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El Paso, March 24 (RHC)-- In the U.S. state of Texas, two Indigenous leaders — who were forced to flee Guatemala in 2019 — are denouncing the ongoing violence against Indigenous land and water defenders,

and demanding justice for Indigenous political prisoners and assassinated leaders.

Gaspar Cobo and Francisco Chávez are now seeking asylum in the United States. They were stuck in the border city of Juárez for over a year under Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy and were ultimately allowed to enter the U.S. after receiving death threats from a local drug cartel.

The two were recently released from an ICE prison in El Paso and held a virtual press conference.

Gaspar Cobo told reporters: "We are not in the United States because we are searching for better living opportunities. We are here by force. The best opportunities should be in our communities. And these opportunities do exist in Guatemala, but, sadly, we are unable to live there because Guatemala is a failed state."

Francisco Chávez is a survivor of a 1982 massacre orchestrated by U.S.-backed Guatemalan army officials and was a key eyewitness in the genocide case against dictator Efraín Ríos Montt. Gaspar Cobo has long advocated for survivors of the genocide.

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