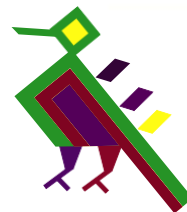




DECLARATION

MEETING OF WOMEN SURVIVORS

Santa María Nebaj, 25 February 2023



Women Survivors of Genocide and Sexual Violence

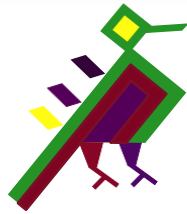
Gathered in Santa María Nebaj, on 24 February 2023, we Ixil, Q'eqchi'es, Poqomchi'es, Achi'es and mestizo women unite our voices to dignify all the victims of the Internal Armed Conflict in Guatemala, which deeply affected our lives.

Considering that our lives and our bodies were used as a weapon of war, that we were tortured, thousands disappeared, that we suffered sexual violence, that we were stripped of our lands, and that this has affected the lives of new generations of girls and young people to this day due to the strong breakdown of the social, cultural and political fabric of our peoples and that we have lived for more than 40 years in pain and suffering, where entire communities were dispossessed of their lands, being occupied by military detachments and military areas not only for training but also as clandestine detention and disappearance centres and finally as clandestine cemeteries, burying women, men, adolescents and children in mass graves, places that were used for torture and sexual violence against women in different territories and where they were forced to work as forced labourers.

The aftermath of the war continues, and today they want to starve us to death, the plundering of our territories continues, criminalising those who defend them and reviving practices of terror, and these traumas have been inherited by our youth.

Yet we are here, we have resisted to raise our voices as Women Survivors. We declare:

1. **We live in a society in which minority and privileged groups want to remain in impunity, erasing and forgetting the serious human rights violations committed in the past**, for some economic or political interest, a society that forgets its history is a society that is condemned to relive those events, and that the events of the present are a reflection of a painful past and of struggle, so it is important to recognise and accept our right to collective memory and to the truth. It is therefore important that the competent authorities comply with the governmental agreement whereby the State of Guatemala issued Decree 06-2004 and its reform Decree 48-2008, which established 25 February of each year to commemorate and honour the memory of the victims. In this sense we urge that spaces of Memory be promoted in educational centres, as well as that all State authorities guarantee the right to Truth, Justice and Dignified Reparation for all women and men victims and survivors of the Internal Armed Conflict and that the struggles, spaces and commemorative monuments be respected.



2. **May our voices as women survivors of genocide and victims of sexual violence** be raised and transcended and may they not be silenced in any space of social life. Racism, discrimination and oppression, machismo and any form of violence against women, abuse of power, age-based violence are structural and daily problems that maintain the continuum of violence in women's bodies, while the Political Constitution of Guatemala establishes that we are all equal, so we demand that the State of Guatemala guarantee our human rights and education for the prevention of these forms of violence as well as the preservation of the historical memory of what happened in our villages.
3. **As women survivors of genocide and sexual violence in different territories, we have come a long way in the search for memory, truth and justice.** We salute with emotion the anniversary of the sentence that vindicated the struggle of the grandmothers of Sepur Zarco. Many of us continue to demand justice for the atrocities committed in different parts of the country, we embrace the Achi women; the Q'eqchi and Poqomchi women who were victims of the military zone No21, today Creompaz; the women and men survivors of the Diario Militar; the Molina Theissen women. Today we see with concern a justice system that is slow, exhausting, re-victimizing, co-opted and unjust, that imposes severe sentences on those who have fought against corruption and impunity and grants house arrest to human rights violators. We demand prompt justice for perpetrators and corrupt judges, and that cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, enforced disappearances and sexual violence do not continue to be shelved and stalled. We want comprehensive justice for new generations.
4. **Women survivors of genocide and sexual violence have the right to a dignified and transformative reparation.** The State has international and national commitments for the recognition of our Mayan peoples and this should be compulsory in the entire educational system; to respect our languages, clothing, ancestral authorities, and our Mayan cosmovision. They must respect and recognise our sacred sites (altars for Mayan ceremonies; caves, hills, streams and others) and not privatise them, as well as allowing us to have places of memory to remember what happened.

In all the public services they owe us respect and recognition, and they must guarantee a treatment in accordance with our dignity as women and as peoples. They must carry out actions to rebuild the community fabric and respect for our ways of thinking and organising ourselves. The State must guarantee reparations with clear policies in favour of survivors. It is not possible to continue tolerating the payment of millions in compensation to members of the army and patrols, while we survivors continue to wait. Many of us are transcending without finding a dignified reparation for the acts committed against us. We would like the new generations to find a space where we can be remembered and where all this history of pain, but also of struggle, can be captured.



5. **We are in an election year in which we must make decisions.** We have the obligation to rethink what kind of society we want, a society with historical memory, a just society, a society without violence against women, particularly Mayan women. That is why women and men from different territories must question and know the background and histories of the candidates to elect presidents and deputies who support our struggles and are objective, to avoid continuing to elect corrupt, racist and genocidal pacts that only seek impunity... it is because of them that our justice cases do not advance....
We do not want another 4 years under military rule.
It is time to change our and Guatemala's history.
That is why we cannot elect deputies or presidents who are members of the corrupt, racist or genocidal pact.
6. **Throughout our journey as survivors of a war planned by the army and the Guatemalan State in the search for memory, truth and justice, we thank our Ancestral Authorities, local, national and international organisations, as well as those with whom we have come together to raise our voices to accompany us on this journey;** that this yearning for justice may not be silenced, that unity may prevail, that the struggle of the people may advance and that the different territories may be strengthened as a network, may continue to strengthen their processes of recovery of historical memory so that the path of the youth may flourish and that the events of the past may not be repeated.
7. **For the leaders of each of the women's collectives** not to lose heart, and that in the different spaces they can continue to inform, raise awareness and preserve the historical memory of the events of the past, that our voices are heard, that they believe in our voice, in our history and that they accompany us on this vindicative date.