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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**USC’s Center for Advanced Genocide Research Hosts World’s First International Conference on Genocide in Guatemala**

LOS ANGELES – Sept. 6, 2016 – USC Shoah Foundation’s Center for Advanced Genocide Research is gearing up to host an international conference on the genocide that ravaged Guatemala at the height of the Cold War in the early 1980s. It will be the first gathering of its kind ever held.

The four-day event from Sept. 11-14 in Los Angeles will feature panel discussions with renowned scholars; a keynote address from Rosalina Tuyuc, who launched an NGO for widows after losing her own husband to the atrocities; and a free concert from Rebeca Lane, one of the boldest young performers in Latin American hip-hop.

Called “A Conflict? Genocide and Resistance in Guatemala,” the conference will delve into the history and impact of the systematic mass violence that left 200,000 mostly Mayan Guatemalans dead and more than 1.5 million displaced without basic resources during the early 1980s – a genocide hidden under the cover of a 36-year civil war that ended in 1996 with a peace accord. Panels will also address current trials that have begun to hold perpetrators to account for crimes against humanity committed decades ago. It will be simulcast in English and Spanish.

The conference is being organized by Wolf Gruner, founding director of the Center for Advanced Genocide Research, and Victoria Sanford, founding director of the Center for Human Rights and Peace Studies at Lehman College, City University of New York.

“Los Angeles is home to one of the world’s largest concentrations of families who fled the Guatemalan genocide, making it an ideal host for an event of this magnitude,” Gruner said. “This conference will generate dialog about a chapter of world history that is too often overlooked: the systematic massacre of indigenous people by their own government, while the U.S. government was a close ally.”

The conference will officially kick off on Sept. 11 with a special preview film screening of “Finding Oscar,” a documentary by filmmaker Ryan Suffern that tells the story of the search for Oscar Ramirez, a living witness to the military massacre committed at the village of Dos Erres.

In addition to gathering 33 scholars from a variety of disciplines for a series of public panels, the conference on Sept. 12 will feature, an evening event with keynote speaker Rosalina Tuyuc, who became a human-rights activist after her father and husband were kidnapped and murdered by the Guatemalan military during the war. In 1988, Tuyuc, a Kaqchikel Mayan, founded the National Association of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA), which remains one of Guatamala’s leading human-rights organizations. She was also elected in 1995 to the Guatemalan Congress, where she fought to extend rights to the country’s marginalized indigenous population.

The conference will also feature a free concert co-sponsored by USC Vision and Voices at 7:30 p.m., Sept. 13 at USC’s Bovard Auditorium by Rebeca Lane, a feminist rapper who named herself after an aunt who’d been forcibly disappeared by the military during the atrocities. Set to reggae, dancehall, cumbia, hip-hop and R&B rhythms, Lane’s music addresses head-on the enduring injustices that stem from the military’s slaughter of its own people that ended just before her own birth in 1984. Her lyrics also challenge gender norms and hip-hop’s male-dominated culture.

The conference will convene scholars from not only USC and other Los Angeles universities, but also across North America, as well as Latin America and Europe.

Among the panel discussions titles:

• Studying perpetrators

• Repression and resistance

• Racist discourse and genocide

• Post-genocide justice

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**About USC Shoah Foundation**
USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education is dedicated to making audio- visual interviews with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides, a compelling voice for research, education and action. The Institute’s current collection of more than 53,000 eyewitness testimonies contained within its Visual History Archive® preserves history as told by the people who lived it, and lived through it. Housed at the University of Southern California, within the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the Institute works with partners around the world to advance scholarship and research, to provide resources and online tools for educators, and to disseminate the testimonies for educational purposes. Currently, the institute works with a partner in Guatemala to collect survivor testimonies.

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**About Center for Advanced Genocide Research**
The USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research is dedicated to advancing new areas of interdisciplinary research on the Holocaust and other genocides. One area of research addresses the fundamental question of what enables people to oppose or resist racist ideologies, state discrimination practices, or the active participation in mass atrocities. Other research interests include Research on Violence, Emotion and Behavioral Change and Digital Genocide Studies.