



Creemos en la vida antes de la muerte

Bogotá, 10 March 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Christian Aid Supports Peace Brigades International

In light of a recent series of defamatory news articles against the international accompaniment organisation Peace Brigades International (PBI), and the Colombian human rights defenders they accompany, Christian Aid finds it necessary to respond publicly on behalf of PBI and to affirm, without question, the fiscal, political, and moral integrity of the organisation.

On 14 December 2009, the US newspaper *The Wall Street Journal* published an editorial titled "The FARC's NGO Friends", accusing PBI of collaborating with the insurgent group. This article was reprinted in several newspapers in Colombia, as well as in Mexico. Additionally, it was used as the principal source in another article published 1 January 2010 in the UK newspaper *Telegraph* titled "How leftist 'peace groups' are helping terrorists". PBI categorically rejects the claims made about their organisation in these two articles, and sent letters of rectification to both the *Telegraph* and *The Wall Street Journal*. The latter published PBI's letter on 24 December 2009. (See <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703523504574604451039816192.html>)

Christian Aid is proud to say that it has provided financial support to PBI in Colombia for well over a decade. PBI operates with full transparency and disclosure of its financial statements, providing us with bi-annual reports and subjecting itself annually to Colombia's rigorous internal audit process, as consistent with national law. Christian Aid conducts its own independent audit of all the groups it funds, and can unequivocally confirm that PBI does not provide support to any illegal entities. Accusations of this nature, besides lacking any credible basis whatsoever, have one sole purpose: to limit the ability of the attacked organisation to conduct its work. Any attack against PBI is ultimately an attack against the threatened human rights lawyers, activists, and communities they accompany. In the Colombian context, these accusations could lead to physical aggression against PBI staff or accompanied individuals and organisations.

PBI's work as an international accompaniment organisation has been and continues to be invaluable to the protection of human rights defenders and displaced communities throughout the world, as any one of the organisations they accompany will attest to. Over the almost 30 years that the organisation has existed, PBI has based its work on principles of non-violence, non-intervention, and impartiality in all countries in which it works. PBI's work has been recognised internationally for its role in highlighting the dangerous situation for human rights defenders around the world, as well as the precarious situation in which internally-displaced persons and communities must try to survive.

Christian Aid hopes that, in the future, news agencies will show greater journalistic integrity and, at a bare minimum, seek out the opinion of the organisations implicated by their accusations, rather than stating unsubstantiated allegations as facts.

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Christian Aid trabaja con las personas más pobres del mundo en más de 50 países, sin distinción de raza o credo. Enfrentamos las causas y consecuencias de la pobreza y la injusticia. Formamos parte de ACT Internacional, la red ecuménica de atención a emergencias. **Christian Aid** en el Reino Unido es una Organización Sin Ánimo de Lucro, con registro número 1105851. **Christian Aid** en Irlanda es una Organización Caritativa, con registro número CHY 6998. **Christian Aid** en Inglaterra y Gales, tiene registro número 5171525 de Compañía Limitada por Garantía. **Christian Aid** en Colombia es una Entidad Extranjera Sin Ánimo de Lucro, Resolución 1295 del Ministerio del Interior y de Justicia.

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