



Monthly Information Package Guatemala

Number 271 - April 2026

1. THE CURRENT SITUATION

Monthly update on the situation in Guatemala as highlighted by the press, related to the main thematic areas of PBI Guatemala's work: the fight against impunity, land issues and defense of territory.

UDEFEGUA releases its 2025 annual report on the situation of human rights defenders

This month, the Unit for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders of Guatemala (UDEFEGUA) released its report on the situation of human rights defenders in 2025. They recorded a total of 5,238 attacks, representing a 26.71% increase compared to 2024. More than 90% of the attacks recorded occurred digitally, primarily through social media. Other notable attacks include 12 murders, 11 attempted murders or homicides (mainly targeting land rights defenders), and more than 10 flawed judicial proceedings. Stigmatization, harassment, and defamation are the most common forms of attack on social media, with more than 80 percent committed by netcenters. These practices “seek to publicly discredit human rights defenders, undermine their social legitimacy, and create a hostile environment for their work.” The groups most frequently targeted are still journalists and justice officials, which “reflects the persistence of attacks directed at those who perform key roles in promoting freedom of expression, access to information, justice, and the rule of law.”

Thirty-one percent of the attacks were against women human rights defenders, although UDEFEGUA believes this figure is due to “underreporting, as many women face greater barriers to reporting incidents, stemming from structural sexism, fear of reprisals, and concern for the consequences for their families. In cases involving women, the most common forms of attack are also stigmatization and harassment.”¹

Journalist Carlos Humberto Cal Ical murdered

Carlos Humberto Cal Ical was murdered on the night of April 26 in San Cristóbal Verapaz, in Alta Verapaz. This tragic incident was confirmed by the Association of Journalists and Social Communications Professionals of Alta Verapaz, of which Carlos Humberto was a member since 2008. A press release published² by the association on its Facebook page noted that, “This crime is yet another example of the bleak situation facing journalism in Guatemala. Alta Verapaz has become a ‘hotspot’ for attacks, with journalists facing intimidation. The region is particularly dangerous for those covering social and environmental conflicts, which increases the vulnerability of those that work in communications.” The press release also calls for a thorough investigation into the crime, “which is part of a larger pattern of systematic persecution against independent journalism in Guatemala.”

Attempt to reopen the *Hogar Seguro* case fails

After a six-year wait, the Fourth Criminal Court, presided over by Mario Flores, was scheduled to begin the intermediate phase hearing for the last four individuals implicated in the *Hogar “Seguro”* case. In January 2020, Crucy María López, Ofelia María Pérez, Rolando Romeo Miranda, and Rocío Murillo were indicted, but a decision on whether they would face trial for the deaths of 41 girls at the Virgen de la Asunción “home” on March 8, 2017, remained unresolved. However, procedural challenges prevented the hearing from beginning.

¹ UDEFEGUA, [Informe de situación de personas, organizaciones y comunidades defensoras de derechos humanos 2025](#), April 2026.

² APC-AV, [Press Release](#), Facebook APC-AV, 27 Apr 2026.

On April 29, the representative from the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) requested that the hearing be rescheduled once again, arguing that he had only recently taken over the case—on a temporary basis, since the prosecutor in charge of the case was removed by MP officials—and had not had enough time to familiarize himself with the charges. The Prosecutor's Office Against Femicide has not confirmed whether he will ultimately be the prosecutor in charge of the case, so he requested more time to settle these issues. With the agreement of the parties to the proceedings, the judge rescheduled the hearing for August 25 and 26, 2026.³

Last August, following a first trial that lasted seven years, six of the seven individuals charged were sentenced for their respective roles in the fire at the state-run “home” that claimed the lives of 41 girls and teenagers and left another 15 girls with varying degrees of injury.

Pacheco and Chaclán will remain in pretrial detention

On April 23, while dozens of indigenous and ancestral leaders from across the country protested in downtown Guatemala City, the Third Chamber of the Court of Appeals ruled to extend the pretrial detention of Luis Pacheco and Héctor Chaclán. The two former indigenous authorities of the 40 Cantones of Totonicapán were among those who led the 2023 demonstrations aimed at defending democracy in the country. They—along with Esteban Toc Tzay, an indigenous leader from Sololá who was arrested in August of last year, and Basilio Puac, former vice president of the 48 Cantones of Totonicapán, who was arrested in January 2026—have been indicted on charges of terrorism, obstruction of criminal proceedings, criminal conspiracy, sedition, and obstruction of justice. While Toc Tzay and Puac were granted alternative measures and remain under house arrest, Pacheco and Chaclán just completed a year in pretrial detention. The Third Chamber determined that the defendants should remain in pretrial detention to ensure that they appear in the criminal proceedings against them and permitted their detention to be extended until September 23, 2026.⁴

Intermediate phase in the Zolic case against former prosecutor Stuardo Campo

The intermediate phase hearing in the Zolic case against former prosecutor Stuardo Campo took place on April 27. At the hearing, the plaintiffs concluded their arguments and the Office of the Attorney General (PGN) also presented its case. The next hearing will be on May 6, when it will be the defense team's turn to present their case. The defense argues that the prosecution's case lacks legal merit, as there is no evidence to support the charges.⁵

In this third case, which is considered criminalization against the former prosecutor of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, the MP charged Campo following a complaint filed by individuals convicted of acts of corruption within the Free Zone for Industry and Commerce (Zolic) in Izabal, in connection with a case that Stuardo Campo handled while he was a prosecutor. The MP has accused him of dereliction of duty for allegedly concealing evidence, which led a court to find the current complainants against the former prosecutor guilty of corruption on two occasions.⁶ The judge in the case, Victor Cruz, is among the judges that the U.S. State Department has accused of promoting acts of corruption.

Plaintiffs in the Military Diary case reject MP prosecutors

On April 28, a public hearing was held on an injunction in the Military Diary case. The plaintiffs—relatives of the disappeared named in the Military Diary—challenged a decision by Regional Prosecutor Dimas Jiménez Jiménez, who rejected the recusal of prosecutor José Crisanto Gómez Meléndez from the case, as ordered by Section Prosecutor Noé Nehemías Rivera Vázquez of the Prosecutor's Office on Human Rights. The plaintiffs argued that this decision was arbitrary and violates their rights to access to justice, due process, and legal certainty. The case involves crimes like forced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, and rape, for which the state has an obligation to investigate, prosecute, and provide reparations.

The plaintiffs accused the prosecutors of misconduct, including weakening or dropping charges, using

³ Osegueda, S., [Caso Hogar Seguro: Cambios de fiscales afectan el desarrollo de audiencia aplazada por seis años](#), La Hora, 29 Apr 2026.

⁴ Pérez Marroquin, C., [Sala prorroga prisión de Luis Pacheco y Héctor Chaclán en medio de protestas de los 48 Cantones](#), Prensa Libre, 23 Apr 2026.

⁵ Verdad y Justicia, [#Criminalización #StuardoCampo](#), Facebook, 27 Apr 2026.

⁶ Osegueda, S., [MP pide enviar a juicio a exfiscal Stuardo Campo por caso Zolic](#), La Hora, 6 Mar 2026.

procedural measures outside the scope of the law, improperly requesting alternative measures, making contradictory statements during hearings, omitting charges, and filing provisional dismissals late without informing the victims. Furthermore, the prosecutors have questioned the MP’s own evidence, as well as survivor testimonies, which, in the plaintiffs’ view, demonstrates a lack of objectivity and favors the defendants.

In this context, the plaintiffs argued that the prosecution's actions have created uncertainty in the proceedings and could contribute to impunity. They have therefore requested that their injunction be granted, that the October 15, 2025, ruling be overturned, and that the prosecutors in question be recused. They have also requested the appointment of an impartial team—including a special prosecutor’s office—to ensure an effective investigation and respect for the victims’ rights.⁷

2. ACCOMPANIMENTS⁸

PBI accompanies social organizations and individuals who have received threats for their work in the defence and promotion of human rights. In this context we are accompanying social processes in the fight against impunity, land inequality and defense of territory.⁹

DEFENSE OF THE TERRITORY

This month, as part of our focus on territorial defense, we accompanied members of the **Maya Ch'orti' Indigenous Council of Olopa** to a meeting with the ancestral authorities and the mayor of San Juan Ermita, a municipality located in Chiquimula. This was the first time the authorities had met with the mayor. Their goal was to convey their requests and to be legitimately recognized by the municipality. The Maya Ch'orti' Indigenous Council of Olopa and the ancestral authorities of San Juan Ermita are committed to defending indigenous peoples’ right to free, prior, and informed consultation, a right guaranteed by Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO).



We also traveled to El Estor in Izabal, to visit community journalist **Carlos Choc**. He updated us on his work, which focuses on supporting and amplifying the voices of the Maya Q'eqchi' people in the face of human rights violations and documenting the environmental impacts caused by extractive industries. He also spoke to us about the security risks he faces because of his work.

3. INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION

PBI Guatemala is present in international public events when requested to do so by Guatemalan social organisations, in order to show international attention and interest and in order to report internationally on what we observe.

On Monday, April 27, we observed a **hearing in the case of the May 1, 1980 forced disappearance of Conrado de la Cruz, a priest, and Herlindo Cifuentes, a catechist**. This hearing was meant to mark the start of the intermediate phase—the phase in which charges are reviewed and evidence admitted—against the defendants, Adán de Jesús Barillas Pinto and Daniel Portillo Morataya, former officers with the National Police. However, the hearing was postponed because of the court's inability to proceed; it has been rescheduled for Tuesday, June 16.

⁷ Verdad y Justicia, [#CasoDiarioMilitar](#), Facebook, 28 Apr 2026.

⁸ We maintained regular contact with accompanied organizations who are not specifically mentioned in this section, but there are no activities to highlight.

⁹ See our website for general information on organizations and individuals we accompany: <https://pbi-guatemala.org/en/groups-and-individuals-currently-accompanied-pbi>

4. POLITICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Meetings and other contact with the diplomatic bodies, international organisations and Guatemalan authorities.

Meetings with national and international authorities are an important way for PBI to make known what we do and what our objectives are. Through these meetings, where necessary and in a reserved manner, we share our concerns about worrying situations that we have witnessed first-hand from the work we do in the field.

As part of our engagement with the diplomatic corps and international organizations, this month we met with Sabine Eisman, Head of Cooperation at the **German Embassy**.

As part of our engagement with Guatemalan authorities, this month we met with the **National Civil Police in El Estor**.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA

On April 16, we held a **security and protection workshop** for organizations focused on transitional justice, reparations, and historical memory. Guatemalan experts in the field led the workshop and 39 participants (17 women and 22 men) from 17 different organizations attended.

From April 20 to 24, we held our **biannual assembly** in Guatemala. There, we evaluated our work over the last six months, identified challenges and progress, and planned our activities for the coming six months. Members of the office staff and project committee participated together with the team of volunteers working on the ground.



We released a **new episode of the ACÉRCATE podcast** focused on the Tz'utujil people of Santiago Atitlán and their struggle to defend their territory and fight corruption. We spoke with ancestral authorities Juan Mendoza and Diego Petzey. You can listen to the episode **here**: <https://shorturl.at/UEMQr>



We also published our **2025 Annual Report**, which provides a summary of PBI Guatemala's work in 2025. With this report, we hope to help bring visibility to the important work of human rights defenders in Guatemala. You can read it here: <https://pbi-guatemala.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/IA2025.pdf>

6. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA OUTSIDE GUATEMALA

Outside the country we constantly develop and strengthen the network of support for the Guatemalan PBI project, as this is one of the essential tools necessary to protect defenders of human rights. Regional Representatives, the Project Office Coordinator and other members of the committee and the Project Office and national groups of PBI, conduct public relations campaigns with many NGOs, agencies and national governments, parliamentarians and others. In this context we develop actions and public relations campaigns, and / or advocacy aimed at protecting defenders of human rights.

This month, PBI Guatemala's European Representative met with Johanna Karanko, the European Union Ambassador to Guatemala, and Jennifer Echeverría, a political officer and human rights point of contact at the **Delegation of the European Union to Guatemala**.

7. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

In this section we publish statements (some abbreviated) from human rights organisations in which they express their concerns regarding recent events.

COMUNICADO

RECHAZAMOS LOS RETRASOS DEL INICIO DEL JUICIO POR GENOCIDIO. LAS VÍCTIMAS EXIGIMOS JUSTICIA

Las familias de las víctimas y sobrevivientes del genocidio cometido por las fuerzas de seguridad del Estado durante el conflicto armado interno en Guatemala, manifestamos:

Para hoy 27 de Abril de 2026 estaba programada la Audiencia de Inicio del Debate Oral y Público en el caso por genocidio contra el general en situación de retiro Luis Enrique Mendoza García, sindicado por Genocidio y Delitos contra los Deberes de Humanidad contra la población Maya Ixil. Mendoza García fungió como Director de Operaciones S-3 del Estado Mayor General del Ejército en marzo de 1982 a junio de 1983, integró el Estado Mayor de la Defensa Nacional durante el gobierno de facto del general Efraín Ríos Montt condenado por genocidio en 2013. Sin embargo, una vez más, éste fue suspendido por tercera vez.

Las víctimas de los hechos suscitados en este caso manifestamos nuestro rechazo en la suspensión que se da nuevamente en el inicio de este Debate, pues esto representa un grave retroceso de la Justicia en casos que juzgan a militares retirados como responsables de delitos tales como desaparición forzada, genocidio, violencia sexual y delitos contra los deberes de humanidad.

Exigimos al sistema de justicia guatemalteco el debido proceso y el acceso a la justicia pronta y cumplida. La dilación en la aplicación de Justicia perpetúa la impunidad y violenta los derechos de los familiares de las víctimas, quienes por más de cuarenta años han buscado que los responsables paguen por estos graves hechos.

Exigimos al Estado de Guatemala que cumpla con su obligación de garantizar el Derecho a la Memoria, Verdad y Justicia para las víctimas y sobrevivientes del conflicto armado interno en Guatemala.



**SÍ HUBO GENOCIDIO Y VIOLENCIA SEXUAL
JUSTICIA POR GENOCIDIO
#SiHuboGenocidio**
**Asociación para la Justicia y Reconciliación, AJR
Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, CALDH**



Guatemala, 27 de abril de 2026

The team of volunteers in PBI Guatemala is currently composed of Nelly Horvath (Hungary), Ericka Stephania López Mota (Mexico), María Moreno Hurtado (Spain), María Josefina Díaz Zunino (Argentina) y Joseph Dotu (France).

All photos published are from PBI

PBI GUATEMALA DOES NOT NECESSARILY IDENTIFY WITH THE OPINIONS AND CONTENT OF THE REPRODUCED ARTICLES AND MEDIA RELEASES.

**GUATEMALA PROJECT
PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL**

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