



**To prepare for the trial of the accused in the massacre at the Spanish embassy in Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchú has cancelled all her international commitments**

Montreal, July 4<sup>th</sup> 2014. Very soon, a historic trial will get underway in Guatemala in order to judge the accused in the Spanish embassy massacre. As we recall, on January 31<sup>st</sup> 1980, the national police launched an assault on the embassy, in contempt of international law, to kill all the Quiche Maya peasants who were occupying the premises in order to let the whole world know about the military exactions of which their villages were victims. Among the thirty-seven dead, most of whom were Indigenous, there were two Guatemalan jurists, several members of the diplomatic corps and Vicente Menchú, the father of the woman who would later become a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

As a stakeholder in the prosecution, in a country where crimes against humanity perpetrated by genocidal generals remain unpunished to this day, with very few exceptions, it is understandable that Rigoberta Menchú wants to devote her efforts to preparations for this historic trial, setting all other matters aside.

On the one hand, First Peoples' Festival regrets that Rigoberta Menchú had to cancel the visit she was set to make to Montreal for the 24<sup>th</sup> edition of the event. On the other hand, we find it utterly positive to see the struggle against impunity continue, so that justice can finally prevail in Guatemala.

As we know, in 2007, invoking the extraterritoriality of crimes against humanity, Spain attempted to obtain the extradition of the high-ranking officers who had led the operation. We hope that, in this trial set to begin this autumn, that the charges will finally lead to conviction of those responsible for the mass killing perpetrated thirty-four years ago within the confines of a diplomatic mission.

First Peoples' Festival firmly expresses its solidarity with all the victims of the atrocities committed during the years of the civil war in Guatemala, and in particular with Rigoberta Menchú Tum.

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## APPENDIX

Message from Mr Gregorio Canil, director of the Rigoberta Menchú Tum foundation, received by the festival on July 1<sup>st</sup>:

*Lamentamos los cambios de agenda de la Dra. Rigoberta Menchú Tum, la semana se realizó una reunión con organizaciones de Pro Derechos Humanos, se elaboro un cronograma preparativos del proceso judicial Debate Publico del caso de la Embajada de España, la apertura del juicio oral dara inicio el uno de octubre dos mil catorce. La Dra. Menchú Tum es querellante adhesivo del caso, ella ha cancelado todas las actividades en su agenda de los cuatro meses julio-septiembre/14, todo el mes de octubre va estar en la Sala de Vista Corte de Suprema de Justicia Guatemala, por el mismo caso.*

*Rogamos comprensión, agradecemos la solidaridad a la visión de lucha de la Dra. Rigoberta Menchú Tum, en defensa de los derechos colectivos de Pueblos Indígenas de Guatemala, del Continente y del mundo.*

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