

“We Are Subjects of History”

**Indigenous communities’ fight for autonomy and human rights
in Chiapas, Mexico, and beyond**



Guadalupe Moshan Álvarez



**Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas
Human Rights Center**

Guadalupe will speak on the human rights situation in Chiapas, Mexico, FrayBa’s work, and the role of international solidarity. The Center has been widely recognized for accompanying indigenous communities under attack, documenting abuses, and pushing back against state and paramilitary forces.

Presentation will be in Spanish
w/ English interpretation.
Attendance is open and free.



Sept 20-Oct 3, 2015: Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, DC, VA, & NC

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Mexico Solidarity Network
Red de Solidaridad con México

"We Are Subjects of History"

Indigenous communities' fight for autonomy and human rights in Chiapas, Mexico, and beyond

featuring Guadalupe Moshan Álvarez, attorney with the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center
September 20th – October 3rd, 2015 in Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, DC, Virginia, & North Carolina

Guadalupe Moshan Álvarez is a human rights defender that works as the principal attorney that gives legal advice at the front desk of the Fray Bartolomé Human Rights Center (FrayBa) in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. As an indigenous, Tzotzil woman from the highlands of Huixtan, Chiapas, Guadalupe knows well the context of socio-political struggle against the political class' development plans that threaten communities in her state. For this reason, since she has been accompanying indigenous communities in their pursuit of justice for over 10 years. In the past year alone, Guadalupe attended to more than 1,300 denouncements of human rights violations. The work she and her coworkers do is powerful, unique, and inspiring. This 7-minute documentary gives a brief explanation of their work with indigenous communities and international solidarity activists.

Mexico is at a critical moment: the forced disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa rural teachers college students set off a tidal wave of indignation and massive protests. As the Director of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center said, "Ayotzinapa is the bulk of the iceberg, not the tip." In the context of a war on drugs that has left more than 25,000 disappeared, there is a growing movement against the State's massive violation of human rights and the corresponding impunity.

Unfortunately, this is not new in the Mexican state of Chiapas, or in the United States for that matter. Consider for example the indiscriminate military violence after the 1994 Zapatista uprising, the 1997 paramilitary massacre in Acteal, the continued dispossession of indigenous land for energy, infrastructure, and ecotourism projects, and the struggle of political prisoners like Alberto Patishtan.

In the United States, indignation over police and vigilante assassinations of black youth such as Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin, as well as record-setting deportations of undocumented people, raises a similar question. How can we promote human rights from the grassroots in the face of direct State violence and impunity?

One thing is clear: the first step must be to recognize and affirm that marginalized communities are not passive victims. For 25 years FrayBa has been denouncing violations of the human rights alongside the indigenous communities of Chiapas and in accompanying these same communities as they engage in inspirational processes to promote and exercise their rights. As people of conscience in the US seek to build a culture of peace and justice, we have much we can learn from FrayBa and the processes of human rights promotion they accompany.

Guadalupe and her colleagues at FrayBa form one of the few organizations dedicated to promoting human rights in the ways determined by those who have been directly deprived of justice. The Center produces daily reports on human rights, accompanies people in court, coordinates human rights observation teams, and has been recognized internationally for this work, most recently through a special mention of their human rights work from the French Republic in January 2014.

During her talk, Guadalupe will discuss the current human rights situation in Chiapas, its relation to the national context, and the role of international solidarity.

The FrayBa Human Rights Center was founded in 1989 by the renowned liberation theologian, peace activist, and Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz. Independent of any political party, ideology or religious creed, FrayBa's mission is to be "at the service of the poor, the marginalized, and the organized peoples who transform their socio-economic and political situation."

Come hear Guadalupe Moshan Álvarez speak of this complex situation and the role of FrayBa in promoting the right of autonomous self-determination, integral justice as a prerequisite for peace, and the development of a culture of dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation. Liberation knows no borders, and the struggle of Chiapas' indigenous communities for justice provides lessons for us all.

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