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pbi
making space for peace
PROYECTO GUATEMALA

CONTENT

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WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO?



Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a non-governmental organization with more than 36 years of experience in international accompaniment. PBI has been present in Guatemala since 1983 (with a break between 1993 and 2003) protecting space for people, organizations and collectives that promote human rights in a nonviolent manner and suffer repression for their work. PBI works only at the request of local organizations.

OUR MANDATE

We seek to contribute to create the necessary conditions so that defenders, organizations and communities can continue their work aimed at increasing respect, observance and protection of human rights and strengthening the rule of law in Guatemala.

OUR PRINCIPLES

We work under the principles of nonviolence, non-partisanship, non-intervention with a horizontal organizational structure and by consensus.

WHAT WE DO

The international accompaniment we propose is global in nature and flexible, at the service of the demands and needs of social organizations who request it. The work focus of global accompaniment aims to weave an effective protective network, depending on the elements relevant to the context.

Presence of international observers

PBI has a team of volunteers in Guatemala who accompany threatened or at-risk human rights defenders, provide presence at offices of threatened organizations, visit rural communities, and carry out international observation.

Interlocution with authorities, advocacy and lobbying

PBI volunteers maintain continuously contact with Guatemalan civil authorities and with international entities like the United Nations and embassies, to make them actors in our accompaniment and protection work, as well as make them aware of concerns about areas where we work and ask for their support. Through the Advocacy Coordinator in Europe and PBI's Country Groups we keep up-to-date multilateral institutions, the governments of 13 European countries, North American and Oceania on the situation of Guatemalan defenders.

Publications

We produce and distribute information on the human rights situation in Guatemala, based on public information sources and our direct observation.

Strengthening capacities

We continuously train the PBI international observer team and facilitate spaces for interchange and training on security and protections for Guatemalan defenders, with the support of existing local resources.



Physical
accompaniment



Political
accompaniment /
advocacy



Publications



Strengthening
local capacities

CURRENT NEWS



2018 has been marked by significant democratic setbacks and the installation of a permanent institutional crisis in Guatemala. Hate speech against groups that oppose the closure of democratic spaces, and who highlight serious human rights violations, has become a permanent feature in the political landscape, creating an atmosphere of confrontation and social and political polarization.

Political decisions and events over the course of the year have demonstrated a strong resistance, on the part of certain sectors of the country, to the advances that have been achieved over recent years. These sectors prioritize the maintenance of their privileges and the political status quo, which impacts on important advancements such as the strengthening of the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP), the prosecution of war crimes, the professionalization of the National Civil Police (PNC) and the growing independence of the Human Rights Ombudsman's office.

The investigations carried out by the International Commission against Impunity (CICIG) and the MP continued throughout 2018. They uncovered several cases of corruption involving government officials, public institutions, political parties and members of the economic oligarchy. When confronted with advances in the investigations into illicit financing of the presidential party FCN-Nación, and of President Jimmy Morales himself, the government has reacted so strongly against the institution that the CICIG's

operations have been seriously affected. Firstly, the government announced the non-renewal of the CICIG's mandate as of 2019 and prohibited its current Commissioner, Iván Velásquez, from entering the country. Secondly, it attempted to unilaterally terminate the agreement with the UN for the CICIG's continued presence in Guatemala. Despite the fact that the Constitutional Court (CC) issued an injunction in favor of the CICIG, the government disobeyed the CC's orders, an act which, according to various expert analysts, produced a de-facto rupture of the constitutional order. These moves by the Guatemalan government, elicited wide-spread condemnation from the national and international community, as they represent significant setbacks to the fight against corruption, human rights abuses and impunity.

The political crisis has been accompanied by other actions that indicate clear regressive tendencies as regards respecting the terms of the Peace Accords. The most significant of these were changes in personnel, particularly in positions of high responsibility, within the PNC, and the increasing use of the army for civil law enforcement duties. Furthermore, new legislative initiatives are being debated in Congress which, if approved, would weaken the rule of law and lead to further deteriorations in the human rights situation.

The approval of the initiative to modify the National Reconciliation Law, for example, would represent a serious setback in the progress that has been made in ending impunity for crimes perpetrated during the internal armed conflict. It would free individuals who have been convicted of crimes against humanity. This would apply to those convicted in the trial for the forced disappearance of Marco Antonio Molina Theissen, aged 14, and the illegal detention, torture and rape of his sister Emma Guadalupe, and the case of the Dos Erres massacre (Petén). Sentences were dictated for both cases in 2018, resulting in the conviction of the majority of the defendants and in dictating reparation measures for the victims.

The Law for the Consultation of Indigenous Peoples is another initiative that has raised deep concerns, due to the restrictions that would apply in the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples should it be approved. The situation of the Mayan, Xinca and Garífuna peoples would deteriorate even further. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "indigenous peoples in Guatemala do not enjoy the protection of their rights to lands, territories and resources, and are subject to racial discrimination that permeates all areas of life."

These and other legislative and political measures have had a serious impact on the defense of human rights and have resulted in increasing risks to human rights defenders, especially those working on access to land and in defense of the territory. UN human rights experts have warned about the increase in assassinations, attacks and other acts of intimidation against human rights defenders. The increase in such deplorable acts impacts the entire population by sending a warning message about the terrible consequences that defending human rights can have. Similarly, organizations such as the International Land Coalition, Front Line Defenders and Civicus have pointed out that there is a systematic pattern of repression in Guatemala that impacts land rights defenders in particular.

Within this context, the number of assassinations of human rights defenders, as well as cases of criminalization, is particularly worrisome, and has become an increasing trend over recent years. Alta Verapaz is one of the regions most affected by the high number of serious attacks against human rights defenders, including one of the most high profile incidents of criminalization at national and international level: the case of the Q'eqchi' human rights defender Bernardo Caal Xol for his opposition to the Oxec I and II hydroelectric projects in Santa María Cahabón. Bernardo was sentenced to seven years and four months in prison on the 9 November 2018. The UN has highlighted this process as an attempt to silence and discredit the legitimate exercise of the rights of the indigenous community. This, however, is not an isolated case. Many members of indigenous communities are being criminalized for defending their ancestral lands against economic projects that



have been imposed without community consultation. Given the seriousness of this situation, the Human Rights Ombudsman has signaled the lack of action of the Ministry of the Interior and has requested the MP to investigate, not only the material authors, but also the intellectual authors, of crimes against human rights defenders.

PBI is monitoring the situation closely. We have provided continued accompaniment and requested international attention for several of the most serious cases of attacks against human rights defenders. Our

objective is to support and maintain the existence of democratic spaces for the defense of human rights by those we accompany within the context of the clear deterioration in the human rights situation.

WHO WE ACCOMPANY

PBI Guatemala accompanies organizations and social processes in their peaceful struggle against impunity, for fair access to land and in defense of their territory.

In 2018 we provided accompaniment to 13 organizations and social processes (238 people, 157 men and 81 women).

We received 13 new requests for accompaniment. 10 of these requests related to global accompaniment and the others related to the observation of specific activities that involved potential risks for the participants. Following a process of analysis, we initiated three new accompaniment processes with: a TZ'AT - Network of Ancestral Healers of Community Feminism from Ixmulew (Red de Sanadoras Ancestrales del Feminismo

Comunitario desde Ixmulew), the Community Council of the Highlands (Consejo Comunitario del Altiplano (CCDA)) Las Verapaces and the Chinautla Multisector Urban Platform (Plataforma Urbana y Multisectorial de Chinautla).

We continued to monitor the situation of human rights defenders in Petén, through two follow-up trips to the department.

In addition, we provided continued observation throughout the trial relating to the forced disappearance of Marco Antonio Molina Theissen, aged 14, and of the illegal detention, torture and rape of his sister Emma Guadalupe, for which four high-ranking ex-military officials were convicted in May 2018.

- Bi-annual visits to a variety of organisations
- K'iche Peoples Council (CPK)
- Cunén Communities' Council (CCC)
- Peaceful Resistance La Puya
- Peaceful Resistance La Laguna
- Human Rights Lawyer's Office (BDH)
- Peaceful Resistance of Cahabón
- Chicoyogüito Neighborhood Association of Alta Verapaz (AVECHAV)

- Union of Campesino Organisations for the Verapaces (UVOC)
- Ecumenical and Social Coordination for the Defence of Life in Chiquimula and Zacapa in the Macizo Merendón
- 'New Day' Ch'orti' Campesino Central Coordinator (CCCND)
- TZ'KAT Network of Ancestral Healers of Community Feminism from Ixmulew
- Community Council of the Highlands – Las Verapaces (CCDA)
- Chinautla Multisector Urban Platform



★ We engaged in continuous monitoring of other processes in the defense of human rights through observation, specific accompaniments and dissemination of information, paying special attention to women human rights defenders in high-risk situations.



WHO WE ACCOMPANY

THE CASE OF “CANTERA LOS MANANTIALES” AND THE CENTRAL CAMPESINA CH’ORTI’ NUEVO DÍA (CCCND): defending the territory as a high risk activity.

The ‘New Day’ Ch’orti’ Campesino Central Coordinator (Central Campesina Ch’orti’ Nuevo Día (CCCND)) is formed of approximately 43 Maya Ch’orti’ communities located in the department of Chiquimula, in eastern Guatemala. CCCND’s work consists of advising and accompanying members of these communities in processes involving the defense of their rights as indigenous peoples including their rights to land and territory.

Within the framework of their work in advocating for human rights, the CCCND supports various communities from the municipality of Olopa in their peaceful resistance to the “Cantera Los Manantiales” project, which extracts the mineral antimony and is run by the mining company American Minerals S.A. This project was granted an operating license by the

Guatemalan State in 2015 and began operations in 2016 without, however, respecting the local communities’ right to free, prior and informed prior consultation, as set out in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Convention 169.

In the absence of community consultations and as a result of the project’s environmental and social impacts, the affected communities decided to express their disagreement with its operation in their territories by organizing three community consultations and peaceful demonstrations. Since 2016 community leaders and members of the CCCND have experienced constant threats, intimidation and attacks by individuals linked to the company as a result of becoming organized in their opposition to the project and for positioning themselves as communities in resistance. They have also become victims of criminalization.

On January 31, 2016, 22 community leaders were charged with a series of crimes including, injuries as a result of rioting, robbery, threats and aggravated arson, which allegedly occurred during a peaceful demonstration organized by the communities in resistance. These accusations were made, despite the fact that observers from the Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office (PDH) and the Municipal Mayor of Olopa were present throughout the demonstration and have corroborated that the communities were exercising their legitimate right to defend their territory in a peaceful manner. This process was eventually resolved on the 16 March 2016 through judicial mediation. The judge ruled in favour of ending the criminal prosecution against the 22 leaders on condition that they stay away from the place where the alleged crimes occurred as well as the company’s property and installations. This instance of criminalization is emblematic of the type of crimes for which human rights defenders are routinely accused of committing in Guatemala, as well as the judicial decisions that aim to restrict peoples’ fundamental rights of resistance, including the right to participate in peaceful demonstrations.

The mining license for the “Cantera Los Manantiales” project has been suspended. Nevertheless, this has not resulted in an improvement in the security situation for the members of these communities. Members of the CCCND continue to suffer intimidation and harassment for their resistance to this project and these intensified throughout 2018. For example, Omar Jerónimo, coordinator of the CCCND, has received multiple death threats. Also, Norma Sancir and Ubaldino García, two members of the technical team that work on this case, have suffered, among other incidents, two attempted raids on their homes.

We have seen that when the PBI team is present these aggressions stop because of the international pressure. PBI’s presence is dissuasive and often it is the only one. If PBI left the territory we would be affected because the people from the communities know PBI and are very satisfied with their work. When they see the vests they know that Nuevo Día is supported in our. (Norma Sancir, members of CCCND).

In November 2018, Elizandro Pérez, an indigenous leader from the community of La Prensa (Olopa) and a member of the resistance to the mining project, was found dead in his home. Elizandro had been receiving constant threats and attacks to his against his physical integrity for his leadership in the resistance to the mine. The CCCND, Elizandro and his family had all issued repeated warnings and reports related to the risks he was facing.

International accompaniment: supporting the defense of the rights to land and territory

Since its foundation the CCCND has opted to defend human rights through peaceful means, especially the rights to land and territory. It is worth highlighting the importance of land to the Ch'orti' communities. As with other Mayan peoples, land and territory represent a fundamental part of their cosmovision, their life and their identity. Therefore, within the context of violence and resource dispossession suffered by the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, the CCCND supports these communities in the legitimate process of defending their rights to land and territory.

PBI began providing accompaniment to the CCCND in 2009. Since then we have maintained a regular presence in the area and we have intensified our accompaniment to the members of the communities that are part of this organization since 2009. We have continued to strengthen the support we provide as we have become more aware of security situation faced by many members of the organization, both within the coordinating team and the communities affected by the extractive projects. A further aspect of this accompaniment has been the continued support to women human rights defenders from the CCCND in their empowerment, vindication of their rights and their organizational processes.

As mentioned above, there are ever clearer restrictions on spaces for defending human rights in the region, thus we have reinforced our presence there. The



security situation in the Olopa communities has also continued to deteriorate, thus we have been present during emergency situations and we have followed-up on the different security incidents suffered by members of the resistance to the "Cantera Los Manantiales."

"PBI's presence is fundamental. It helps a lot and motivates us to continue with the struggle. (José Raúl, community member from El Cerrón, municipality of Olopa, Chiquimula, and member of CCCND.)"

In recent years, the CCCND has affirmed its commitment to engaging in dialogue with State institutions, local authorities and international organizations

with the aim of reaching realistic solutions to their demands. As a component of our mandate, PBI has been participating in various local, national and international advocacy spaces, where we have shared our concerns over the security situation faced by the communities from the CCCND and their members. We have also provided accompaniment to the CCCND in their advocacy strategy, for example, we facilitated two advocacy tours by CCCND members to Europe in 2018 where they were able to present their demands to a wider audience.

In response to the increases in threats and intimidation towards the CCCND and its members throughout 2018, we activated our Support Network on three separate occasions, in order to express our concern over the alarming security situation they are currently facing.

PBI, through these actions, aims to prevent the further reduction of spaces for CCCND's defense of human rights and allow for human rights defenders to carry out their important work with a minimum of risk. PBI's efforts, which build on CCCND's advocacy work, have contributed to the mobilization of support for their defense of human rights from the international community in Guatemala and, on some occasions, the national authorities. The meeting held between the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Ch'orti' communities during her visit to Guatemala in May 2018 is of particular importance. Further meetings were held by PBI and the office of the Special Rapporteur in Geneva in March, where we stressed the situation of risk faced by human rights defenders in the Eastern regions and the importance of maintaining an international interest in the region. In 2018 we also facilitated the participation of Omar Jerónimo in several advocacy spaces in Germany. As a result, there was an increase in the German public's concern over the regulation of the right to consultation of indigenous peoples in the Central American country and the defense of human rights in Guatemala came to the attention for many people in Europe.

Despite the risks, the CCCND and the Olopa communities affected by the "Cantera Los Manantiales" continue to defend their rights. The possibility of an intensification in attacks against the organisation and the communities is a persistent concern, therefore PBI will continue to provide accompaniment and support to CCCND and the cases they defend.



WHO WE ACCOMPANY

NEW ACCOMPANIMENTS: women leading the defense of land and territory

During 2018 PBI began accompanying two new organizations in which women play a leading role in the defense of land and territory: the TZK'AT - Network of Ancestral Healers of Community Feminism from Ixmulew and the Community Council of the Highlands (CCDA) Las Verapaces.

The Network was founded in 2015 and is made up of indigenous Xinka and indigenous Mayan women from the Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, K'iche', Uspanteko and Ch'orti' peoples. All these communities share stories of political persecution, stigmatization, territorial and political displacement, criminalization, prosecution, they have received death threats and have experienced sexual violence. These attacks occur in retaliation to their work in defense of their land, territory and their bodies. Their vulnerabilities are increased due to the

fact that they are 1) indigenous women, 2) from rural areas and 3) human rights defenders.

The Network emerged out of the need to support and give a voice to women human rights defenders in the face of a patriarchal political, economic and social system that oppresses and exploits them. It aims to enable women to heal, a process which is understood as a form of integrated protection and the strengthening of community and the Network also promotes strategies for self-protection and care based on the ancestral cosmovisions. The work of the Network highlights the specific risks that women human rights defenders face, not only in public spaces, but also in community and organizational spaces.

PBI's accompaniment of the Network forms part of our commitment towards deepening our gender approach,

and by extension our feminism, within our protective accompaniment processes. The exchanges with the women human rights defenders that form part of the Network have also become learning spaces for PBI.

PBI support us directly into our territory, they witness the situation and they walk with us. We value PBI's presence alongside us and that they carry our struggles and our claims, which the racist, genocidal, misogynist and patriarchal state of Guatemala, has tried to silence, to other territories (Lolita Chávez, member of the Consejo de Pueblos K'ichés' -CPK- and the TZK'AT Red de Sanadoras Ancestrales del Feminismo Comunitario de Ixmulew).

PBI's accompaniment of the Network has helped its members to expand their international support network. For example, Lorena Cabnal participated in a breakfast meeting with the Special Representative of the European Union for Human Rights, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, and nine other civil society representatives, which took place in November. In addition, by providing protection to the Network, we help strengthen its capacity to bring together more women human rights defenders from throughout the country to form part of this system of horizontal protection.

CCDA Las Verapaces is an organization that has been working for the defense, recovery and access to land for over twenty years. It accompanies more than 150 Q'eqchi'communities that have faced repression and dispossession of their land, or who are experiencing conflicts over land possession. These communities are located in the departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz, in the municipality of El Estor (Izabal) and in Zona Reyna (Quiché). The organization seeks peaceful ways of resolving land conflicts by actively participating in dialogue processes with different state institutions. This, however, has not protected them from becoming targets of serious attacks. Several of these attacks have been aimed at the two women who lead the organization. They have faced threats, intimidation and defamation with clear sexist overtones as well as other actions designed to question their leadership abilities because they are women. CCDA, in addition to being led by two women, has equal participation between women and men in their governing body.

2018 has been a disastrous year for this organization in terms of aggressions against its members: between May and June three members were murdered. Many other leaders have been criminalized, and even imprisoned, accused of trespassing or invading their own territories.

For these reasons, CCDA approached PBI seeking international accompaniment. This began providing in



July. Since then, we have accompanied them on 21 occasions including: hearings in cases of criminalization, meetings between representatives of the organization and the Government, or by maintaining a visible international presence in their offices. We activated our support network in response to three different emergencies provoked by attacks and threats faced by members of the communities and we included this

case in an alert issued to the international community. Finally, we have supported them in strengthening their own self-protection capacities by facilitating a security workshop during which 21 members participated.

The above actions have contributed to mobilizing state institutions such as the Presidential Human Rights Committee (COPREDEH) of Alta Verapaz,

which attended hearings on cases of criminalization of members of the CCDA. Also, the information we provided to the Filter Group contributed to their willingness to visit the region and to meet with the widow of José Can Xol, an ancestral authority from the Choctún Basilá community (Cobán, Alta Verapaz), who was murdered in May. The Filter Group further expressed its concerns over the criminalization cases to local representatives from the Public Prosecutors Office, the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the National Civil Police (PNC).

These actions, which form part of our accompaniment, have contributed to a reduction in serious attacks against the organization, thus enabling it to continue with its work. In December 2018, the organization reached an agreement with the national Land Fund (FONTIERRAS) for the purchase of a farm for the relocation of 81 families from five communities, some of whom had been evicted. Although this represents a significant achievement, CCDA Las Verapaces has highlighted that there are many more families facing the same problems and suffering the effects of the agrarian conflict in the region.

Since PBI began accompanying us, we have received attention at the Public Prosecutor's Office. Before they did not want to deal with us, they questioned whether we knew how to read or write. When they saw me dressed in a huipil and corte (indigenous blouse and skirt) they did not believe what I said and they discriminated against us. But when we arrive with PBI, they have to attend to us. (Lesbia Artola, coordinator CCDA Las Verapaces).

PBI will continue to accompany these two organizations, with the aim of ensuring that their spaces for action and advocacy remain open so they can continue with their invaluable work.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

ALERT ON INCREASING RISKS TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS OF LAND AND TERRITORY

According to data from UDEFEGUA, twenty-six human rights defenders were murdered in Guatemala during 2018, 136% more than the previous year¹. The murders are the most serious acts within the context of an alarming number of attacks against human rights defenders in Guatemala. Taking solely the number of security incidents reported to PBI by accompanied organization, the tendency towards the reduction and closure of political space for local actors has become clear, particularly for those who work on protecting the land and territory and those based in departments far from the capital city, such as Alta Verapaz and the eastern regions of the country.

PBI published an Alert directed at the international community in response to this situation, in which we expressed our concerns over the safety of our accompanied organizations and requesting the swift application of protection mechanisms. The Alert including specific information relating to the risks faced by the CCCND, the Peaceful Resistance Cahabón, the Union of Campesino Organizations for the Verapaces (UVOC) and CCDA – Alta Verapaz. The information contained in the Alert had to be updated three times over the course of the year, due to the continued deterioration of the security situation faced by these organizations.

¹ We take as our reference the number of assassinations of human rights defenders registered by UDEFEGUA in 2017, without including the 41 victims the fire at the "Virgen de La Asunción" Safe Home (UDEFEGUA, Por el Derecho a Defender Derechos. Informe 2017, Guatemala, mayo 2018).



We have maintained continuous communication and meetings with the personnel responsible for Guatemala and Human Rights from the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels, as well as with the geographical managers from the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and France, through the national PBI groups in these countries. At the same time, we have informed members of the European Parliament and other people within PBI Guatemala's Support Network about the current situation.

These actions have contributed to motivating staff from the Swiss Embassy and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) to attend hearings in the case against Bernardo Caal

Xol, a community leader from the Peaceful Resistance Cahabón who has been criminalized. These actions have also helped motivate the Filter Group to visit Bernardo in prison, and to meet with the widow of José Can Xol, a member of the CCDA - Las Verapaces, who was murdered in 2018. The information provided by PBI facilitated the invitation of several accompanied organizations to meetings with a delegation of MEPs that visited Guatemala in the autumn of 2018. We also helped facilitate the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, to Bernardo in prison during her reporting trip to Guatemala, as well as facilitating a visit to Guatemala's eastern region to meet with the Ch'orti' communities, many of whom are members of the

CCCND. Furthermore, OACNUDH and the EU Delegation held meetings with the coordinator of the CCCND, as a result of the serious threats he has received.

There were many reactions at the international level when I received serious threats and I feel that the advocacy work PBI carried out on my case contributed to this response. (Omar Jerónimo, coordinator of CCCND)

All the advocacy actions detailed here proved to be an important source of support for these organizations to be able to continue with their advocacy work, despite the growing hostility in the context in which they work.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

FOCUSING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON THE SITUATION IN GUATEMALA

As follow up to the European Parliament's commitment to human rights in Guatemala, PBI led, in collaboration with other organizations, the following actions: a presentation on the situation of the country at the

Human Rights Subcommittee (June), a visit by MEPs to Guatemala (November), and open letters from MEPs to their Guatemalan counterparts and Jimmy Morales' government (June). Our concern over the situation of human rights defenders within the context of the institutional crisis and the deterioration in rule of law that the country is experiencing were the motivating factors behind these initiatives. At this juncture, we are particularly concerned about the progress in the investigations into corruption that have carried out by the CICIG and the Public Prosecutor's Office, the continued independence of the judicial system in the face of doubts over transparency in the selection process for the new Attorney General, as well as the continued defamation by government bodies against civil society organizations.

We hope that the European Parliament's continued attention to the human rights situation in Guatemala will result in a greater degree of attention and improved protection for human rights defenders in the country.

We also carried out advocacy work within the United Nations system, in parallel to the actions undertaken at EU level. We prepared information for the thematic report from UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples on criminalization and attacks against indigenous peoples and ahead of her visit to Guatemala in June 2018. With the support from the PBI national group in Switzerland, we also prepared interventions for the 2017/2018 session on the acceptance of recommendations for Guatemala's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Committee (March) and for the annual Human Rights Council session (September). Each intervention highlighted the risks faced by human rights defenders and the need for a State policy on the protection of human rights defenders, as well as the need to investigate the crimes and prosecute the perpetrators of the attacks.

ADVOCACY TOURS: STRENGTHENING OUR SUPPORT NETWORK IN NORTH AMERICA

During 2018 we supported six human rights defenders in carrying out advocacy tours in both Europe and North America. These helped in raising awareness of the specific situation faced by their organizations at local level and in strengthening their support networks outside of Guatemala.



A particular highlight was the advocacy tour to Washington in June, organized jointly by the PBI projects in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras, with support from the PBI group in the United States. The tour focused on the regional context as well as the risks and challenges faced by social struggles working on the defense of the territory in the Meso-American region. Indigenous communities across all three countries face the presence of extractive projects in their territories that are operating without consultation from the affected population. Human rights defenders across the diverse resistances have received threats and aggressions and their leaders have been subject to criminalization processes.

Raúl Caal Ical, a human rights defender from the Peaceful Resistance Cahabón, participated from Guatemala, in representation of the Q'eqchi' people who are defending their territory against the imposition of the OXEC hydroelectric plant. The presence of this project in the region has resulted in serious aggressions against members of the Resistance, as well as the criminalization of several community leaders, including Bernardo Caal Xol.

The three human rights defenders who participated in the tour met with staff from 14 congressional offices of the US State Department and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to share details of their struggles and the adverse situation regarding human rights in their respective countries.

As a result of the meetings held during the tour, members of the US Congress and Senate committed to issuing a open letter to address their concerns about the increase in attacks against human rights defenders, as well as the legal initiatives currently under discussion in the Guatemalan Congress, which, if approved, would limit actions in the defense human rights.



ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

PBI'S ACTIVITIES CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The Declaration on the Rights and Duty of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Human Rights and Universally Recognized Fundamental Freedoms highlights the importance of promoting human rights and the need to protect those who carry out this work and who participate actively in the construction of more democratic and respectful societies.

Despite the 20 years that have passed since its ratification, the people and groups that defend and promote human rights are under increasing pressure all over the world. Guatemala is no exception.

To highlight this situation we organized a number of activities around the Declaration in collaboration with other PBI national projects and groups. These included a workshop with human rights defenders we accompany from Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Kenya, Indonesia and Nepal. The workshop included activities such as an exchange on the risks and difficulties faced by human rights defenders and their experiences and strategies for comprehensive protection and self-care so as to promote mutual learning among the participants. Participants carried out an analysis of global and regional trends that impact the risks for human rights defenders and identified common needs that require immediate attention from the international community. Following these reflections the 40 participants developed a common narrative with key messages and recommendations for political actors from the EU and Member States. This common narrative can be consulted at the following link: <https://bit.ly/2Eqc8pH>

PBI took advantage of the human rights defenders' visit to Brussels to organize meetings with geographical managers from their countries of origin and representatives from the Human Rights Unit of the EEAS. Furthermore, a round table was prepared on

the Declaration in collaboration with the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU, as Austria held the EU Presidency during the second semester of 2018. The roundtable focused on the current challenges for implementing the declaration and suggestions for improving protections for human rights defenders. The round table included participation from three human rights defenders who are accompanied by PBI, a representative from the Human Rights Unit of the EEAS, a representative from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders, a representative from the General Directorate of Commerce of the European Commission and the Austrian Ambassador.

On conclusion of the activities in Brussels, PBI facilitated tours for the human rights defenders we accompany to a total of 10 European countries.

“My participation in PBI's activities in Brussels has been very important to me because I met many human rights defenders from other countries, such as Nepal, and Kenya. I saw that their struggles are similar to what we experience in Guatemala. They also suffer many threats because of their work. It was important to realize that the threats to human rights defenders are not limited to Guatemala, that it is a global problem. (Domingo Vásquez, member of CCCND)

PBI Guatemala highly values these activities, particularly the possibility for knowledge exchange and learning with other people in a peaceful space. We greatly appreciate the energy and richness of experience provided by each of the participants, as well as the wealth of perspectives exchanged during this activity.

We dedicated our **Boletín Popular no. 8** to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders as a means to raise awareness of the Declaration in rural areas, where the most vulnerable human rights defenders are based. The Bulletin explains the rights and freedoms recognized by all countries in the world that support the work of human rights defenders and can be consulted on the PBI Guatemala website.

IN 2018 WE LAUNCHED THE NEW PBI GUATEMALA WEBSITE!

The website is one of our principal tools for disseminating the findings from our accompaniment in Guatemala.

This is further supported by two periodic publications:

- The Monthly Information Packages summarize the most important news from the month in the field of human rights, as well as the work carried out by PBI within and outside of Guatemala.
- The bi-annual Bulletins give greater attention to different issues of importance relating to the human rights situation in Guatemala as well as seeking to give voice to the people and organizations that we accompany.

Visit us at
<https://pbi-guatemala.org!>

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES



Throughout 2018 we focused on strengthening the self-protection and care capacities of the local organizations that we accompany by increasing the number of trainings on security and protection that we usually provide.

We organised **two gatherings** on healing as a protection tool, held in Totonicapán and Nebaj with women human rights defenders who work on the connections between the body, land and territory. 72 women human rights defenders participated.

We also provided a **security and protection workshop** for members of the organizations and communities we accompany. This training space, which PBI offers on an annual basis, has a dual purpose. On the one hand, it aims to create a space for exchange between human rights defenders that PBI accompanies

from across the different regions of Guatemala. On the other hand, it emphasizes the importance that PBI places on the need for each group and organization that we accompany to develop its own protection and security capabilities, independent of the presence of international accompaniment. The workshop was held in Guatemala City and participants included seven women human rights defenders and 20 human rights defenders from across seven organizations that we accompany. The training included a particular emphasis how gender based violence undermines the coherence of social struggles when it occurs within organizations that defend human rights.

In the second semester, we facilitated a **workshop on security and community protection for members of CCDA-Las Verapaces**, which coincided with the inauguration of PBI's accompaniment to this organization. The workshop was facilitated in the Q'eqchi' language by Antonio Xicol Cú, a member of the Association of Communities for the Development and Defense of the Territory (ACODET) from Ixcán (Quiché). Participants included eight women human rights defenders and 13 human rights defenders from different communities across the department of Alta Verapaz.

Additionally, we facilitated the organization of **13 security and protection workshops for members of the Peaceful Resistance of Cahabón**, which encompasses 195 communities from this municipality. The community members requested training from PBI so they could strengthen their own security due to the increase in aggressions against them since they formed the resistance movement. In response to this request, we organized a cycle of workshops in the Q'eqchi' language during which 169 people participated (105 women and 64 men). Many participants committed to replicating what they learned with the rest of the communities throughout 2019. Three of these workshops focused on healing for women human rights defenders, and included the recovery of spiritual elements from their Q'eqchi' cosmovision and the strengthening of their self-care, protection and safety capacities.

PBI GUATEMALA VOLUNTEERS

PBI Guatemala is made up of several volunteer work spaces which include:

- ✓ Field team
- ✓ Project committee
- ✓ Training team

In 2018 a total of 22 accompaniers formed part of the **field team**, 13 women, and 9 men of 11 different nationalities.

13 + 9



Germany	1
Argentina	1
Belgium	1
Canada	1
Chile	1
Colombia	5
Ecuador	1
Spain	4
Italy	4
Great Britain	2
Switzerland	1

TESTIMONY FROM FORMER VOLUNTEER: LAURA GOMÁRIZ (AUGUST 2017-AUGUST 2018)

My experience as a field volunteer in Guatemala ended just a few months ago and when I look back I can hardly imagine my life now, nor in the future, without contributing my grain of sand to support the defense of human rights in Guatemala, where so many people fight tirelessly for their human rights.

The volunteer experience hooked me gradually, I began to feel more and more involved and committed to the work of international accompaniment as time went on, particularly when faced with the real needs expressed by human rights defenders in Guatemala in the face of the continuous harassment they suffer while carrying out their legitimate work.

This feeling began to grow from the moment I sent off my application to become a field volunteer, while participating in a magical and moving training and selection week where I was lucky to meet people from all corners of the world with the same beliefs, and even after arriving in Guatemala City when I was still full of uncertainty.

As the days went by in the PBI-Guatemala team, whether I was in the city accompanying hearings in court, writing reports and articles, organizing meetings with local or international authorities, traveling to remote communities where I met the most courageous and resilient people I have ever known, my understanding of PBI's work in accompanying people who are defending their rights to land and territory and fighting against impunity, was constantly growing.

It was not easy to understand the complexity of the Guatemalan context. Nor was it easy to deal with the injustices and attacks suffered by human rights defenders. It was very hard for me to witness first hand the cases of criminalization, the continuous harassment of human rights defenders, as well as the suffering of families and entire communities that are directly or indirectly affected by such attacks. I did not, however, let this discourage me. Rather it gave me even greater conviction of the need to tell the world what human rights defenders are going through in Guatemala.

As a woman, it is important for me to highlight the work of women human rights defenders, who are an example of dignity and resilience. Apart from

their tireless work in defending their cause, they are absorbed with looking after their families, taking care of their children, doing the cooking and countless other domestic chores. They are a great example for me to follow. Hopefully, one day, all the violence suffered by women in Guatemala and the rest of the world will come to an end.

Although our stay in the country as volunteers is temporary, the sum of each person's contribution to this project is what makes the international accompaniment possible, a counter-balance to the violations that human rights defenders suffer in their daily struggle.



PBI IN NUMBERS

PHYSICAL PRESENCE

- 345** Accompaniments to organizations and social entities
- 106** Meetings with accompanied organization and social entities
- 129** Meetings with other Guatemalan organizations
- 22** Observations of events organized by Guatemalan civil society

ADVOCACY

- 83** Meetings with Guatemalan authorities at the state, department, and local levels
- 44** Meetings with diplomatic corps and embassies, OHCHR in Guatemala
- 38** Meetings with Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Organizations in Europe
- 5** Human rights defenders advocacy tours to Europe

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES

We facilitated **17** workshops* for **289** participants from 18 organizations

- ***1** Workshop on security and protection for accompanied organizations
- ***13** Workshops on security and protection for members of the Cahabón Resistance and on healing for their women defenders
- ***1** Workshop on security and protection for members of CCDA-Las Verapaces
- ***2** Meetings on healing for women defenders

PUBLICATIONS



- 1** Boletín Popular

- 12** Monthly Information Package

- 2** Bi-annual Bulletins



♀ 192

97 ♂



MEMBERS OF PBI GUATEMALA 2018

VOLUNTEER TEAM IN GUATEMALA

Gustavo García Andrade (Colombia), Francisco Vanegas Toro (Colombia), Jan Sabbe (Belgium), Anabel Butler (United Kingdom), Emanuela Lamieri (Italy), Andreas Lo Grasso (Germany), Laura Gomáriz Cebrián (Spain), Ricardo Henao Galvis (Colombia), Dylan Lebecki (Ecuador), Pilar Tablado Marrón (Spain), María Clara de Paz (Argentina), Jessica García (Switzerland), Antonia Pérez (Chile), Evelina Crespi (Italy), Viviana Annunziata (Italy), Emily Spence (United Kingdom), Jordi Quiles Sendra (Spain), Daniel Jiménez Hita (Spain), Sophie Mailly (Canada), Sara Lodi (Italy), Diana Carolina Cabra Delgado (Colombia), Julián Esteban Arturo Ordoñez (Colombia).

PROJECT COMMITTEE:

Amaya de Miguel (Spain), Montserrat García (Spain), Kerstin Reemtsma (Germany), Maike Holderer (Germany), Samuel Jones (United Kingdom), Erika Martínez (Spain), Irene Izquieta (Spain), Adam Lunn (United Kingdom), Pedro Cárdenas (Mexico), Eulália Padró Giral (Spain).

FORMATION TEAM:

Erika Martínez García (Spain), Kristel Best Urday (Peru), Felix Weiss (Germany), Katharina Ochsendorf (Germany), Irene Izquieta (Spain), Paulina Martínez Larraín (Chile), Eulália Padró Giral (Spain) Manon Fenoy (France), Alicia Gutiérrez Esturillo (Spain).

PROJECT STAFF:

Amaya de Miguel (coordinator), Kerstin Reemtsma (representative to the European Union), Eulália Padró Giral (substitution of representative to the European Union while on unpaid leave), Mayte Quesada (administrator), Jacques van Luytelaar y Ana Fernández Rodríguez (financial supervisor), Paola Sarti (fundraiser), Silvia Weber and Irene Izquieta (field support), Maike Holderer and Laura Gomáriz Cebrián (responsible of formation).

PROJECTS CONSULTANTS:

Evangelina Scarfe (Ireland), Fermín Rodrigo (Spain), Cristina Barbeito (Spain).

FINANCIAL REPORT 2018

During 2018, PBI Guatemala has maintained a financial stability, which has allowed for us to carry out all planned activities and as well as the implementation of some specific activities not originally included in the annual budget. The budget expenditure for the year 2018 has increased by 10% with respect to the previous year's budget and revenues have increased by 8%. The number and diversity of donors who support PBI's work in Guatemala has remained virtually unchanged over the last two years. At the close of

the 2018 accounts we had a surplus of just over 1% that will be used partly to finance additional activities during 2019 and partly to create a reserve that allows the project to cover six months of operational expenses for 2019. Such reserves are an example of good practice in terms of non-profit management and have been established in the financial regulations by PBI's international office. If the reserves exceed six months of operational expenses, they are reduced and used to cover operating expenses for the current year. We thank all donors for the financial support that has allowed us to continue providing accompaniment and international protection to those who risk their lives to defend human rights in Guatemala.

WHAT WE SPENT IN?



EXPENSES PBI GUATEMALA 2018

	EUR	
Volunteer training and orientation	20.821	5%
Physical presence, interlocution and advocacy in Guatemala	121.859	30%
Communication and advocacy outside of Guatemala	63.631	15%
Training for defenders in Guatemala	27.843	7%
Coordination and strategic planning	49.378	12%
Fundraising, administration and finances	60.274	15%
Audit and evaluation	8.943	2%
Coordination and strategic planning at PBI global level	46.057	11%
Non-operating expenses	12.536	3%
TOTAL EXPENSES	411.342	
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME AND EXPENSES	4.710	

* All expenses and income presented in this report are in euros and are in the process of external audit by the Guatemalan firm Subuyuj Consultores - Public Accountants and Auditors.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 2018		EUR
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		235.825
Commercial Debtors and Other Accounts Receivable		
Donations and y outstanding agreements		18.051
Accounts receivable PBI International Secretariat		62.493
Health insurance reimbursements receivable		603
Down payments and advances		1.893
Deposits		677
Total Commercial Debtors and Other Accounts Receivable		83.717
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		319.542
NONCURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Computer and communication equipment		0
Furnishings and fixtures		0
Accumulated depreciation		0
Total Property, Plant and Equipment		0
TOTAL ASSETS		319.542
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Commercial creditors and other accounts payable		
Accounts payable to third party		14.072
Accounts payable to staff and volunteers		529
Accounts payable to PBI International Secretariat		
Accounts payable to other PBI entities		306
Total Commercial creditors and other accounts payable		14.907
Provisions		
Staff and volunteer benefits		8.172
Other Provisions		13.035
Total Provisions		21.207
Current tax liability		4.980
Other non-financial liabilities (Restricted funds to be executed)		584.442
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		99.535
NONCURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provision for Contingencies		86.100
TOTAL NONCURRENT LIABILITIES		86.100
EQUITY		
Funds free to execute, starting balance		129.197
Difference between Income and Expenses		4.710
TOTAL EQUITY		133.907
TOTAL LIABILITY AND EQUITY		319.542

INCOME RECEIVED PBI GUATEMALA 2018		EUR
Funds received in PBI bank accounts from Donors		436.971
European Union	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	28.430
Germany	Brot für die Welt	10.250
Germany	Misereor (213-600-1002 ZG)	30.650
Germany	IfA-Institut für Auslandbeziehungen (ZIVIK, MAE Alemán)	82.626
Germany	Ziviler Friedensdienst	38.944
Belgium	Oxfam Solidarité	3.490
Spain	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)	40.000
Spain	Ayuntamiento de Castellon de la Plana / Periferias del Mon	18.382
Spain	Diputación de Córdoba	16.560
Spain	Diputación de Valladolid	27.300
Spain	Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo	24.000
United States	Overbrook Foundation USD 10.000	8.417
Ireland	Trocaire, GUA 170223	25.000
Italy	Chiesa Evangelica Valdese. Uniones delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi	3.150
Italy	Grupo Nacional PBI Italia	2.000
Netherlands	Dutch Human Rights Fund	41.311
United Kingdom	Open Society Foundation	4.239
Switzerland	Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération - Lausanne, Montreux, Renens CHF 19.247	16.877
Switzerland	Gesamtkirchgemeinde Stadt Bern und Umgebung (GKG Bern) CHF 17.500	15.345
Funds dating from 2017/Donations to be spent by end of 2017		-14.365
European Union	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	-10.215
Germany	Ziviler Friedensdienst	-1.000
Italy	Chiesa Evangelica Valdese. Uniones delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi	-3.150
Funds received during 2018 pending implementation in 2019		-58.442
Spain	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)	-4.290
Spain	Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo	-23.125
Spain	Ayuntamiento de Castellon de la Plana / Periferias del Mon	-3.632
Netherlands	Dutch Human Rights Fund	-26.346
United Kingdom	Open Society Foundation	-1.049
Funds for activities implemented during 2018 that still awaiting end of year payment		18.051
European Union	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	8.551
Germany	Brot für die Welt	7.750
Germany	Misereor (213-600-1002 ZG)	1.750
Funds received in 2017 to be implemented in 2018		32.004
Germany	Misereor (213-600-1002 ZG)	1.760
Spain	Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo	5.650
Ireland	Trocaire, GUA 140111/ GUA140204 Protección de personas defensoras	6.594
Netherlands	Dutch Human Rights Fund	18.000
United Kingdom	Open Society Foundation	0
Funds reintegrated from part of a 2012 agreement (principal)		-2.180
Spain	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)	-2.180
Other income		4.012
Private donors		3.482
Income from own activities		500
Interests		30
TOTAL GENERAL INCOME		416.052



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