series of environmental objectives and several energy-specific targets.⁶

In fulfilling these commitments, the State of Guatemala has started acting for an energy transition, seeking the production of "cleaner" energies, and supporting making use of the plentiful water resources. However, much of the enormous potential for generating hydroelectric power is located in indigenous territories, and the cosmovision of indigenous people confers a profound significance on rivers. Beyond the availability of water, which is a central element of the territory according to their cosmovision, it is the foundation of life, conceived as a systemic whole.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that, during the second half of the 20th century, the

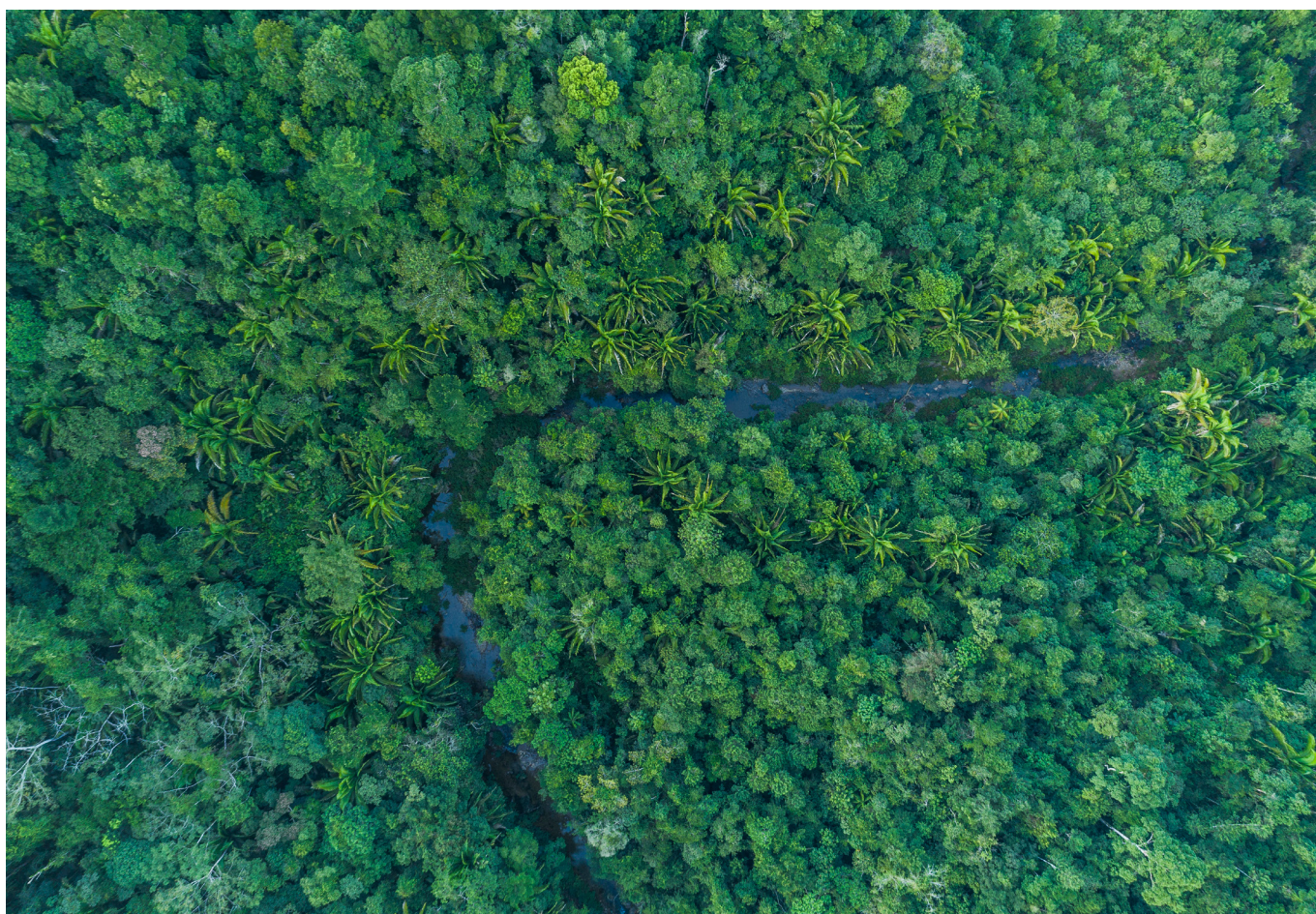
2 Instituto Nacional de Estadística Guatemala (INE), *Proyecciones Nacionales 1950-2*.

3 74% of the total population of the municipality, according to the 2018 census.

4 Lovell, W. G. (2013) "*The archive that never was: state terror and historical memory in Guatemala*".

5 Interview E, see references.

6 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: *Sustainable Development Goals*.



Credits: Jamen Percy on Shutterstock

history of the establishment of hydroelectric plants in Guatemala abounds with violations of the rights of indigenous peoples. The most emblematic case is that of the Chixoy hydroelectric plant, whose construction, starting in 1975, brought about dramatic changes that changed the patterns of land use and tenure, as well as the population's way of life.⁷ There was

"a forced displacement of the population that was directly affected, with the consequent abandonment of their lands, an alteration of their productive and cultural practices, and the rupture of the social fabric and the project of community life"⁸.

According to the damage verification report, the plant was constructed against a backdrop of military dictatorships and human rights violations on a massive scale. The communities refused to leave their territories and consulted sources claim that as a consequence they suffered terrible acts of violence, including murder, torture and rape.⁹ There were no balanced negotiating conditions between the National Institute of Electrification (INDE)¹⁰, the State and the affected communities. Social, psychosocial, cultural, economic and environmental damages to the communities have been confirmed by the sources consulted¹¹.

7 Alianza por la Solidaridad (2014), *"Una hidroeléctrica española contra los pueblos indígenas: El caso de la empresa Ecoener-Hidralia en el norte de Guatemala"*.

8 Government of Guatemala, *"Reparation Policy for Communities Affected by the Construction of the Chixoy Hydroelectric Plant"*.

9 Interviews conducted. In addition, Guatemala Human Rights Commission (2014) *"Santa Cruz Barrillas"*.

10 National Electrification Institute, www.inde.gob.gt.

11 COCAHICH (2009), *"Identification and verification report of damages and loss caused to communities affected by the construction of the Chixoy hydroelectric plant"*.

This dispossession, together with the multiple acts of genocide committed by the state in the northwestern region of the country during the early 1980s, mostly against indigenous peoples,¹² make it possible to understand the community's rejection of megaprojects set up in the area after the signing of the Peace Accords.

In the post-conflict context, licenses have been granted for setting up energy megaprojects in the Northern Transverse Strip. Under these conditions, the extractive model in Guatemala has generated large-scale conflict, in addition to multiple factors that promote opacity in resource management. Raging inequalities, historical racism and systemic poverty, in addition to weak and defective institutions, created conditions for poor respect for human rights in general and for those of indigenous people in particular.¹³

Currently, Guatemala exports energy produced in hydroelectric plants¹⁴ to the Central American market¹⁵ and to southern Mexico. And yet, more than 10% of households have no connection to an electricity network. It should be pointed out that the department with the highest hydroelectric potential, Alta Verapaz, has the lowest electrification rate. In that department, almost half of the households (48%) have no connection to the electricity system¹⁶.

In the country, several European companies have licenses for producing hydroelectric energy; for example, the Italian company Enel Green Power operates five hydroelectric power plants, producing 164 MW¹⁷. One of Enel's hydroelectric plants is Palo Viejo, located in Finca San Francisco, in the Quiché department. This region was the scene of human rights violations against the Ixil people during the civil war.¹⁸ Construction of this hydroelectric plant

began in 2005, using water from the Cotzal River and three of its tributaries, thereby affecting the supply of neighbouring communities. The project saw opposition from local populations, who feared irreparable environmental damage. In 2011, the conflict was at its highest point of tension. The state mobilised more than 700 police and army officers, and warrants were issued to arrest the leaders of the resistance.¹⁹ In 2013, an agreement was reached, and the company committed to contributing to the development of the communities.

12 La Coordinadora (2020), "*Los papeles secretos del genocidio en Guatemala. Ayúdanos para que la verdad salga a la luz.*"

13 Cultural Survival (2017) "*Observations on the State of Indigenous Human Rights in Guatemala*".

14 Banco de Guatemala, *External sector statistics*.

15 According to the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Guatemala has historically positioned itself as a net exporter to Central America.

16 MEM, *Access to Electricity Index* 2022.

17 ENEL, *Guatemala*.

18 Batz, G. (2022) "*La Cuarta Invasión: Historias y resistencia del pueblo ixil, y su lucha contra la Hidroeléctrica Palo Viejo en Cotzal, Quiché, Guatemala*".

19 Environmental Justice Atlas (2022), "*Hidroeléctrica Palo Viejo, Guatemala*".

3.

Q'AN B'ALAM, DEFENDING THE RIVER FROM THE SERPENT

On June 23, 2007, in a historic referendum, the vast majority of the population of the municipality of Barillas — more than 46,000 inhabitants — voted against the exploitation of natural resources. The population organised and carried out the referendum before the establishment of extractive megaprojects, taking into account the experiences of other territories after the signing of the Peace Accords²⁰.

“Water is essential for the community, and this creates the need to organise. When it comes to defending water, communities get organised”²¹.

The decision taken by the population went unheeded and, with the support of the central government and the local mayor, works began on the Cambalán²² project, which belongs to Hidro Santa Cruz, a subsidiary of the transnational company Hidralia Energía-Ecoener, a Spanish company based in La Coruña²³. In 2012 the Ministry of Energy and Mines granted this project two licenses²⁴.

As the process did not stop, “the local organisation managed the situation for several years, within the regulatory framework signed by the country, taking the results of the ballots and the requests of the organised community to the authorities. There was



Credits: Daniel Hernandez-Salazar on Shutterstock

intense lobbying and advocacy, in an attempt to ensure the people’s will was respected. They never did anything”²⁵.

The population continued with its peaceful resistance, which, according to consulted sources and as confirmed by various reports produced, was infiltrated by external actors, who provoked violence that led to homicides and the sabotage of machinery.^{26, 27} This provided the government with an excuse to suspend constitutional guarantees in the municipality and begin persecuting the leaders of the resistance. In 2012, a state of emergency was declared, and the establishment of the company progressed. From that moment, a violent incursion by police and military agents began in Barillas, creating a climate of terror within the population²⁸.

20 Hernández, J. O. (2012) *“Un pueblo, el Estado y... una empresa”*.

21 Interview C.

22 Latinization of Q’an B’alam is the name of the river where the hydroelectric plant was built.

23 Van Gelder, J. W. and de Wilde, J. (2015) *“Company profile of Ecoener and Hidralia Energía”*.

24 MEM, <https://mem.gob.gt/que-hacemos/area-energetica/>.

25 Interview C.

26 Cabanas, A. (2014) *“Santa Cruz Barillas: persecución y resistencias”*

27 Rodríguez-Carmona, A. y E. De Luis Romero (2016) *“Hidroeléctricas Insaciables en Guatemala. Una investigación del impacto de Hidro Santa Cruz y Renace en los derechos humanos de pueblos indígenas.”*

28 Guatemala Human Rights Commission (2014) *“Santa Cruz Barillas”*.

4. IMPACTS ON THE POPULATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

According to the report of the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman²⁹ on May 1, 2012, during a peaceful protest outside the Santa Cruz hydroelectric facility, the company's private security guards shot and killed Andrés Francisco Miguel, a farmer and community activist against the megaproject, and injured two other people. The state of emergency imposed by the government provoked terror in the local population, still smarting from open wounds inflicted by state repression during the civil war. The region was heavily militarised, several members of the community went into exile, and several women were attacked by company personnel³⁰.

In December 2016, the company announced its "withdrawal from the country", after endless human rights violations against the population organised since 2007: a murder, several attacks, a state of emergency, 21 political prisoners, dozens of arrest warrants, threats and other actions, as stated by several sources³¹. Many of the criminal proceedings were filed by the company and, in the end, it was proven that they were based on lies and false accusations³².

"This is a story of great pain. It disrupted the life of an entire community. It caused death and irredeemable loss to the community, leaving effects that are still felt in the community to this day"³³.

While impacts such as deforestation, the grabbing of water sources, the alteration of biological cycles, and of community connections are accurately highlighted, the most profound impact is on the community fabric.

"There was a rupture of a social fabric that had just started to heal the wounds of the war"³⁴.

There was a confrontation between the company's employees³⁵ and the population.

"Before the company arrived, you could go out for a walk. There was no conflict. We started to see armed people. And people were afraid. Especially women, who were harassed by guards".

"Barillas was a very organised community. After the imprisonment of all the leaders, it was never able to reach the same level of organisation"³⁶.

On the other hand, one impact that has not received the attention it deserves is that of the imprisonment of community leaders. Legal persecution has serious consequences for individuals and the community.

29 Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (2015) *"Guatemala: CIFI-01/ Hidro Santa Cruz."*

30 Ibidem.

31 Ibidem (n26 and n27).

32 Community Press and Guatemala Human Rights Commission (2014) *"Santa Cruz Barrillas"*.

33 Interview C.

34 Interview F.

35 Ibid (n28).

36 Interview C.



Credits: MPDL Guatemala

“The consequences of prison on the lives of political prisoners are extreme. Many families broke down”.

Currently, “there is still no clarity regarding the legal status of many community leaders”, which creates constant fear and insecurity in many families^{37, 38}.

“The effects of these imprisonments impacted those who, for periods ranging from 3 to 37 months, went to prison for crimes they did not commit, as demonstrated in the trials; and indirect and manifold for their families, whose finances were affected, the workload of their life partners increased and their children's education was compromised.”³⁹.

The right to free, prior, informed, referendums, carried out in good faith exists in Guatemala. However, it is characterised by non-compliance

on the part of the state and by a lack of specific regulations for its implementation. In the absence of this guarantee, the affected populations have launched two types of referenda: 1) Self-managed communities acting in good faith, with the support of municipalities, 2) Community referenda supported by the mechanism of local development councils.

Although the Constitutional Court has recognised the full validity of the right to prior consultation, it has also limited the binding nature of community referenda that act in good faith, arguing that that is the responsibility of central government, not of the municipalities.

Finally, in countries that have regressed to authoritarianism, such as Guatemala, the takeover of the justice system has limited the implementation of the right to prior consultation. The highest court in Guatemala, the Constitutional Court, recently issued a ruling in favour of an extractive company⁴⁰, despite the fact that a community referendum had voted against the installation of the mine.

37 Interview A.

38 Ibid (n28).

39 NISGUA, (2021) *“Open Statement: Pacific Resistance of Santa Cruz Barillas and Departamental Assembly of Huehuetenango”*.

40 On September 18, 2022, the town of Asunción Mita, in the department of Jutiapa, held a Municipal Neighbourhood Consultation to have a direct vote that would decide whether mining companies could operate in their territory. The result of the referendum was overwhelming: 7,481 people voted against the mining, while 904 voted in favour. (Community Press, <https://prensacomunitaria.org/2023/10/cc-favorece-a-empresa-minera-que-busca-operar-en-asuncion-mita-jutiapa/>).

5.

THE NEED FOR GREATER CONTROLS ON TRANSNATIONAL CAPITAL

According to Cabanas⁴¹, in the specific case of Hidralia, its representative known as the “king of the Galician kilowatt”, on account of his hegemony over the energy market in small power plants, has created a network of more than forty companies. “This hegemony is based on illegality: the creation of a complicated mess comprised of dozens of large and opaque companies, formed very recently, that have no experience, very little initial capital, and without the necessary material, personal or technical support for developing their activities”.⁴²

Although in December 2016 the community and its accompanying organisations welcomed the public announcement of the cessation of the project with joy, concern persists, given that the company still owns the land of the hydroelectric plant in Barillas, and there are fears that the project will be reactivated.⁴³

“The company leaves, and criminalisation stays. In whose hands is the land? Who are the new owners of the land that the population sold to the company according to their private property rights? How is the social fabric repaired?”⁴⁴



Credits: Vivid imagery on Shutterstock

41 Cabanas A. (2012), *“Hidro Santa Cruz, from A to Z. Contributions to debate No. 2. Guatemala Memorial, October 2012”*.

42 Ibid.

43 Real World Radio (2016) *“After eight years of community resistance and international pressure, hidro santa cruz leaves guatemala”*.

44 Interview C.

6.

CONCLUSION

Hydroelectric power represents a viable alternative for an energy transition in Guatemala. Due to its geography and natural resources, Guatemala has the potential to produce hydroelectric energy in large quantities and for this reason the country has become a major exporter of electricity to Central America. Paradoxically, many areas still lack access to electricity, particularly indigenous territories and the most isolated areas of the country. This is due to the fact that the energy transition has followed a fundamentally unjust model, with the loss of access to rivers by the communities living in the areas of hydroelectric construction and exploitation, as well as the criminalization and persecution of community leaders who have objected to the projects. The energy transition in the country has been carried out without taking into account historical, social or environmental factors and without benefiting local communities.

This has been made possible by the weakness of a post-conflict state, which still lacks adequate mechanisms to comply with international social and environmental commitments and to monitor companies and their investments. In this context, both national and transnational companies invest in the country, evading regulations and generating conflicts.

The case of Hidralia Santa Cruz is an example of how the establishment of a project that does not consider the social context, environmental vulnerabilities, nor the recent history of human rights violations can disrupt the community fabric. The failed attempt to establish this hydroelectric plant left a divided society, with new reasons to grieve, such as the criminalisation and even murder of community members who refused to accept the imposition of a project contrary to the will of a community that

expressed its wishes through a referendum, a right guaranteed by the commitments signed by the country.⁴⁵

Hydropower represents an opportunity for clean and sustainable energy production. But to ensure a just energy transition in Guatemala that benefits the entire population and does not harm the environment or local communities, strict due diligence and monitoring mechanisms must be implemented to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples and women. In addition, international actors such as the European Union should follow up on projects with European investment or capital that have been forced to cease due to human rights violations to ensure that, once the project is completed, rights violations do not continue, as well as to support the reconstruction of the social fabric.

And finally, the EU should ensure the right to prior, free, informed and good faith consultation of local communities affected by its investments, in addition to valuing and protecting the ancestral knowledge of indigenous communities.

⁴⁵ Ibid (n7).

7 TOWARDS A GLOBAL JUST TRANSITION

Despite its efforts, the EU is lagging behind on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals⁴⁶ while some of its strategies and policies, like the European Green Deal, risk putting at stake partner countries' capacity to achieve the SDGs.

While environmental and climate action and social justice are two sides of the same coin, if not planned and implemented in a coherent and inclusive manner, the European green transition can lead to environmentally and socially harmful impacts in the Global South.

Therefore, the *Global Just Transition Campaign* calls upon the European Union's institutions, including the future members of the European Parliament and the new European Commission to ensure the next European Green Deal is equipped with a strong external dimension.

In this framework, the EU and its representatives shall:

- ✔ Lead on the implementation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through a comprehensive EU sustainable development strategy and ensure Policy Coherence to tackle the potentially negative impacts of the EU policies, programs, and actions on partner countries. They should conduct in-depth sustainability impact assessments (ex-ante and ex post) of its policies, programs, and actions to assess and address the external economic, social, environmental and political impacts of EU policies, especially on the most marginalized communities;
- ✔ Revise its trade policy and economic relations to incorporate sanctions on labour and environmental standards. Ensure that all EU business enterprises respect human rights, do not infringe them; addresses adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved, and ensures access to effective remedy in case violations occur.
- ✔ Increase incentives, such as technical and financial support, as well as grants based funding for loss and damage, mitigation and adaptation for partner countries to undertake their own Just Transition processes and mechanisms.
- ✔ Promote, protect and enable civic space and counter shrinking space for civil society. Ensuring meaningful, inclusive and safe consultations and dialogues with CSO, during the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its policies. At the same time, the EU should promote an open civic space and protect human rights defenders, such as environmental, women', indigenous people', workers' rights defenders, as well as the right to defend rights.
- ✔ Strengthen social justice during the green transition by promoting and facilitating the mobilisation of domestic and when needed international resources to set up and scale up Universal Social Protection Floors and systems, including income support schemes, reskilling and upskilling programs, and quality public services such as health care.

⁴⁶ EEB Press Release (2023), *"SDGs: EU Voluntary Review does not support rhetoric of transformative and participatory change"*

8 REFERENCES

1. Alianza por la Solidaridad (2014) *“Una hidroeléctrica española contra los pueblos indígenas: El caso de la empresa Ecoener-Hidralia en el norte de Guatemala”*.
2. Aupi A. (2018) *“Transición democrática energética. Case: Guatemala”*.
3. Bastos S. (2016) *“Informe de contexto sociohistórico de la conflictividad en el norte de Huehuetenango”*.
4. Bastos S. (2022) *“El gobierno ancestral plurinacional q’anjob’al en Guatemala”*.
5. Batz, G. (2022) *“La Cuarta Invasión: Historias y resistencia del pueblo ixil, y su lucha contra la Hidroeléctrica Palo Viejo en Cotzal, Quiché, Guatemala”*.
6. Cabanas A. (2012) *“Hidro Santa Cruz, de la A hasta la Z. Aportes para el debate No. 2. Memorial de Guatemala”*.
7. Cabanas A. (2014) *“Santa Cruz Barillas: persecución y resistencias”*.
8. Coordinator of Communities Affected by the Construction of the Chixoy Hydroelectric Power Plant, COCAHICH (2009) *“Informe de identificación y verificación de daños y perjuicios ocasionados a las comunidades afectadas por la construcción de la hidroeléctrica Chixoy”*.
9. Cultural Survival (2017) *“Observations on the State of Indigenous Human Rights in Guatemala”*.
10. Documentary “Y lo poco que nos queda”, de Ana G. Aupi y Raquel Rei, 20 de febrero de 2017. Disponible en: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHz3XdZUbmkn>.
11. Environmental Justice Atlas (2022), *“Hidroeléctrica Palo Viejo, Guatemala”*.
12. García, J. (2022) *“Así se compra un Estado. Cómo una minera rusa corrompió todos los poderes en Guatemala”*.
13. Guatemala Human Rights Commission (2014) *“Santa Cruz Barrillas”*.
14. Hernández, J. O. (2012) *“Un pueblo, el Estado y... una empresa”*.
15. Human Rights Watch (2022) *“Events of 2022, Guatemala”*.
16. La Coordinadora (2020), *“Los papeles secretos del genocidio en Guatemala. Ayúdanos para que la verdad salga a la luz.”*
17. Lovell, W. G. (2013) *“The archive that never was: state terror and historical memory in Guatemala”*.
18. Ministry of Energy and Mines (2023) *“Guatemala muestra su potencial para producir energía a base de hidrogeno verde”*.
19. Ministry of Energy and Mines, Government of Guatemala, (2023) *“Informe de Monitoreo semanal del desempeño de los indicadores del sector energético”*.

20. Perez, D. S. (2023) "Guatemala desobedece fallo de Corte Interamericana para beneficiar a 3 militares condenados".
21. Pohlenz A. (2017) Water for energy or for life: processes of social and environmental destruction as a result of hydroelectric plants in Guatemala. WATERLAT-COBACIT NETWORK. Working Papers Thematic Area Series – TA10 – vol 4 No. 4/2017.
22. Rodríguez-Carmona, A. and E. De Luis Romero (2016) "Hidroeléctricas Insaciables en Guatemala. Una investigación del impacto de Hidro Santa Cruz y Renace en los derechos humanos de pueblos indígenas."
23. Van Gelder, J. W. and de Wilde, J. (2015) "Company profile of Ecoener and Hidralia Energía".
24. Several articles in the Community Press: <https://prensacomunitaria.org/>.
25. People consulted: A total of 6 people were consulted. The conversations took place between July and September 2023. For security reasons, their names are not included. In the text, they are cited under the following references, depending on their profile:
 - A. Academic, journalist and social researcher. He researched and covered events related to resistance and conflicts sparked by the hydroelectric power plant in Barillas.
 - B. Journalist, academic and human rights activist. She has investigated different resistance processes related to megaprojects in the northwest of the country.
 - C. Academic, human rights defender, and feminist. She support the process of resistance to the project.
 - D. Q'anjob'al Maya community leader. Opponent of the project, criminalised, and imprisoned for his participation in peaceful protests.
 - E. Q'anjob'al Maya community leader. Opposing leader, criminalised, for his opposition to Hidro Santa Cruz. Displaced as a result of persecution.
 - F. Q'anjob'al Maya community leader. Female activist. Community supporter of criminalised opponents of the project. She was also criminalised, and ousted from her community as a result of persecution.



Credits: Ruslana Iurchenko on Shutterstock



solidar

50 Avenue Des Arts. Box 5, 2nd floor.
B1000 - Brussels
Belgium

Responsible Editor: SOLIDAR and MPDL

Author: María Verónica Sajbin Velásquez

Coordination: Lavinia Mazzei and Penelope Berlamas

Translation and Copy-editing: Sara Casanova and Ümit Hussein

Graphic Design: Dagmar Bleyová

2024

SOLIDAR is a European and worldwide network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. Our over 50 member organisations are based in 27 countries (19 of which are EU countries) and include national CSOs in Europe, as non-EU, EU-wide and organisations active at the international level.

For more info www.solidar.org