

Guatemalan Indigenous Government Denounces U.S. Military Presence



Guatemala City, January 18 (RHC)-- The Plurinational Ancestral Government of the Akateko, Chuj, Popti and Q'anjob'al Maya, C. A., has denounced U.S. military presence in their territories, claiming it's part of the government's militarization strategy to suppress popular opposition to corporate activity.

According to a press release issued in Guatemala City, on January 9th and 10th, three helicopters carrying U.S. military personnel were seen flying over Q'anjob'al in Huehuetenango, Guatemala before landing in Ixquisis (also known as Yichkisis) – a ranch base to military and police presence.

The helicopters flew over several communities in northern Huehuetenango, raising concern among the local residents. It was later discovered that the aircraft belong to the Southern Command of the U.S. Army. The aircraft were identified as UH-60 Black Hawks from the Joint Task Force-Bravo military base in Palmerola, Honduras, according to a report by Prensa Comunitaria.

The Ixquisis territory, which is home to the hydroelectric company PDHSA, has had national military presence since 2014. Former President Otto Perez Molina established the base, which was a request from the hydroelectric company to calm relations with residents, who oppose the plan to build three

additional plants. Witnesses claim that 16 military officers, seven civilians, company reps and members of Guatemala's army were seen near the area where the helicopters landed.

PDHSA confirmed that members of the U.S. military are present and have paired with Guatemalan troops to explore the possible implementation of new medical programs next month. A representative for the Plurinational Ancestral Government, Julio Gomez, declared that “the presence of military aircraft are a serious provocation to the residents of the municipality. The reports and testimonies against military presence within the company's territory are plenty and the State still hasn't taken care of it.”

In the press release, the Plurinational Ancestral Government opposed the alleged implementation of any medical program, saying it should be the responsibility of the health ministry. The report reminded the government to honor their international agreements to ban military drills in their territory.

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