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PBI COLOMBIA

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PBI es una organización independiente integrada por socios, abierta a todos aquellos que apoyan sus objetivos. No está afiliada a ninguna institución religiosa, económica o política. Es una ONG oficialmente reconocida por la ONU.

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TWENTY SEVENTH NARRATIVE Y FINANCIAL REPORT JANUARY-DECEMBER 2008



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PBI Colombia Projects Objectives

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Contribution to the achievement of peace with respect for human rights in Colombia

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:

Protection of human rights defenders in Colombia so that they can carry out and maintain their working activities

To achieve these objectives, the project uses four working tools:

- 1: Presence of observers and international accompaniment.
- 2: Regional, national and international advocacy work
- 3: Awareness raising in the international community on the human rights situation in Colombia, and on Colombian initiatives to improve this situation.
- 4: Support in the reconstruction of the social fabric, and psychosocial support to accompanied NGOs and PBI volunteers.

During 2008, the coordination of the Colombia Project has been focused on internal organisation and consolidation of the Project and the implementation of the Project strategies approved in the Colombia Project Committee in June 2008. The strengthening of the communications and political accompaniment areas stand out. Bringing the strategies up to date continues to be the frame of reference for the direction of the four field teams and for the prioritisation of the work. In line with the decisions taken in 2005, PBI continues to raise awareness about specific themes, such as the fight against impunity, human rights violations for economic interests and the work of grassroots organisations.

At the same time, international advocacy work in Bogotá, Brussels, Geneva and Washington has been strengthened during 2008. In both Europe and Colombia, PBI participated, within the limitations of its mandate, in the advocacy work for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR is a mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council to monitor the human rights situation of its member states. In addition, our Washington office has developed and strengthened its advocacy work focused in raising awareness of the work of human rights defenders accompanied in Colombia with various authorities and institutions.

This year, the situation of human rights NGOs and communities continues to be of concern and PBI carried out several activations throughout the year. Various members and leaders of small farmer and internally displaced persons organisations have been assassinated, which has serious consequences for these grassroots organisations that are vulnerable and have limited capacity to reorganise or to react.

In addition to the security incidents for NGOs and international organisations mentioned in other parts of this report, as in the case of Urabá, tension in Barrancabermeja has been maintained or even increased throughout the year. The number of death threats against members of various grassroots organisations has also increased. In June 2008, serious threats were made against organisations in the city of Barrancabermeja, including the OFP, CREDHOS, the Small Farmers' Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra (ACVC), and the Association of displaced population resettled in the Barrancabermeja municipality (ASODESAMUBA), that were accused of "supporting the guerilla" and declared "military objectives" by the self-named illegal armed group "Black Eagles of Colombia". Hostile actions continued in July, this time by means of a pamphlet distributed in the town by hooded men and signed by "Don Mario – Commander Heroes of Castaño". The pamphlet announced that this group "had decided to take Barrancabermeja by blood and fire to pacify it". As a result of the numerous threats, the working space of social organisations has been severely restricted and has caused human rights defenders to be displaced from the town.

In Urabá, faced with a different situation, PBI expressed its concern, several times, about the security of members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) and the leaders of the displaced families accompanied by CIJP in the Curbaradó river basin, during recuperation of and return to their lands.

We would like to highlight the following among the activities of the Colombia Project in 2008:

- This year we activated our support networks on several occasions for the members of CIJP who have suffered multiple threats against them, such as physical and verbal intimidation and strong accusations in Curbaradó and Bogotá, as a result of the protection that they offer to displaced communities in the Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó river basins.
- Within the framework of this activation and our protection mandate, the PBI communications team produced a special edition of the ColomPBIa newsletter in September 2008. The aim of

this publication was to present the context within which CIJP carries out its accompaniment work with displaced communities in the Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó river basins.

- The communications team has worked specifically on raising awareness about impunity. PBI published a special edition of the ColomPBIa newsletter (March 2008) about unfounded legal investigations and the repercussions for the work of human rights defenders. A presentation was made to the diplomatic corps in Bogotá, with the participation of representatives of 14 Embassies from North America and Europe.
- In May 2008, together with other international organizations, PBI Colombia was invited to the Council of the European Union Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) and, in November 2008, to the Latin America Committee of the Council of the European Union (COLAT) to present its view on the human rights situation.
- Strengthening of the continuous dialogue between PBI and various international human rights organisations, especially those that work in Colombia.
- In October 2008, the visit to Colombia of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. PBI was invited by UNHCHR to make a presentation about its work on the unfounded legal investigations.

Internally, the coordination area ensured that the monitoring and control mechanisms were functioning, both at the financial level and the level of evaluation of the work of the field teams. The human resources situation has been exceptional in 2008; the Project saw many changes of staff: eleven new colleagues joined the organisation in the Colombia and Brussels offices. Four new positions were created: Public Relations Officer in Washington D.C, a second computer technician in Bogotá, a workshop leader for the social fabric reconstruction team and a Human Resources Officer. These changes in personnel were due to the current support needs of the Project in the implementation of its strategies.

In 2008, the Colombia Project carried out an evaluation process within the framework of the three yearly global evaluation of Peace Brigades International; the previous evaluation was carried out in 2004. The Guatemala, Mexico, Nepal and Indonesia Projects were also evaluated within this framework, as well as an evaluation that reviewed and made recommendations to strengthen the organisational structure of the PBI International Secretariat (ISEC). Means of reflection about the functioning of the PBI National Groups were also incorporated into the joint evaluation. The evaluations were carried out by six independent experts, external to PBI, during the first half of 2008. On the basis of their recommendations made in relation to the political impact of the work and on the internal functioning of the organisation, we decided to create working groups to focus on communication, historical memory, new forms of accompaniment and the Project structure that will produce analysis and make proposals in view of these recommendations.

Analysis of the Political Context 2008

3.1 General context

Colombia has been suffering from a situation of internal armed conflict for over 40 years, the roots of which are diverse, and can be attributed to a mixture of structural, political and economic problems. The degradation caused by 40 years of fighting is exacerbated by the general situation of poverty and inequality within the country, which in turn perpetuates the conflict. According to official sources, in Colombia 45% of the population live in poverty.¹

The existence of conflict also generates and worsens the existence of other related phenomena such as internal displacement. According to Human Rights Watch, there is a serious problem of internal displacement in Colombia, caused by threats, confrontations between the different armed actors during which the civilian population is stuck in the middle, and pressure to collaborate with one or other of these actors.² The organisation also reports that Colombia suffers the worst internal displacement crisis after Sudan, while Codhes (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement) highlight the fact that during the first half of 2008, displacement related to the armed conflict had increased by 41% compared with figures for the same period in 2007.³ These figures are repeated by Human Rights Watch in their latest annual report, in which they highlight the fact that these figures for forced displacement in the first half of 2008 are the worst for 23 years⁴. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross annual report for 2007, the phenomenon of individual and small-scale displacement is also on the increase⁵. They report that the three main causes of individual displacement are due in 58% of cases to death threats, in 11% to pressure to collaborate, and in 9% to threats of forced recruitment.

3.2 Political context

According to the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the general situation in Colombia has improved, as a result of their *democratic security* policy. The government affirms that the demobilisation process has been a great success, that it has put an end to paramilitarism, and that figures related to political violence have lowered. They also highlight military gains against the FARC (such as the attack on Raúl Reyes' camp in March and the liberation of hostages in July) as proof that democracy is being consolidated throughout the country. The government also insists that human rights are being fully respected in Colombia, to such an extent that there no is longer any reason why the United States should not sign the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

PBI feels it is necessary to draw attention to facts which show that the human rights situation



¹ http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/sne/2007/febrero/28/17282007.htm

² www.hrw.org/we2k/index.htm HRW annual report, January 2007

³ "Tapando el sol con las manos – Informe sobre desplazamiento forzado, conflicto armado y derechos humanos, enero – junio 2008"; CODHES, 25 September 2008

⁴ Human Rights Watch, World Report – 2009 Events of 2008, January 2009, www.hrw.org/en/publications

⁵ [www.icrc.org/WEB/SPA/sitespa0.nsf/htmlall/p_t200813/\\$File/ICRC_003_T200813.PDF!Open](http://www.icrc.org/WEB/SPA/sitespa0.nsf/htmlall/p_t200813/$File/ICRC_003_T200813.PDF!Open)

continues to be a cause of great concern for our organisation and for all those who work to promote the defence of human rights and peace projects in displaced communities. This report will therefore present an analysis of the most striking events in 2007 and 2008, without underestimating the importance of other realities and events during the same period. The political context during the last two years has been characterized by four specific elements: the paramilitary demobilisation process and the implementation of the “Justice and Peace” Law, the appearance of new illegal armed groups, the “para-politics” scandals, and the scandals involving the military in human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions.

It is also important to highlight the election of Barack Obama as the new President of the United States, and the expectations that this has raised within human rights organisations, in terms of his possible interest in the respect for and monitoring of human rights.

3.3 The demobilisation process and the implementation of the Justice and Peace Law

The demobilisation process continues to unfold under Law 975. According to Human Rights Watch⁶ one of the difficulties is that of the 3.431 people who have applied to receive the benefits established under the Justice and Peace Law, the majority of those interviewed said that they wanted to withdraw from the process. Many “said that no-one had explained that they were registering for the Justice and Peace Law”. According to the Director of the Justice and Peace Unit in the Attorney General’s Office, it is probable that in the future more applicants will withdraw: “There are around 2,200 who have no preliminary investigations” against them, he reported. In his opinion, it is possible that almost all of these people could withdraw, leaving a mere 1,200 people in the process. According to the Attorney General’s Office, “It is not clear whether this is because the commanders of the United Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) forced many of their subordinates to demobilise, when they had not committed any actual crimes, to blow a smoke screen over the Attorney General’s Office investigations, or if in fact all these combatants had committed crimes in complete impunity.” In a number of cases, “youths with no criminal history took the place of the real criminals”.⁷ Many demobilised paramilitaries say they have not committed crimes against humanity, like ‘Ernesto Báez’, who declared “that he had not committed any crimes apart from bribing a policeman and using a false identity”.⁸ However, many victims have reported serious and constant intimidation and harassment, including at the very entrance to the Attorney General’s Offices, and at least 16 have been assassinated, including Yolanda Izquierdo, who was leading a group of people who were trying to reclaim lands stolen from them by the Castaño family in the Córdoba region of Colombia. After her assassination, several of these internally displaced people abandoned their claims. A further 160 victims have received threatening calls and visits to their homes demanding that they abandon their search for truth, justice and reparation. According to Eduardo Pizarro León-Gómez, president of the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation, those victims demanding restitution of lands and properties require the greatest protection.⁹

In any case, the limitations of the Attorney General’s Office to investigate crimes under Law 975 have become all too clear. In 2007, the Justice and Peace Unit in the Attorney General’s Office employed 23 attorneys to investigate the cases of over 48 thousand people, registered as victims before this legal body¹⁰, and it was not until January 2008 that the government issued a decree authorising a

⁶ “Breaking the control? – Obstacles to justice in the investigations into the paramilitary mafia in Colombia”, Human Rights Watch, October 2008

⁷ idem

⁸ idem

⁹ El Tiempo June 2007, El Colombiano June 2007

¹⁰ El Tiempo, June 2007, Hechos de Callejón (On the Road to Peace) No 25 May 2005

substantial increase in staff assigned to the unit.¹¹ Moreover, Pizarro León-Gómez publicly announced that since paramilitary bosses have properties registered under third parties, there are not enough resources to guarantee reparation as it is contemplated under Law 975.¹² According to *El Tiempo* newspaper, “around 250 of the 353 properties handed over by the paramilitaries (...) belong to third parties who intend to fight to keep them (...). In other cases, experts have not even been able to localise the lands in question”¹³.

3.4 Persistence of illegal armed structures

Both the Colombian national press and international organisations have highlighted cases of the resurgence of paramilitary groups, despite the collective demobilisations which took place between 2004 and 2006. According to the *El Espectador* newspaper, the Human Rights Ombudsman’s Office have detected the existence of more than twenty armed structures throughout the country which, on the pretext of maintaining security, actually continue to control the political and electoral panorama through the use of armed violence and proselytism.¹⁴ As monitors of the paramilitary demobilisation process in the country, the Organization of American States Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA), published its 10th report in 2007, in which it revealed the existence of 22 new armed structures in regions where demobilisations had previously taken place. The Mission stated that these groups cannot be seen as a homogenous phenomenon because they are made up of a mixture of actors with roots in different illegal sectors.¹⁵ In April 2008, Salvatore Mancuso himself admitted during an interview with *Terra* virtual magazine that “many former paramilitary groups” had rearmed.¹⁶ For Amnesty International,¹⁷ in spite of the fact that “the government affirms that paramilitary groups are no longer active, and that all current violence can be attributed to criminal gangs implicated in drug-trafficking (...) there is solid evidence that many of these so-called “ex” paramilitaries continue to operate as “traditional” paramilitaries, often with new names, as in the case of the *New Generation* organisation or the *Black Eagles*. These organisations continue to use threats and real violence to in order to further their economic and political aims. In fact, many paramilitary groups operate at two different yet interrelated levels: on the one hand, they carry out criminal activities linked to drug-trafficking, while at the same time they support the counter-insurgency strategy of the security forces.” Moreover “evidence suggests that the victims of these groups are the same human rights activists, trade unionists and community leaders who used to suffer attacks from paramilitary groups”. Another argument put forward by the supporters of the paramilitary process is that “given that these groups no longer maintain armed confrontations with guerrilla forces, they can no longer be classified as paramilitaries. However, this ignores the *raison d’être* of paramilitarism, whose military strategy does not consist of direct confrontation with the guerrilla – skirmishes between the guerrilla and the paramilitaries have always been scarce – but rather consists of “starving the fish of water” that is to say, breeding terror in civilians to destroy the guerrilla’s grassroots support, whether real or imagined.”

¹¹ Decree 122 issued by the Ministry for Internal Affairs, 18 January 2008

¹² *El Colombiano* June 2007

¹³ *El Tiempo*, “A bienes ofrecidos por ‘paras’ les surgen dueños, 9 November 2008, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-3179255>

¹⁴ *El Espectador* 28 January - 3 February 2007

¹⁵ OEA/Ser.g CP/doc 4249/07, 31 October 2007

¹⁶ *El Espectador*, “Mancuso reconoce el rearme paramilitar”, 5 April 2008

¹⁷ “Leave us alone!”, Amnesty International, October 2008

3.5 “Para-politics” scandals

In June 2008 more than 30 members of the Colombian Congress were under arrest and dozens more were under investigation, and links between politicians and paramilitaries continued to surface. One example was the case of the “Ralito Pact”, a document signed in 2001 by four paramilitary bosses, four senators and seven representatives which committed a total of 32 politicians to defending the AUC paramilitary strategy to “found a new homeland”.¹⁸ Eleven of these politicians were subsequently elected to the Congress and Senate. Other pacts and agreements between politicians, businessmen and paramilitaries continued to come to light, as reported by the *New Rainbow Corporation*¹⁹, agreements such as the “Chivolo Pact”, the “Pivijai Pact”, the “Coordination Meeting”, the “Urabá Pact”, and the “Magdalena Medio Pact”.

Human Rights Watch expressed in both its special report on Colombia²⁰ and its 2009 annual report²¹ a number of concerns related to these investigations. These concerns and others are also covered in the above-mentioned report issued by the *New Rainbow Corporation*, including strategies used to avoid facing the justice system, which have been used both by members of Congress and by the government.

3.5 Political violence against women

According to the Eighth Report from the Working Group on Women and the Armed Conflict²² “violence against women and girls continues to be serious, systematic and generalised throughout Colombia. This violence is used as a method of social and political persecution and as a weapon of war by all the groups who participate in the armed conflict”. The report emphasises the extremely high level of impunity in crimes of sexual violence within the framework of Law 975 which regulates the demobilisation process, highlighting the numerous obstacles faced by women, who are victims of sexual violence, to access justice.

3.6 Situation and work of human rights NGOs

In its 2008 Annual Report the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) highlights the situation of human rights defenders, reporting cases of murder, especially of grassroots leaders and those from rural areas. Some of these cases have been attributed to members of the army and the police. There were also cases of threats against human rights defenders and information theft. UNHCHR continue to show concern at the increase in cases of extrajudicial executions attributed to the army and the police²³.

Throughout 2008, NGOs working for the defence of human rights, including the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP), the Corporation for Legal Freedom (CJL), the Small Farmers’ Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra (ACVC) and the Joel Sierra Human Rights Foundation have continued to report cases of extrajudicial executions in the regions of Antioquia, Bolívar, Arauca, Boyacá and Casanare. According to the ACVC, in the North East of Antioquia repeated cases of

¹⁸ idem

¹⁹ ‘Balance político de la parapolítica’, New Rainbow Corporation, November 2008

²⁰ ‘Breaking the control? – Obstacles to justice in the investigations into the paramilitary mafia in Colombia’, Human Rights Watch, October 2008

²¹ ‘World Report 2009’, Human Rights Watch, January 2009

²² ‘VIII Informe sobre violencia sociopolítica contra mujeres, jóvenes y niñas en Colombia’, Working Group on Women and the Armed Conflict, December 2008

²³ 2008 Annual Report Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

extrajudicial executions caused the forced displacement of some 200 people from several villages in the region.²⁴

NGOs who make up the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group (CCEEUU)²⁵ have released a report which lists 110 cases of extrajudicial executions in Eastern Antioquia, in which they show the systematic way in which these crimes have been committed. Shortly after the public launch of this report, one of the lawyers from the Corporation for Legal Freedom received threats.²⁶

3.7 Security incidents against organisations accompanied by PBI

In the city of *Barrancabermeja*, NGOs received constant threats throughout 2008. In February, David Ravelo (from the Board of Directors of CREDHOS) received information warning him that paramilitaries were organising an attempt against his life.²⁷ This pressure continued when, on 18 June 2008, a new threat was sent to a number of organisations, namely ADECO (Association of Economists from the University of Antioquia), USO (Worker's Trade Union), OFP (Grassroots Women's Organisation), CREDHOS (Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights), ACVC (Small Farmers Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra) and Association of displaced population resettled in the Barrancabermeja municipality (ASODESAMUBA), a threat which accuses them of "assisting the guerrilla" and declares them "military objectives".²⁸ These threats and pressure continued throughout the second half of the year. The latest incident took place on the 5 November during the testimony of paramilitary boss Mario Jaimes alias 'El Panadero', who accused Ravelo of being linked to the guerrilla.²⁹ The following day, a number of associations, NGOs and trade unions from Barrancabermeja, and David Ravelo himself, received a threatening e-mail signed by the Gaitanista Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC), referring to "Panadero" as their commander.³⁰

Meanwhile, legal proceedings against members of the Board of Directors of the ACVC have yet to be resolved. On 29 September 2007, four leaders from the association were arrested, and a further two during the following months. To date, two of those arrested are still in prison and the other four have been released. Social organisations in the region are demanding guarantees for their lives, personal integrity, and the right to due process, and recall the fact that, on previous occasions, international bodies have reported that in Colombia the law has been misused, as for example when investigations have been carried out on the basis of false or unfounded charges against human rights defenders with the aim of stigmatising and harassing them, and impeding them from carrying out their work.³¹

In the *Urabá* region, communities continue to live in an atmosphere of pressure, harassment and terror. During 2007, four people were assassinated, including Dairo Torres – leader from the San José de Apartadó Peace Community³² (situated in the area of Urabá which is part of the Antioquia region, in the Abibe Mountains). In 2008, the Peace Community continued to suffer from pressure, and reported on a number of occasions the appearance of paramilitary groups in both the town and in rural villages belonging to the Peace Community³³. In October, the community organised a pilgrimage to remember

²⁴ Prensa Rural, May 2007

²⁵ Extrajudicial executions, March 2007, Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group

²⁶ Public Communiqué, CJL 28 May 2007

²⁷ CREDHOS, 08.02.14 "Acción Urgente – Peligra la vida de Defensor de Derechos Humanos David Ravelo Crespo.

²⁸ Urgent Action, Communiqué from the Barrancabermeja, Magdalena Medio Human Rights Workers' Coordination Group 20 June 2008.

²⁹ "Alias 'El Panadero' señala a ex Congresista en un crimen", Vanguardia Liberal, 5 November 2008

³⁰ "Credhos denuncia correos amenazantes", Vanguardia Liberal, 9 November 2008

³¹ Amnesty International, Colombia Fear and Intimidation – the dangers for human rights, AMR 23 March 2006.

³² "Paramilitares asesinan a Diario", "Amenazas de los paramilitares" "Los Paramilitares Asesinan a Francisco". Public Comunicados from the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 14 and 13 July 2007 and 14 May 2007.

³³ Public communiqué "Los Paramilitares están en nuestras fincas", San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 30 September 2008.

“the over 180 murders of members of the community, more than 90% of which have been carried out by the State”³⁴. In November, one leader from the community was threatened in broad daylight in the city of Apartadó by two men carrying a firearm³⁵.

In September 2007, further south in Belén de Bajirá in the Curbaradó river basin, two small farming leaders, Miguel and Ualberto Hoyos, suffered an attack on their lives. These brothers are accompanied by the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) in their projects to return to and recuperate their lands. Fortunately the two men survived the attack. One month previously, the brothers had led the return of some 10 families (45 people), who had been forcibly displaced in 1997, to the new humanitarian zone of Caño Manso. Several days before the attack, the Colombian state ruled to return lands to campesino farmers from Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó. Moreover, they are witnesses in the case of the murder of Orlando Valencia in 2005, who was leader of the Curbaradó community council. The attempted murder of the two brothers occurred in Belén de Bajirá despite the fact that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has granted provisional protection measures to the small farmers in Curbaradó.³⁶ Because of their precarious situation, the brothers were forced to leave the Urabá region, and soon after their return in October 2008, Ualberto Hoyos was assassinated as he left a meeting in the Caño Manso community³⁷.

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, who are accompanied by PBI, support this community, and have fallen victim to a number of attacks during 2008³⁸. On 24 August 2008, they received simultaneous threatening calls both in the field and in their offices in Bogotá³⁹. During the following days they continued to receive similar calls. The situation worsened, when at around one in the morning on 30 August, two unidentified men entered the Camelias humanitarian zone, and made for the house where the CIJP team and two PBI accompaniers were staying. When they were spotted by community members they fled the area⁴⁰. In September, one member of the Commission was taken hostage by two men in Chigorodó, who held him for an hour and a half in a van, threatening him and his colleagues. Several days later the organisation received further calls and messages on their mobile phones with new threats.

Other organisations accompanied by PBI at the *national level* have suffered attacks and harassments as well as legal proceedings against them, based on unfounded accusations. The majority of the victims are organisations or individuals who are part of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes.

Upon request from the Cepeda Foundation and due to the organisation’s level of risk PBI increased its accompaniment at the beginning of 2007. That same year legal proceedings were brought against Iván Cepeda on charges of libel against José María Conde Romero, a member of Congress from the Sucre region of Colombia, after a speech he made in a hearing in the area last year⁴¹. According to Human Rights First’s report, it is evident that a number of politicians and paramilitary groups are concerned that Cepeda’s work could implicate them in human rights violations.⁴²

³⁴ <http://cdpsanjose.org/?q=node/93> ‘Caminando por la Vida’, San José de Apartado Peace Community, October 2008

³⁵ “Atentan contra el representante legal de nuestra comunidad”, San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 1 November 2008

³⁶ Provisional measures, Republic of Colombia – Case of the Communities of Jiguamiandó and Curbaradó, Resolution of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 7 February 2006

³⁷ Urgent Call – Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OMCT/FIDH), 21 October 2008

³⁸ For further details, see the organisation’s website, <http://www.justiciapazencolombia.org/>.

³⁹ Informe 93 - Acción Urgente – Curvaradó, “Amenazado equipo de Justicia y Paz en Curvaradó”, Inter Church Justice and Peace Commission, 24 August 2008.

⁴⁰ Informe – Curvaradó, “Por amenazas e intimidación salen de Curvaradó 2 DD.HH. de JyP”, Inter Church Justice and Peace Commission, 30 August 2008.

⁴¹ José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers’ Collective, Señalamientos y hostigamientos contra Iván Cepeda Castro, DR-002/07, 14 May, 2007.

⁴² Colombia’s Human Rights Defenders in Danger, Human Rights First, Septiembre 2007, p6.

After the demonstration organised by the Movement of Victims of State Crimes on 6 March 2008, where demonstrators marched in solidarity with the victims of paramilitarism, a number of participating organisations received emails threatening them with death, including MINGA, who are accompanied by PBI. UNHCHR declared that these threats were made against “leaders from grassroots social organisations and members of human rights organisations who actively participated in the 6 March demonstration” and were part of a context in which multiple violent actions had been carried out over the previous three months throughout the country⁴³. Among these acts were the attack on 28 February against the home of Luz Adriana González, member of the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights and one of the organisers of the 6 March demonstration in the city of Pereira. As highlighted in the public communiqué released by UNHCHR, the UN have been informed of a number of murders of grassroots and community leaders which clearly emphasise “the risks to their lives and integrity which human rights and social activists are faced with in their regions”.

At the end of April 2008, the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP) received a threat dated 21 April and signed by the “Black Eagles – rearmed”. This threat was sent directly by email to the FCSP office in the Atlántico region of Colombia, to the personal email of FCSP lawyer José Humberto Torres, and to VicePresident of the regional United Workers` Federation (CUT) office, Jesús Tovar. This was of serious concern to the FCSP because it was the first time that María Sedeño and Nicolás Castro, two FCSP members highly committed to the political work of this regional office, were mentioned by name in the threat. It is not, however, the first time that the FCSP has received this kind of harassment. Another threat, dated 18 April 2008, and signed by the “New Generation Black Eagles”, declared 17 people military targets (all members of trade unions and human rights organisations) including Carolina Rubio, who works in the FCSP offices, and Príncipe Gabriel González Arango. The leaders of the FCSP office in the Atlántico region have been under threat for several years now⁴⁴. These constant intimidations not only weaken the organisational processes of the FCSP, they have also led to members becoming exiled, as in the cases of Franklin Castañeda and José Humberto Torres. Castañeda, the former coordinator of the FCSP office in the Atlántico region, was forcibly displaced to the city of Barranquilla, after becoming the victim of harassment and intimidation in 2007.

These different situations of repression appear to be linked. Direct and indirect attacks against human rights defenders, including murder and disappearance, weakens the defence of human rights, since fear obstructs their work and sometimes leads to them leaving their regions or Colombia itself, either permanently or temporarily, due to unsustainable levels of pressure. False accusations and unfounded legal proceedings make the defence of human rights more difficult, either because human rights defenders find themselves languishing in prison or because they have to give priority to their own legal defence or to defending the legitimacy of their work. This causes their working space to diminish, impeding their fundamental work helping to educate communities and the most vulnerable social groups about their fundamental rights, so that they can become key actors for the political, economic and cultural development of their country. The high level of impunity in cases of human rights violations contributes to a vicious cycle of repetition, thereby limiting the possibilities of finding peaceful and lasting solutions to the Colombian conflict.

Finally, during the United Nations Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review, a number of countries, such as Spain, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and Uruguay, asked the Colombian

⁴³ “concern over threats and murders carried out against Human Rights Defenders”, UNHCHR, 13 March 2008

⁴⁴ Nueva ola de persecución a defensores de derechos humanos, CSPP public communiqué, 06 January 2006.

State to guarantee the work of human rights defenders, and to abstain from making public accusations against them in order to delegitimise their work.

Accompaniment and presence of international observers in the field

Bogotá:

Since November 2007, PBI has been in the process of exploring the possibilities of accompaniment with the Social Corporation for Community Assistance and Training (COS-PACC). This process will be evaluated in the Project Assembly in June 2009. COS-PACC works on environmental management programmes, education programmes for young people and women, human rights training programmes and agricultural projects.

Please find below a summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments for 2008:

	ASFADDES	Manuel Cepeda Foundation	Minga	CIJP
Office visits	107	-	2	26
Accompaniments (1/2 days)	38	80	16	46
Meetings	9	19	22	57

	FCSP (and COS-PACC)	CCAJAR	Others
Office visits	97	119	18
Accompaniments (1/2 days)	146	252	56
Meetings	13	16	13

Note: The Bogotá team rarely carries out office visits to the Manuel Cepeda Foundation, MINGA, the OFP and COS-PACC. These relationships are maintained with face to face meetings. Awareness raising of the work of the Manuel Cepeda Foundation is carried out through visits to the MOVICE office. The 'others' column relates to work with Berenice Celeyta, the MOVICE and Yolanda Becerra of the OFP. Berenice Celeyta is based in Cali and PBI accompanies her during visits to Bogotá and on regional trips.

The José Alvear Restrepo Lawyer's Collective (CCAJAR)

The accompaniment plan for CCAJAR was accomplished with around three visits to their offices each week and accompaniment of the lawyers in their visits to the regions.

It is worth highlighting that during 2008, accompaniment of CCAJAR to the Atlantic Coast has increased, one of the regions most affected by the parapolitical scandals.

CCAJAR frequently travel to the Guajira department.

In May, one of their lawyers travelled there to investigate various cases: massacres and displacement



of Wayuu and Wiwa indigenous communities and the population affected by the exploitation of the Cerrejón mine.

The objectives of this four day visit were to review 18 cases in the Riohacha Office of the Attorney General and the Law Court, to hold workshops with the leaders of the Wayuu and Wiwa communities and to hold various meetings. Furthermore, following up on the previous visits to the region, CCAJAR met with family members of victims of the Limón massacre (2001), with leaders of indigenous communities, victims of the El Cerrejón mine and with other leaders in the town of Maicao.

During this same month, CCAJAR were accompanied to Tunja, Boyacá. The objective of the accompaniment was to interview two paramilitaries in the Combita prison about the massacre of 16 May in Barrancabermeja and to collect information about the location of mass graves.



For five days in November, one of the CCAJAR lawyers was accompanied to a hearing at the Law Courts in Bogotá. CCAJAR are representatives in the civil case of the retired general Luís Alfonso Plazas Vega. The lawyer explained that they felt threatened because of their work on this case. The key accusation is the alleged responsibility of high ranking military officials in the disappearance of 11 employees from the cafeteria of the Law Courts, and a member of the M-19 guerrilla group, Irma Franco Pineda.

In July, PBI accompanied CCAJAR to Trujillo for two days. They participated in a public hearing about the case of the drug dealer, Henry Loaiza Ceballos, alias *el Alacrán*. The cases of the Trujillo massacres (1986-1994) have been handled by CCAJAR since the beginning, and, there are now more than 300 open case files related to this massacre. During the hearing many victims and family members of victims gave statements through the Association of Family Members of Victims in Trujillo AFAVIT.

Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP)

On several occasions, PBI accompanied the FCSP whilst they gathered information regarding legal cases against the 16th Brigade of the Colombian Army, based in Yopal. The FCSP represents the families of victims in several cases of extrajudicial executions in Casanare and Boyacá, in which the alleged responsibility of the 16th Brigade is being investigated. Furthermore, the FCSP, together with the Social Corporation for Community Assistance and Training (COS-PACC), also holds workshops with the communities there about human rights legal mechanisms.

In February, COS-PACC and FCSP were accompanied for four days to El Yopal, Sácama, Aguazul and La Salina, municipalities in Casanare. The FCSP lawyer introduced himself to the local authorities, as he was new to the organisation. The two accompanied organisations met with the local authorities and family members of victims of alleged extrajudicial executions and arbitrary massive arrests to collect testimonies. The PBI volunteers met with members of the local government human rights offices and the local Police. The situation in the region is characterised by the fact that the state authorities have taken control after it had been controlled by the guerrilla for several years.

In July, PBI carried out a seven day accompaniment of the FCSPP and COS-PACC to the municipalities of El Yopal, Nunchia, Morcote, Monquirá and Magüito in the departments of Boyacá and Casanare. During a humanitarian commission organised by the FCSPP, COS-PACC and the Claretiana Corporation NPB, PBI accompanied FCSPP and COS-PACC. The commission travelled to demonstrate an active presence in communities that have been discredited and harassed because they live in an area that is disputed by armed actors. The commission recorded statements from people who had suffered from a violation of their rights, encouraging groups and individuals to report such violations. Likewise, the commission explained the situation related to some of the cases handled by the FCSPP, verified the human rights situation in Monquirá and held meetings with small farmer communities to invite representatives of the communities to the Peoples` Permanent Tribunal that took place in Bogotá at the end of July. The situation was high risk given that FCSPP and COS-PACC are working on cases of alleged extrajudicial executions and human rights violations as a result of economic interests in the region.

On average, the Bogotá team has accompanied FCSPP and COS-PACC once a month in the Casanare and Boyacá regions, on missions to Arauca twice a year and to the Valledupar prison twice a year. The volunteers visit their offices twice a week, on request.

Manuel Cepeda Foundation

The accompaniment of the Cepeda Foundation is focused on Iván Cepeda and his wife, Claudia Girón. The frequency of the accompaniments increased since March related to the situation following the March 6th demonstration and the statements made by Colombian government officials that discredited the work of the Iván Cepeda and his role as the spokesperson for National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE). In PBI's experience, statements that discredit the work of human rights defenders can increase their risk. Therefore, Iván Cepeda and Claudia Girón decided only to travel to carry out activities in the field with the accompaniment of PBI. In 2008, the level of accompaniment was reduced slightly compared to 2007 given that Iván Cepeda has a higher profile, which meant that there was less need for physical accompaniment. This analysis is subject to change, given the current situation, as PBI constantly evaluates the possible risks for the Manuel Cepeda Foundation.

On March 6th, PBI accompanied the MOVICE on the demonstration in memory of victims of the paramilitaries and of state crimes, in which more than 200,000 people participated and there were no security incidents. Iván Cepeda was surrounded by the press most of the time and at the end he gave a speech in Bolivar Square. After the march, various human rights organisations that participated in the event received threats by email, including the Manuel Cepeda Foundation, MOVICE and others.

In April, PBI accompanied Ivan Cepeda to Montería, capital of the Cordoba region, to visit the displaced population there and to visit Cordoba University. On this trip, Ivan Cepeda participated in a student and lecturer protest march to request the immediate resignation of Claudio Sanchez Parra because of alleged links with the paramilitary. In the same protest march, the students and lecturers were demanding truth and justice in the case of 19 members of the university who were assassinated in 1995.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <http://www.elespectador.com/opinion/columnistasdelimpreso/ivan-cepeda-castro/columna-prueba-monteria>

In October, volunteers from the Bogotá team accompanied Iván Cepeda for one day at a public hearing of the MOVICE, following up from the visit in April. CCAJAR, CIJP, FCSPP, PCS, Piedad Córdoba, members of the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Department of Administrative Security participated in the hearing. There were no security incidents.

In July, Iván requested a three day accompaniment to participate in the Permanent People's Tribunal about indigenous genocide.

Association for Alternative Social Participation (MINGA)

The level of risk and protection needs of MINGA was jointly analysed and the conclusion was reached that a focus on their accompaniments in the region and meetings to share information was of most value for them. For this reason, the number of office visits is less than in 2007 and the accompaniments and meetings have increased considerably.

Minga works in the Putumayo and Nariño departments, among others. Their work has several different focuses:

1. Support for the integration of women as a political force. One element of the process is the annual meetings in la Cocha – Nariño. One of the contributions of Minga was a study of the situation of women which they two years ago.
2. They are working with the Pastoral Social in the border areas with Ecuador. This activity consists primarily of monitoring the situation of the communities, with special emphasis on Puerto Leguízamo.
3. They accompany the work of the Acsomayo association. This organization is particularly interesting as it combines small farmers, afro Colombians and indigenous people in the area between Puerto Asís and the hamlet of La Vega.
4. They accompany the permanent round table of the Cofán indigenous people, who are in danger of becoming extinct.

In April, PBI accompanied MINGA and CIJP on a humanitarian and accompaniment mission of social organisations in Putumayo. This mission took place as a result of surveys carried out about the human rights protection needs of those who live in the region, protection initiatives of the social organisations in the region and the monitoring of the human rights situation in Putumayo by state institutions.

The objectives of this mission were to agree terms for a protection and accompaniment strategy in the Putumayo department, to produce a report about the current human rights situation and to identify risk factors. Oxfam UK, UNHCR, UNHCHR, Centre for Investigation and Popular Education (CINEP,) CODHES and the permanent round table of the Cofán indigenous people.

In July, MINGA was accompanied for three days to La Hormiga, Putumayo. Minga participated in the permanent round table of the Cofán indigenous people with the oil company that is in the process of exploration in the Cofán area. There were no security incidents during this trip.

Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP)

The level of risk and protection needs of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) was jointly analysed and the conclusion was reached that a focus on their accompaniments in the region and meetings to share information was of most value for them. For this reason, the number of office

visits is less than in 2007 and the accompaniments and meetings have increased considerably. The relationship with the CIJP in Bogota is focused on analysis and coordination with the missionary teams that work in the Curbaradó and Cacarica river basins with the PBI Urabá team.

In March, as a result of the threats received by three of the CIJP missionary team in the Bajo Naya region, in the Valle del Cauca region, PBI accompanied six members of the CIJP board to get them safely out of the region.

In September and October, a slight increase in the number of requests for accompaniments was noted because of changes in the situation in Curbaradó and Cacarica and the monitoring of the threats received by the CIJP team in August.

Association of Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared (ASFADDES)

On March 6th, in Bogotá, PBI accompanied a group of 12 members of ASFADDES on the demonstration in memory of victims of the paramilitaries and of state crimes

In April, two members of ASFADDES were accompanied during the International Opinion Tribunal (ITO) in Bogotá. The aim of the ITO was to raise awareness nationally and internationally about forced disappearance and to achieve recognition of the existence of these crimes through the statements of the dozens of victims accompanied by ASFADDES. Representatives of various embassies were invited by ASFADDES to attend the event: Belgium, Brazil, Libya, Canada, Ecuador, the US, France, the UK, Switzerland and Venezuela.

Representatives of civil society, state governing bodies, multilateral and international organisations and national and international representatives of the media also attended the event. Although the ITO has no legal powers, moral sentencing of forced disappearance and ethical sanctioning by the international organisations was sought.

Finally, the Bogota team continues to visit the ASFADDES offices to ensure protection through international presence and to exchange information.

Medellín:

PBI Colombia has been in an exploration process with the Small Farmers Association of Antioquia (ACA). This process will be evaluated in the Project's Assembly in June 2009.

Please find below a summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments during 2008:

	IPC	ASFADDES	CJL	FCSP	OTHERS: CODEHSEL / ACA / CIJP / ASOPROA
Office visits	53	60	70	61	61
Accompaniments (half days)	15	12	37	11	56
Meetings	8	4	6	3	13

Note: In the "OTHERS" column, we describe work carried out with member organisation of of the two NGO coordination groups in the city: the Red de Hermanamiento and Seeds of Freedom Human Rights Collective (CODHESEL), as well as to ASOPROA and the ACA, on an occasional basis and upon request.

Corporación Jurídica Libertad (CJL)

The PBI Colombia Medellín team met its objectives for physical accompaniment in 2008. The team visited the CJL offices with the objective of raising awareness of the international accompaniment of this organisation and updating information about their security situation and their analysis of the current situation.

In January, CJL were accompanied during the visit of eight US congressmen, interested in learning about the human rights situation in Colombia. It was an important meeting in terms of the information given to the congressmen and the interest they showed in the current human rights situation in Colombia.

From April, CJL decided not to travel to the Eastern Antioquia region without international accompaniment which implied an increase in their physical accompaniment from this time. They visit Cocorná, San Luís and Granada and the surrounding rural areas with the aim of running health and farming training workshops that last up to 10 days a month.

In June, CJL were accompanied to Corcorná with the aim of sharing the decisions of the Rionegro Energy Forum, attended by members of various communities from the region – el Coco, el Jordán, el Molino and el Chocó. It is important to emphasize the passive interventions of the small farmers, which reflects the fear they feel because of the threats against and assassinations of leaders of their communities.



In October, PBI Colombia accompanied CJL⁴⁶ and the ACA for one day in the village of Los Medios in the area of Granada, Eastern Antioquia region. Among those present were the Mobile Human Rights Unit, the human rights office, the Antioquia regional local administration, the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF), the local human rights Ombudsman from Granada, and the Mayor's Representative from Granada. This trip was carried out after Enrique Giraldo was assassinated, on 17 September 2008, and Antonio Ciro on 30 March 2008, both who were community leaders and members of the Association of Small and Medium Producers in Eastern Antioquia (ASOPROA)⁴⁷. This accompaniment came one month after the last assassination, and its objective was to gather information and hold meetings on the work of CJL with the authorities and the local population.

Furthermore, the monthly meetings with CJL enable information sharing about the current situation, the security situation and definition of PBI accompaniment bearing in mind the current situation and the needs of the organisation.

⁴⁶ See article in newsletter ColomPBIa, No 9, November 2008.

⁴⁷ Corporación Jurídica Libertad (CJL): "Denuncia Pública", 2 April 2008 and 19 September 2008.

Grassroots Training Institute (IPC)

In 2008, the level of visits to the offices of the Grassroots Training Institute (IPC) was maintained. In the April monthly meeting, an analysis of the level of vulnerability and risk for the IPC was carried out, given that the organisation is in a vulnerable situation as a result of the report they produced about 'parapolitics' in Antioquia and paramilitary control in Medellin.

At the end of June, the IPC was accompanied to Marinilla where the 'Regional Meeting of Victims of the conflict in the Eastern Antioquia region' was held, within the framework of the Second Peace Laboratory, with representation from various municipalities in the region.



In September, PBI accompanied three members of the IPC on a one-day visit to Granada, in the Eastern Antioquia region. The trip was carried out in March during the human rights week, entitled "Regional Meeting for Human Rights and the Memory of the Victims of the Armed Conflict in Eastern Antioquia". Around 200 people took part in this event in Granada which included a march, discussion sessions, talks and a concert. The event was covered by several journalists and there were no security incidents.

Association of Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared (ASFADDES)

During 2008, the PBI team continued to accompany ASFADDES, showing international presence and ensuring their requirements were met. Asfaddes held their 25th anniversary this year.

The hearing at the beginning of March in preparation for the ITO on forced disappearance that took place in Bogota in April stands out as being one of the most important accompaniments. Testimonies were given in this hearing.

In June, the team accompanied several organisations, the Manuel Cepeda Foundation, CCAJAR, ACA, CSPP, CJL, ASFADDES and the IPC in a symbolic march 'Without rights for victims there is no democracy' organised by the Antioquia branch of MOVICE during the Organisation of American States (OAS) General Assembly.

In October, PBI accompanied ASFADDES during the commemoration of the disappearance of Ángel and Claudia, two members of the organisation who were murdered in 2000. The event was held around a mass service and a documentary was shown. Among participants were the ACA, the FCSP and CJL.

In addition, in June, PBI participated as an observer in the Eastern Antioquia region Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Working Group meeting in Marinilla, during which increasing concern was expressed regarding violent acts that occurred in the Eastern Antioquia region in the preceding weeks. These were primarily harassment, accusations, sexual violence and assassinations in the areas surrounding de Granada, San Luis, Sansón and in the municipalities of de la Unión, el Retiro, Marinilla and la Ceja.

Small Farmers Association of Antioquia (ACA)

PBI has accompanied the ACA as part of an exploration process because of the context in the region and the risks faced by the members of this association, responding to requests and PBI's evaluation and capacity for accompaniment at any given moment.

From January to June this year, PBI significantly increased its physical accompaniment of the ACA. One of the main reasons for this increase is this organisation's concern about the current situation in the Eastern Antioquia region, they, therefore, value the international physical accompaniment offered by PBI. During the months of August and September, PBI did not accompany the ACA because they were accompanied constantly by the Network for Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia. The ACA receives volunteers who stay in the communities in which they work, during the summer period of university holidays in Europe.

In January, PBI accompanied ACA in Argelia to set up projects in food security and leadership training for young people. The project will be developed in the town and in six neighbouring hamlets; given the high security risk, they do not work in hamlets that are a long way from the town. The objective of this visit was to share information about the project with authorities in the town and to organise meetings with the municipal authorities.

In March, PBI accompanied ACA in San Francisco and San Isidro where they ran workshops with young people and adults about youth and community organisation, food security, organic farming, collective memory and victims' rights. Testimonies were gathered from people displaced en masse since 2003 because of the guerrilla and the difficulty of adapting to life in the town.

In July, we accompanied the ACA in the march for the rights of displaced people organised by the ACA and the Metropolitan Coordination of Displaced People. In October, PBI also accompanied the ACA during the "VI Regional Forum on Forced Displacement and Agrarian Issues", in Medellín which was also supported by CODEHSEL and included participants from the ASOPROA, the Technical Secretary of the Antioquia Lands Commission, Hernando Gómez, the association of sugar cane cutters from the Valle de Cauca region, students and small farmers from villages in the region, and displaced people from Medellín.

Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP)

The Medellín field team accompanied the CIJP on three occasions to the Bajo Naya region between March and June. The Commission had a permanent team of missionaries in the región, and they asked for accompaniment and after receiving two threats on 19 March in the San Francisco municipality, signed by the self-named "Black Eagles"⁴⁸ (see section on "notable accompaniment in 2008").



Barrancabermeja / Magdalena Medio

⁴⁸ Informe 31, Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, 19 March 2008.

Please find below a summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments carried out by the team in Barrancabermeja during 2008:

	CREDHOS	OFPP	CALCP	ACVC	Other accompaniments
Office visits	194	397	30	65	-
Accompaniments	42	242	15	12	21
Meetings	8	10	7	9	48

Note: The CALCP office is in Bucaramanga, therefore the monitoring carried out with this organisation is over the telephone, rather than frequent office visits.

During 2008, the PBI team in Barrancabermeja continued to accompany the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS), the Grassroots Women’s Organisation (OFPP), and the Luis Carlos Pérez Lawyers’ Collective (CALCP). In the Project Assembly in November 2008, it was agreed to end the exploration process with the Small Farmers Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra (ACVC), and consolidate an accompaniment agreement with them. Due to a number of security incidents suffered by Asodesamuba and ASORVIM (Regional Association of Victims in the Magdalena Medio Region) in October 2008, the team began to visit their offices from time to time.

Throughout the whole of 2008, PBI has noted an extremely worrying situation developing in Barrancabermeja and the surrounding región. There were a series of threats against social organizations in the region, ranging from threats from unknown sources to the arrest of members of the ACVC, on vcharges of rebellion. Moreover, CREDHOS received several death therats in letter form, some of which also included threats against other organisations such as the OFPP, and the ACVC. These events have resulted in a significant rise in accompaniment requests and visits to the offices of accompanied organizations, compared to during previous years. There was a specific increase in accompaniment to the ACVC and the OFPP.

Grassroots Women’s Organisation (OFPP)

PBI Colombia continues its weekly visits to the workplaces of the OFPP in Bucaramanga, and also maintains its weekly visits to the work places of the OFPP in Barrancabermeja (community kitchens,



offices and homes of the members of the board). These visits raise awareness of the international support of the OFPP, which has a dissuasive effect, preventing possible attacks against the organisation.

The OFPP coordinators continue to receive direct threats (emails, pamphlets, pone calls), and in reponse to this PBI increased its accompaniment. On the other hand, PBI also significantly increased its rounds of the community kitchens.

Within our strategy of physical accompaniment, PBI accompanied OFPP Director, Yolanda Becerra, to the I General Assembly of Indigenous Women in the Indigenous Zenu territory of Algodoncillo, Sucre, a región that the OFPP had not visited for three years. In October, PBI also accompanied the OFPP in their trip to Popayán for women’s meetings, as part of COMOSOC (Coalition of Social Organisations

and Movements in Colombia), who accompanied the CRIC (Regional Indigenous Council in Cauca) during the indigenous mobilization that month. During this indigenous mobilization, the OFP offered legal support to the CRIC. The mobilisation was comprised of between seven and nine thousand indigenous people. In this accompaniment, there were many moments of tension in events which according to the press left some 60 indigenous people injured. The OFP took the initiative of reporting the facts as they occurred.

In conclusion, PBI was able to continue to support the organisation, balancing physical accompaniment with political work, despite the considerable increase in requests for accompaniment.

Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS)

CREDHOS continues to work in the defence and promotion of human rights in Barrancabermeja and the region, primarily in the Cimitarra River Valley. Furthermore, they continue with their media and communications program. As CREDHOS have recovered their work in rural areas, in 2008 they carried out more working trips, especially in the Valley of the River Cimitarra.

In February David Ravelo, the secretary of the CREDHOS board, received threats and was forced to leave Barrancabermeja in fear for his life and that of his family. These threats were constant throughout the year, with the last received in December. Because of these threats, PBI intensified its message of concern to the international community and Colombian authorities.

In April, PBI Colombia accompanied CREDHOS to San Francisco, in the Antioquia region, within the framework of the fourth regional verification mission. The commission brought together small farmers from neighbouring villages to collect testimonies about the main topics of concern: fumigation/eradication of illegal crops and the repercussions of a lack of viable and sustainable farming projects and concerns about petty crime in the area. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Municipal Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman and ACVC also took part in the commission.



In conclusion, PBI fulfilled its accompaniment work plan with CREDHOS throughout the year, meeting all accompaniment requests to regions where the organisation works, resulting in a positive evaluation of the work of the PBI team and strengthened out relationship with the organisation.

Luis Carlos Pérez Lawyers' Collective (CALCP)

During 2008, CALCP continued its work in the Norte de Santander region, where it accompanies the Motilón Bari indigenous people. It also continued its work of providing legal advice to the Association of Small Framers from Catatumbo (ASCAMCAT) and legal work in Bucaramanga.

Between February and April, PBI accompanied various CALCP lawyers to the Bari Community in Ichirryndacaira, César, the Norte de Santander region, and Catatumbo in the Norte de Santander region. Two of the objectives of the visits were: to run workshops with Asocbari about the consequences of a coal mining concession in the region and to collect information about the human rights situation in the region. This type of work increases the risk for the members of CALCP, given that there are a number of parties interested in exploiting the natural resources in the region.



In July, CCALCP were accompanied to the Catatumbo Verification Commission, where they monitored human rights situations in order to evaluate the impacts of legal and political actions which were carried out after an earlier verification commission visited the region from 9 to 12 August 2007, in which some 350 delegates participated from 51 villages in the municipalities of El Carmen, Convención, Teorema and el Tarra.

In general throughout 2008 PBI mainly accompanied CALCP's work in Catatumbo, during verification commissions, assemblies of the Barí People, and during training workshops with small farmers and indigenous people. Given the organisation's important work with vulnerable people in the región, and also given their profile, PBI considers it important to continue accompanying the organisation.

Small Farmers' Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra (ACVC)

The ACVC is a regional organisation which brings together community proposals from community action groups, cooperatives, fishing committees and other groups of rural workers, in order to defend their human rights and struggles for land. They carry out community, political and social work in 120 villages located in eight municipalities in the Magdalena Medio region: Barrancabermeja, Cantagallo, Remedios, San Pablo, Santa Rosa del Sur, Segovia, Simití and Yondó.

After an accompaniment exploration process lasting 18 months, in the last PBI Assembly in November 2008 it was decided to develop a more formal relationship with the ACVC. The PBI field team has carried out at least one accompaniment per month as part of the fulfillment of their work plan, and to strengthen the work of the ACVC.

Between September 2007 and January 2008, six members of the board of the ACVC were arrested on charges of rebellion and although four of them were later released between April and May, two members are still being held and another ten were under warrant for arrest in November 2008. The presence of the PBI field team as observers has been constant throughout these events. In meetings with the authorities, PBI has highlighted the importance that the legal proceedings against the ACVC are carried out according to legal frameworks.



Because of these events during 2008, PBI increased its accompaniment to the ACVC, using meetings to raise awareness on the problem the organisation is facing, and the regions in which it works. Currently PBI accompanies the board members from time to time, and the four former board members who were released from prison. PBI also makes frequent visits to the ACVC offices in Barrancabermeja.

Other accompanied organisations

The PBI field team in Barrancabermeja accompanied NGOs normally accompanied by other PBI teams, as some of these organisations carried out work in the region of the field team, such as CCAJAR, FCSP, CCJ (Colombian Commission of Jurists), Manuel Cepeda Foundation, IPC and ASFFADES.

Urabá:

Please find below a summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments for 2008:

	San José de Apartadó Peace Community	CIJP (Curbaradó, Medio Atrato and Riosucio)	CIJP and CAVIDA (Cacarica)	Others
Acompaniments	92 (208 days)	59 (283.5 days)	34 (196.5 days)	25 (56 days)
Meetings	42	10	51	8

San José de Apartado Peace Community

During 2008, the significant increase in the accompaniment of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community stands out. This is as a result of the constant threats, human rights violations and attacks against representatives of the community.

During the first six months of the year, the Urabá team significantly increased physical accompaniment of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, expanding this accompaniment to outlying hamlets like Rodoxalí. This is as a result of the request from the members of the community to extend support to these areas in order to thwart the constant harassment and threats that the Peace Community Council reports in these outlying hamlets. At the beginning of June, PBI accompanied members of the Peace Community Council to Mulatos, el Guineo and La Resbalosa to meet with peasant farmers and to discuss the establishment of the humanitarian production zones project; the plan is to create production centres. The meeting was successful with the participation of many small farmers. The members of the Peace Community highlighted the fact that, without the presence of PBI, there would not have been the same number of participants.



The second half of the year was marked by an attack on 1 November 2008 against Jesús Emilio Tubercia, legal representative of the San José de Apartado Peace Community. In the centre of

Apartadó, two armed men approached Tuberquia and pointed a gun at him, threatening to kill him. Tuberquia was able to escape the attempt on his life without suffering any physical damage.⁴⁹

This attack occurred 15 days after an illegal self-named group called the Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Colombia paralysed commercial activity in the Urabá region⁵⁰ and some weeks after the Peace Community had reported that “more than 100 paramilitaries arrived at La Unión hamlet”.⁵¹ Before this, on September 2 and 31, there was fighting between the insurgents and alleged paramilitaries near La Esperanza hamlet.⁵² Given the vulnerability of the situation for the members of the Peace Community, the Urabá team has maintained a constant presence there, over and above the number of days defined for presence in the main settlement and in those hamlets where the population is at most risk of displacement. Furthermore, the volunteers have met with the army, the police and the local civil authorities to alert them to this situation and to obtain information to ensure the protection of the Peace Community.

From 1-6 October, the team also accompanied the international solidarity pilgrimage organised by the Peace Community with the aim of showing the reality of the threats suffered in the region, visiting hamlets affected by the violence in recent years, including La Esperanza, Mulatos and La Unión.

As a means of raising awareness, among the diplomatic corps and international organisations, about the problems suffered by peasant farmers in the region, PBI assisted in organising the visits to the Peace Community and Curbaradó by representatives from the British, Swedish and French Embassies, the European Union delegation, UNHCHR and MAPP-OEA.

Community for Self-determination, Life and Dignity (CAVIDA) and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP)

This year, the Urabá team has maintained the planned level of accompaniment Community for Self-determination, Life and Dignity (CAVIDA) and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP). The international presence in the community was distributed between the *Nueva Esperanza en Dios* and *Nueva Vida* settlements, maintaining an average presence of 17 days a month. This fertile region, known as the Bajo Atrato, continues to be of interest to logging and banana export companies, placing the communities under extreme economic and political pressure and that, at the same time, threatening their food security and land rights. As a result of this situation, the communities fear for their lives and their right to self-determination.⁵³

It is important to note that PBI had to increase its presence and accompaniment during several days in March, as a result of fighting that allegedly took place in La Virginia, approximately 10km from the humanitarian zone that caused momentary displacement of some indigenous families from Perrancho, until the situation returned to normal. The increased level of protection – additional days of physical presence – was complemented with meetings with authorities and national organisations in the area.

⁴⁹ Press release “Attack against the legal representative of our community”, San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 1 November 2008; PBI Colombia PBI Colombia, Focus, November

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Press release “Los Paramilitares están en nuestras fincas”, San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 30 September 2008.

⁵² Press release “Combates colocan en riesgo a nuestra comunidad”, San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 3 September 2008

⁵³ Peoples’ Permanent Tribunal “TPP Colombia: final sentence in the biodiversity hearing”

This year, restrictions on and control of basic goods in the port of Turbo have been noted. CAVIDA has, on occasion, requested the presence of the PBI team when members of CAVIDA are loading provisions for the humanitarian zone.

In addition, there has been a constant discrediting of the work of CIJP in the media that aims to discredit the work carried out by the CIJP in the Cacarica and Curbaradó communities. This smear campaign puts the work of the members of CIJP in the region at risk, primarily after the television Channel *Noticias Uno* revealed information about a telephone call between retired general Rito Alejo del Río and Fernando Londoño Hoyos, ex Minister of the Interior, in which the general explains his intention to harm the CIJP.⁵⁴ Rito Alejo del Río directed Operation Genesis in 1997 that caused massive displacement in the Cacarica region. The general is currently in prison for alleged crimes against humanity and links with paramilitaries.⁵⁵

Curbaradó and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP)

In the Medio Atrato region, the Urabá team continues to accompany CIJP in their assessment work with displaced families in Curbaradó. During 2008, PBI has noted an escalation of threats against leaders of this process and members of the CIJP team. In August, various members of this organisation received telephone threats from the illegal group the Black Eagles, with the aim of forcing them to leave the area.

These threats culminated in the kidnapping, for an hour, of a member of the CIJP team in the Chigorodó municipality, with the aim of obtaining information about the other members of the CIJP. Following this, in October, two armed men entered the Caño Manso humanitarian zone and assassinated the community leader there, Ualberto Hoyos Rivas, who was protected by precautionary measures granted by the Inter American Commission on Human Rights. At the request of the CIJP, PBI travelled to the humanitarian zone the same day the assassination took place and was present when the members of the community gave their statements to the Office of the Attorney General.

In order to ensure greater protection for the members of the CIJP, PBI decided to maintain a permanent accompaniment in Curbaradó from the end of August to date. Furthermore, PBI facilitated the visit of members of the diplomatic corps and international organizations to the region (see section on San José de Apartadó) where they had the opportunity to hear the stories of displaced people from different humanitarian zones in Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó.

⁵⁴ Intercepción telefónica compromete a General (r) Rigo Alejo del Río”, *Noticias Uno*, November 5 2008

⁵⁵ Medida de aseguramiento contra general Río Alejo del Río”, *Semana*, September 12 2006

Notable accompaniment of 2008

PBI accompanies the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission following threats in the Bajo Naya region.

In March 2008, PBI received a request for accompaniment to an area not previously visited given that the CIJP field team was threatened with death if they did not leave the Bajo Naya region. At the same time as the CIJP team received this threat, the legal representative of the community council of the afro Colombian communities of the Naya River, an important contact for the CIJP in the river basin, also received the same threat. The legal representative is one of the leaders who has pushed for the recognition of the community council's land rights and promotes initiatives for income generation and human rights training for community leaders. As a result of these threats, PBI evaluated the risk and took the necessary security measures to travel to the area as fast as possible, without exposing the field volunteers to any risk, and accompanied the CIJP and the legal representative of the community council out of the area. This is an example of how the protection tools used by PBI are extremely important in maximizing the cost of threats against an accompanied NGO. On this occasion, the international support for CIJP worked as a guarantee for them to travel in the Bajo Naya region under secure conditions.

The Bajo Naya region is located between the Valle del Cauca and the Cauca departments. This is an area of jungle and is characterised by its richness in natural resources such as oil and gold. The Naya River crosses the region and serves as a means of transport for the communities that live there, most of whom are afro Colombian communities that have lived there for more than 300 years. The resources and the access to the Pacific Ocean ports have been a cause of conflict in the region over control of the river ways, particularly as it is a drug trafficking route. Various legal and illegal armed actors are present here. This means that, regardless of age or gender, the civilian population is subject to surveillance by the armed actors and is suspected of either belonging to or helping one of the armed groups simply by living in the area.

CIJP began its work in the Bajo Naya region in 2001. Its work focused on human rights workshops to develop the organisational processes of the local communities. Since then, until 2007, CIJP visited the region from time to time, and, from 2007, the NGO received funding from the European Union to have a permanent team in the area. One month after the team arrived, they were threatened by an illegal armed group called "Black Eagles for the Naya".⁵⁶

Since the team had to leave the field because of threats in March 2008, CIJP has not been able to have a permanent presence in the region. This shows the level of risk for CIJP, which does not think that there are sufficient security guarantees for its staff to return. With the aim of once more returning to the area, CIJP requested accompaniment to the region on various occasions. PBI accompanied CIJP each time and carried out meetings with the military and civil authorities in the area to raise awareness of their presence and to guarantee the security of the CIJP personnel.

⁵⁶ Report 31, Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, March 19, 2008

Raising awareness of the work of human rights defenders before the international community and the Colombian State authorities

	Members and officials from the Colombian Government and State	Colombian Army and Police	Diplomatic Corps, United Nations, OAS, and European Union	NGOs, international agencies and coordination groups
Bogotá	17	28	112	112
Magdalena Medio	5	26	12	96
Urabá	15	31	11	22
Medellín	7	16	7	31
TOTAL	44	101	142	261

With the aim of protecting both the work space and the physical and psychological integrity of human rights defenders in Colombia, whilst at the same time supporting the protection work of the field teams, the field coordination team has carried out a wide range of advocacy work with Colombian civil and military authorities, United Nations agencies and international organisations. The coordination team participates in the Inter-Team Committee that analyses the work in the regions to ensure that the work of PBI Colombia is coherent at the national level. The functions of this committee include the support and assessment of the field teams in their political work.

The coordination team expanded on the national advocacy work carried out by the field teams in the regions by holding more than 220 meetings in Bogotá. It is extremely important that the coordination reinforce the regional work, with high level political work with the Colombian authorities, the diplomatic corps and United Nations in Bogotá, especially at times of emergency as a result of security incidents with accompanied organisations.

We consider that we have maintained good and transparent contact to inform the various Colombian State institutions about our work, both within the government and the Army and Police; both the offices of the Colombian Vice President and the Ministry of Defence have responded to PBI's requests for support. Furthermore, at the request of the Ministry of Defence, the different field units within the Army and the Police have expressed their availability for meetings with PBI. We consider that the support of our organisation shown by the government is necessary as both PBI and many other social organisations have received unfounded criticisms and their work has been stigmatised. Throughout the year, there have been public statements that distort our work and mandate, which represents a risk given the conflict situation in the country. We can therefore highlight the fact that we have counted on the support of the Director of the Presidential Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Programme, Carlos Franco Echavarría, especially when his support was requested and in times of emergency related to security incidents of accompanied organisations.

At the end of 2007 and during 2008 various members of the Colombian State, the Army and the Police made public accusations against human rights defenders. The most internationally well known event

was the March 6th 2008 demonstration that was organised as homage to the victims of State crimes. After the march and the public statement by José Obdulio Gaviria in the media, that the 6 March 2008 demonstration was “organized by the FARC” comparing the members of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes with this guerrilla group, we noted a considerable increase in the number of threats against and harassment of social and human rights organisations, some of which are accompanied by PBI. Given that such words question the very nature of the work of human rights organisations and can encourage actions against the life and freedom of the defenders, as UNHCHR highlighted in their press release of 13 March⁵⁷, we carried out various activities nationally and internationally to contribute to ending these dangerous accusations. The coordination team supported our US representative in their work of transmitting information and concerns, together with other organisations. These concerns were echoed when 63 members of US Congress signed a letter directed at the Colombian government expressing their concern about the accusations. PBI, therefore, held various high level meetings with the Colombian civil and military authorities, with the UNHCHR, the diplomatic corps and the European Union delegation, with whom we highlighted our concerns. We consider the statements of the UNHCHR⁵⁸, the European Union⁵⁹ and the G24⁶⁰, among others, to be positive, as set out in their press releases showing support for the work of human rights defenders with the aim of stopping the accusations. Given that the statements made by public servants constitute a lack of compliance with the Presidential Decree 07 of 1999 that demands that all public servants “abstain from questioning the legitimacy of human rights organisations and their members, from making statements that disqualify, threaten or incite accusations against these organisations, and from making public or private statements that stigmatise the work of these organisations”⁶¹, the coordination working group of international aid agencies, DIAL, in which PBI participates, wrote a letter to President Uribe reminding him of this Presidential Decree. Unfortunately, we have continued to note accusations by members of the State, the Army and the Police, we have therefore continued to express our concerns until the end of 2008 with members of the diplomatic corps, the UNHCHR and Colombian civil and military authorities.

In August 2008, when fresh accusations were made against PBI in the context of serious threats against the CIJP, organisation accompanied by PBI, we held meetings with the diplomatic corps and we received the support of various embassies, as well as ensuring that the government monitor the situation with an open attitude.

In the context of these threats against CIJP and in response to the interest of the embassies, the coordination team, together with the CIBO, participated in the coordination of a visit by representatives of the French, Swiss, Belgian, Spanish, Swedish and Austrian embassies and the European Union delegation to the head offices of CIJP in Bogotá. Furthermore, the coordination team, together with the CIBO, coordinated a field visit by embassies to the Curbaradó river basin in the Bajo Atrato region, where the CIJP missionary team had received serious threats. The commission of embassies also visited the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, given that the situation there is deteriorating once more because of the presence of different illegal armed groups in the Serranía de Abibe region. Representatives of the British, Swedish and French embassies, the European Union delegation, the UNHCHR and MAPP-OEA participated in this field visit, the purpose of which was to

⁵⁷ “Gobierno no participa en marcha contra paramilitares del 6 de marzo”, RCN news, February 11, 2008

⁵⁸ “Preocupación por amenazas y asesinatos contra defensores de derechos humanos”, Bogotá D.C., March 13, 2008

⁵⁹ Presidential statement on behalf of the European Union about the situation of human rights defenders in Colombia Declaración de la presidencia, a nombre de la Unión Europea, sobre la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en Colombia 080422

⁶⁰ Press release: “seminario de víctimas y construcción de paz desde la perspectiva regional”, Quirama Conference Centre, March 27 and 28, 2008.

⁶¹ Presidential Decree 07 of 1999

raise awareness with accompanied organisations of the international support of various European countries.

The combination of these activities, supported by the team coordinators and the CIBO, both in Colombia and the articulation of these activities with our offices in Washington and Brussels, both in this and other emergency situations in 2008 as a result of security incidents with accompanied organisations, enabled the reduction of the immediate risks for them and contributed to enabling them to continue with their work as human rights defenders.

In addition, the team coordinators and the CIBO carried out specific activities such as bilateral meetings, with Colombian State institutions, the diplomatic corps and the working groups related to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR), together with DIAL. In these meetings, the aim was to seek support for accompanied organisations in their fight against impunity, extrajudicial executions, and human rights violations because of economic interests, as well as to support grassroots organisations with the aim of giving evidence of the situation of human rights defenders at the time that Colombia was subject to review under the UPR system.

Within this context, in October 2008, the coordination team, together with other members of DIAL, participated in a noteworthy meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, to describe the human rights situation in Colombia, as a result of the daily observations in our work with human rights defenders in the field. The team coordinators and the CIBO, together with other Colombian and French human rights organizations were invited to a lunch with the new French human rights responsible and, on a separate occasion, with Oxfam and Colombian human rights organisations. The reason for this meeting was to meet with the French Minister of External Relations for South America, who was visiting Colombia to request information about the human rights situation prior to the UPR. As a result of the interest from the French Minister, the coordination team, together with DIAL and UNHCHR, organised a meeting with various embassies to share our observations about the situation of human rights and human rights defenders in Colombia.

The activities related to the UPR were articulated by the team coordinators and the CIBO, working closely with our offices in Washington and Brussels, where our representatives coordinated with other organisations and agencies that work in this field. After the UPR meeting on December 10th 2008, in Geneva, we have noted that the extremely thorough preparation work carried out by Colombian civil society organisations with the diplomatic corps and the UNHCHR, complemented by the work of various international organisations and agencies, including PBI, had an impact. All of our concerns and recommendations were mentioned by different countries that participated in the UPR process and various have been accepted by the Colombian government.

It is worth mentioning that PBI published two special newsletters this year with the aim of protecting both the physical and psychological integrity of the organisations accompanied. The first newsletter⁶² was dedicated to subject of unfounded criminal investigations that are directed towards a wide range of sectors of society, from small farmers, including entire communities, the youth movement, teachers, the clergy, lawyers and musicians, all of whom are human rights defenders, given that each of them, to some extent, promotes the recognition of fundamental rights and freedoms. One of the key problems related to unfounded criminal investigations is the lack of respect for due process, as

⁶² Peace Brigades International Colombia, Quarterly newsletter No 6, February 2008

well as the use of false statements. The simple fact of using the legal system to initiate investigations, with unreliable accusations, has seriously damaging implications for the work, credibility, social integration, freedom of movement and the income of human rights defenders. In order to raise awareness about this subject, the coordination team, together with other project areas, held an international press conference to present this newsletter. Four members of the media attended the meeting; members of accompanied organisations were also present to enable the media to listen to first-hand accounts of this situation. With the same aim of raising awareness about this issue, the coordination team made a presentation of this newsletter to the diplomatic corps under the auspices of the UNHCHR.

Finally, driven by the team coordinators and the CIBO, a letter of intent was signed between UNHCR and PBI Colombia, with the aim of coordinating actions at appropriate times to ensure that civil society organisations that work with displaced populations are able to continue with their work and to encourage the coordination of attention given to the protection of internally displaced populations, returned populations, as well as those at risk of displacement.



Local, national and international political advocacy

In Europe

United Nations

In 2008, PBI began to notice in its daily work, the consequences of the reform of the former UN Human Rights Commission, which has now become the UN Human Rights Council. PBI has seen it as a priority to monitor the changes and maintain the Project informed of how the new United Nations mechanisms affect our work and protection for human rights defenders in Colombia. With this in mind, in 2008, the PBI European Representative made three trips to Geneva, to participate in the Human Rights Council Sessions. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the new Council evaluation tool, was implemented for the first time in 2008, and Colombia was reviewed on 10 December. The preparation work for the UPR carried out by PBI in Europe had two main focuses: to promote concerns about the situation of human rights defenders so that these could be included in the UPR. Secondly, to ensure that the voice of Colombian organisations was included to a sufficient extent, as these organisations represent the voice of the victims.

The first focus was achieved through our collaboration in the report presented by the European Coordination Office ODHACO to the United Nations for the UPR session, and through meetings held by PBI in Brussels and Geneva. In order to achieve the second focus, we made efforts to coordinate an exchange of information related to the UN mechanism through our participation in relevant meetings, and we also hosted visits by human rights defenders to Europe, so that they could participate directly in meetings with representatives from European institutions on the subject.

In the UPR, on 10 December, the worrying situation for human rights defenders in Colombia was one of the most frequently mentioned subjects, with multiple recommendations that Colombia guarantee the security of those who work in the defence of human rights, and that Colombia publicly supports their legitimate and legally recognised work. These recommendations reflect PBI's longstanding concerns, which we have constantly brought to the attention of the Colombian and international authorities over the years.

European Union

The institutions of the European Union have expressed their concern, on various occasions, for the serious situation of human rights defenders in Colombia in 2008.

After the murders of trade unionists, human rights defenders, and social leaders, as well as the threats against social leaders and human rights defenders who organised the 6 March demonstration, 26 Euro MPs sent an open letter to the Colombian President, asking that he make a public pronouncement, declaring "clear support for the work of human rights defenders". The Euro MPs included delegates from the European Parliament working on human rights, and because of the EU's relationship with the Andean Community of Nations, they reported that this situation shows that the paramilitary phenomenon has not been overcome in Colombia. PBI contributed to this process by facilitating information to its Support Network in the European Parliament. Many of the group of Euro MPs who signed the letter to Uribe are also members of the PBI support network.

On 19 May Slovenia, who at the time, held the Presidency of the EU, released a public communiqué voicing the concerns of all European Union member states, as well as States outside of the European Union. In this statement, the most powerful body in the EU highlighted that efforts by community leaders to build peace in Colombia are legitimate, as are the defence and promotion of human rights. They also express their concern about the appearance of armed criminal groups, who have taken control of illegal structures established by the AUC (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia) before their demobilisation.

PBI, together with other international organisations working on Colombia, have expressed concern before the European Union, on a number of occasions, about the lack of protection for human rights defenders in the country. A public statement can increase protection, as it offers support from the international community for those who work on behalf of human rights throughout the world.

Human Rights NGOs are invited to the Council of Ministers

In 2008 PBI, in coordination with other international organisations, has held two important meetings with the Council of Ministers.

In May, ODHACO, Amnesty International, FIDH, Frontline and PBI Colombia were all invited by Slovenian representatives (at that time presidents of the EU), to a meeting of the Council of the European Union Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM). The Slovenian Presidency was accompanied by representatives from other member States.

In November, the subsequent French Presidency of the EU, opened their doors so that human rights organisations working in Brussels could give a presentation to members of the Council of the European Union Working Party on Latin America (COLAT) on the human rights situation in Colombia. PBI was invited to this meeting, together with ODHACO, Amnesty International, OMCT, FIDH and Frontline. We had the opportunity to speak of our concerns regarding the stigmatization of human rights defenders, and unfounded legal proceedings against human rights organisations that carry out transparent, legitimate and legally-recognised work in Colombia. It was important for PBI to have this opportunity to speak to representatives of all 27 Member States of the EU. This invitation was in itself recognition of our work in itself.

Speaking tours in Europe organised by PBI Colombia

In Europe we have supported speaking tours carried out by organisations accompanied by PBI in Colombia. In Brussels, throughout 2008, we have welcomed representatives from the Corporation for Legal Freedom (CJL), the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP), the Luis Carlos Perez Lawyers' Collective (CALCP) and the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSPP). Through these visits, we have been able to raise the profile of these organisations, who work on subjects of strategic importance for the protection of human rights defenders, such as extrajudicial executions, ethnic minority rights, such as those of the afro-descendants in the Lower Atrato region, and the situation of indigenous and small farmer communities in the Norte de Santander region. Thanks to the support of the PBI national groups, the representatives of Colombian organisations have also been able to visit other European countries such as France, Sweden, Great Britain, Spain and Germany.

Work with PBI's national groups in Europe

The coordination of European advocacy work on Colombia, and support for PBI's national groups continues to be a priority for our protection work in Europe. With this aim, the European Representative traveled to Holland, France and Norway throughout the year, to meet with representatives from PBI national groups in those countries.

On three occasions in 2008, we have asked PBI national groups to activate their support networks to protect the physical integrity and the work of those we accompany in Colombia: when threats were made against social leaders and the murders of trade unionists after the peaceful demonstration in homage to the victims of State crimes on 6 March 2008, when unfounded legal proceedings were brought against human rights defenders in Colombia, and when the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission were threatened and one of their members kidnapped in August and September. On these occasions we coordinated our advocacy work between Brussels, Bogotá and European capital cities, thereby taking full advantage of the extensive network we have in Europe and the excellent work done by the PBI national groups.

Coordinating strategies for advocacy work in PBI International

One new task which has been added to the work of the European Representative is to represent PBI Colombia in the recently-established international advocacy committee in PBI International. Taking part in this committee are representatives from PBI's five projects throughout the world, the PBI International Office, and a number of PBI national groups. As part of this work, the European Representative and the Project Coordinator have traveled twice to London to participate in committee meetings. At the same time, a common strategy for international advocacy work is being developed, with the aim of achieving greater protection for human rights defenders accompanied by PBI all over the world.

Intern position in the Brussels office

In 2008 PBI Colombia opened an intern position in the European Office of the Colombia Project in Brussels in order to give the opportunity to former field volunteers to work in the centre of Europe with the representative for a period of six months. Since January 2008, two former volunteers have been working in this position covering the two halves of the year.

The main tasks that the intern carries out during their time in the office are analysis of the Colombian context from a European perspective, monitoring sessions of the European Parliament or events organised in Brussels, related to Colombia, participation in meetings with members of the European Parliament and officials from different European institutions, coordination European speaking tours carried out by PBI accompanied organisations, maintaining relationships with and support of PBI national groups, supporting the European Representative during emergency situations affecting accompanied Colombian organisations, participation in meetings of coordination spaces and international organisations of which PBI are members.

The volunteers themselves are supported in that they are given the opportunity to continue the political accompaniment work which they began in Colombia, and to contribute through their experience and knowledge of the Colombian context to the project's political advocacy work in Europe.

At the same time, the support offered to the national groups strengthens and contributes to the close relationship between the Colombia Project and different groups within Europe who contact the European office to ask for up to date information regarding the Colombian context and, in general, makes a number of different contributions so that the office can function with greater efficiency according to the needs of the Colombia Project.

Finally, the intern carries out a number of daily tasks which allow the intern to focus more on lobbying and advocacy work, and on organisational tasks.

In the United States

In the first half of 2008, the PBI Colombia Representative for the United States and Canada focused her efforts on making direct contact with members of the Support Network to introduce herself and share concerns. In 2008, the representative activated the Support Network for the CIJP cases, in which they were threatened by the "Black Eagles". Advocacy work carried out by the representative has been intense because of the context in Colombia and the different activations it has been necessary to carry out during the year.

In order to increase the Support Network, the representative met regularly with the Network for Solidarity with Grassroots Afro-Colombian Communities (NASGACC), a new network in solidarity with grassroots Afro Colombian organisations. PBI participates in NASGACC as observers to share concerns on the security situation of the Community for Self-Determination, Life and Dignity (CAVIDA) and the CIJP in the Chocó and Bajo Naya regions. The members of NASGACC, among others AFRODES USA (the Organisation of Displaced Afro-Colombians), Trans Africa Forum, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and Presbyterian groups, wrote a letter to the United States Embassy, expressing concern for the situation of communities and the CIJP in Curbaradó. AFRODES USA, Trans Africa Forum and the Chicago Religious Leaders Network sent alerts to their support network about the kidnap of Yimmy Jansasoy and the murder of Ualberto Hoyos in Curbarado. We also held meetings with the Offices of Members of Congress, together with Trans Africa Forum, Afrodes and Wola.

PBI regularly meets with the Colombia Steering Committee (CSC) to update them on the situation of accompanied individuals and organisations, and to coordinate activities during visits from human rights defenders. On the invitation of Lutheran World Relief we presented our work and the situation of human rights defenders to the CSC's Ecumenical Working Group. We maintained regular contact with WOLA, US Office on Colombia, Latin America Working Group, Human Rights First (HRF) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) to inform them of the situation in Colombia and to facilitate contacts with accompanied organisations. HRF monitored the situation of Iván Cepeda, the Small Farmers Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra, Minga, and members of MOVICE, FCSP, CIJP and the subject of unfounded legal proceedings brought against human rights defenders. Organisations who are members of the CSC wrote to the Colombian State on the subject of the accusations made by presidential adviser José Obdulio Gaviria, and about the wave of threats and attacks against human rights defenders, the kidnap of Yimmy Jansasoy, threats and harrassment against members of the CIJP and communities in Curbaradó, illegal surveillance of the emails and telephones of human rights defenders, the leaked military intelligence reports about the San José de Apartado Peace Community. Members of the CSC also expressed their concerns about the security situation of Iván Cepeda, the FSCPP and human rights organisations in Barrancabermeja, in particular David Ravelo from Credhos.

The representative met with the offices of the following members of Congress: Sen. Clinton, Sen Obama, Sen Feingold, Sen Allard, Sen Wyden, Rep McGovern, Rep Grijalva, Rep Payne, Rep Lee, Rep FARR, Rep Schackowsky, Rep Engel, Rep Conyers, Rep Jackson Jr, Rep Rush, Rep Udall, and Rep Honda. The representative also held meetings with the Western Hemisphere Sub-Committee Office. In March, 63 Members of Congress signed a letter to President Uribe expressing their concern at the accusations made by presidential adviser José Obdulio Gaviria, the wave of threats and attacks against human rights defenders, and the apparent continued existence of paramilitary groups. On 14 February, a group of Senators, headed by Senators Dodd and Feingold, wrote to the Secretary of State to express their concern about extrajudicial executions.

The representative participated in a consultation on the USAID economic and social aid program. She kept in regular contact with the Department of State, to update them on the situation in the field. She also established a contact with the Defenders Unit of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, and also with the same Unit in the Inter-American Court, to share information on the work of PBI, provide updates on cases or protection measures which have been granted to PBI's accompanied organisations in the Inter-American human rights system (IACHR), and to talk about possible joint activities and consultation processes with civil society.

During the visit of Margaret Sekkagya, the United Nations Representative on human rights and human rights defenders, PBI was invited to take part in a meeting between Sekkagya, the General Secretary of the IAHR and human rights organisations on the subject of human rights in the Organisation of American States (OAS) member countries. In this meeting, a number of aspects were discussed, including the security situation, international civil society, the IAHR and Margaret Sekkagya. Among other participants were Amnesty International, US Office on Colombia, FCSPP, CJL, CIJP and the Robert F Kennedy Foundation. During the meeting, the IAHR highlighted the serious situation in Colombia and Sekkagya expressed an interest in visiting the country.

The PBI representative presented the work of PBI and the human rights situation to Howard University, Maryland University and Browns University.

The representative met with the Norwegian Refugee Council – Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, to share concerns about the situation of the CIJP in Curbaradó, and to coordinate advocacy work with the offices of Members of Congress. She presented information to the United Steel Workers Trade Union, and to the Office of Congressman Michaud about impunity in the case of Marino López-Operation Genesis. She regularly took part in meetings of the Colombia Human Rights Committee to support the visits of human rights defenders to the States, and to distribute PBI's publications.

As part of the campaign to raise awareness on the effects of unfounded legal proceedings against human rights defenders, the representative presented the PBI Colombia statement and the special newsletter on the subject, to the CSC, HRF, Fellowship of Reconciliation and to the Department of State.

The Representative supported the CIJP, CJL, FCSPP, Minga and CAJAR during their visits to Washington.

With the aim of increasing the work of the support network on behalf of grassroots organisations, to create specialised support networks (environmental groups, lawyers), to increase the capacity for activation during visits of the Representative in Colombia, to strengthen the international communications strategy and contacts with the press, and to support fundraising for the project in the

United States, PBI Colombia decided to create a post for Public Relations Officer in North America, located in Washington DC. We hope to fill the post at the beginning of 2009.

Work with National Groups

The representative carried out advocacy work in coordination with the PBI Mexico Project, with the offices of Senators Allard, Clinton and Wyden, and in coordination with PBI Indonesia, with the offices of Senators Obama and Feingold. The representative gave support and information to the new PBI USA team and gave joint presentations to students, took part in informative meetings with PBI, and presented the new PBI USA team to members of the Support Network. She met with PBI USA, the Overbrook Foundation and the Open Society Institute to present PBI's work. She coordinated with PBI Mexico, PBI Guatemala, PBI Canada and PBI USA to prepare a possible speaking tour of defenders accompanied by the three Latin American PBI Projects. PBI also developed a joint advocacy strategy in North America, and a special newsletter on the subject of impunity, within the priorities identified by the working group for joint advocacy.

The representative kept in regular contact with PBI Australia, and facilitated information for a question in the Senate.

The representative was in permanent contact with the PBI Canada national group, to share information and prepare advocacy work, including in meetings with the Americas Policy Group (APG) in which PBI participates as observers. The APG sent a letter expressing their concern at the human rights situation in Colombia. The representative supported a speaking tour in Canadá of former volunteer Gilles Philippe Pagé, in particular his presentation before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Trade and his meetings with members of Parliament on the subject of extrajudicial executions, the relationship between palm oil plantations and human rights abuses in Chocó, and the use of unfounded legal proceedings against human rights defenders in Colombia. PBI Colombia and PBI Canada contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to express concerns at the growing hostility towards human rights defenders, public accusations made by state officials and the reigning impunity in cases of attacks against human rights defenders.

Communications and distribution of information

The year 2008 has been characterised by a series of new communications initiatives for PBI and several accompanied organisations.

The PBI General Assembly held in June 2008 decided to change the area's name from *Publications* to *Communications*. This change in name is related to the expansion of the project's "information production and distribution" working strategy over the last three years, leading to a more strategic focus to this work, which no longer only focuses on the organisation's Newsletter and Focus publications. The Assembly also approved a new strategic plan, the objective of which is to inform about the protection work which PBI Colombia offers to human rights defenders, and even more importantly, on the risks they suffer for defending human rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Awareness-raising campaigns

In the first half of 2008, PBI began an awareness-raising campaign on unfounded legal proceedings. The project published a 12 page report on the subject¹, focusing on a number of cases of accompanied human rights defenders who have suffered legal persecution, the way this affects their work and the psychosocial impacts on their lives and families. On the concluding page of this newsletter, PBI offers a series of recommendations to the international community suggesting ways they can help to put an end to this practice in Colombia.

In order to communicate the contents of this campaign, PBI organised a press conference in Bogotá in March² and subsequently invited the diplomatic corps to an event hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogotá, where the human rights defenders themselves had the opportunity to share their stories. Representatives of the Embassies of Brazil, Belgium, Chile, the United States, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Norway, and members of the European Union Delegation in Colombia were present during the event.

The communications officer also participated in meetings to build strategies for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), an instrument for the analysis of the human rights situation in each UN member country, carried out by the United Nations Human Rights Council every four years. Through meetings organised by representatives of the Alliance Coordination Group, the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group, and the DESC Working Group, meetings were held with the directors of the communications media, to explain to them the importance of this United Nations tool and its impact on the future of human rights in Colombia. A press conference was also organised with 16 journalists, which led to 35 news items in different national and international media.

After threats were made against the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace (CIJP) in Curbaradó in August and September, PBI decided to produce an eight page newsletter³ explaining the context in which this organisation works, accompanying communities who were displaced from the region during military operations in 1997 in the Curbaradó river basin. This publication also shows the chronological development of these threats, which small farmers and members of the CIJP have suffered throughout the last decade during the recovery of their lands and the defence of their rights.

Contact with the international press

The Communications Area also received visits from a total of 17 journalists, the majority interested in the work of social organisations, who themselves had decided that in 2008 they would focus their work more on advocacy with the media. One highlight was the support PBI gave to the Swiss documentary maker Frank Gaberly, who has been in contact with PBI for some nine months before finally making a film on the Curbaradó region, accompanied by our volunteers. The following is a list of media representatives who contacted PBI during the year to carry out reports on PBI, or on accompanied organisations, or who asked for logistical support for their work.

Radio Switzerland	PBI and Curbaradó
Jérôme Mars (French freelance Photojournalist)	PBI and the San José de Apartadó Peace Community
Frank Garbely (Swiss documentary maker)	PBI and Curbaradó
Radio Suisse Romande	Human rights situation in Colombia and PBI
Mikel Muñoz (Basque documentary maker)	Curbaradó
German documentary maker	PBI and Curbaradó
El País	Press Conference – presentation of PBI’s unfounded legal proceedings Newsletter
Telesur	Press Conference – presentation of PBI’s unfounded legal proceedings Newsletter
IPS	Press Conference – presentation of PBI’s unfounded legal proceedings Newsletter
Radio Nederlands	Press Conference – presentation of PBI’s unfounded legal proceedings Newsletter
Radio Suisse Romande	PBI
La Croix	PBI
Marie Claire	PBI
O Globo	PBI, displaced people and victims, 6 March demonstration
The New Statesman	San José de Apartadó Peace Community
TVE	PBI and the San José de Apartadó Peace Community
Al Jazeera	Information on the Urabá region

Journalistic coverage

The communications workers also covered several events such as the 6 March demonstration, organised by the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), the MOVICE Assembly, the 10th anniversary of the 16 May massacre in Barrancabermeja, several sessions of the Peoples’ Permanent

Tribunal including the penultimate trial in indigenous Kankuamo lands in the Sierra Nevada region of Colombia. In August, the communications officer also participated in the Lawyers' Caravan organised by the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective which brought a number of lawyers to Colombia, mainly from the United Kingdom, to learn about the reality for Colombian human rights defenders.

Publications

In 2008, the Communications area published five newsletters, including two special editions on unfounded legal proceedings and the Curbaradó region; the publication of the Project's Narrative and Financial Report in journal format, and the publication of new informative presentation leaflets on the work of PBI. Moreover, the area coordinated the 12 Focus of Interest publications, which are sent to our support network in three languages with the aim of alerting as to the attacks and threats against the lives and work of accompanied human rights defenders.

Workshops

The communications officer and the volunteer specialising in communications, have given communication workshops to the four PBI Colombia teams. The workshops consist of sharing journalistic writing techniques, skills on managing contacts with the international communications media, updating the web page, and taking photographs for the Project's publications.

Psychosocial support within the project

External psychosocial support

During 2008, 26 external workshops were held with the PBI Colombia team: five with the Urabá team, five with the Bogotá team, three in Medellín, four in Barrancabermeja, four in the Brussels office, three with the volunteers from the support team in Bogotá, and two in preparation for the project's general assemblies.

The teams and the Psychosocial Officer, and also the external support organisations *Vínculos* and *AVRE*, have all evaluated the workshops positively. The main difficulty has been ensuring that on the days that the workshops are programmed, there are no urgent or emergency accompaniments for the teams; this has led to changes in dates for the workshops at the last moment, sometimes several times, and has meant that the Medellín team has only received three workshops.

In addition to external group support, all PBI Colombia members have been given the opportunity to have individual support sessions, when they have requested it. This year, 25 people have received this kind of support: twelve from Urabá, five from Bogotá, one from Barrancabermeja, four from the support office, one from Brussels and two Colombian staff.

The person responsible for the project's psychosocial work has held 15 coordination meetings with the external support organisations. During 2008, PBI met on six occasions with *Vínculos*, six with *AVRE*, and three with *Terre des Hommes Italy*.

Moreover, so that the workshops function well, the psychosocial worker has carried out the following activities: monitoring external psychosocial support with the teams and support volunteers, archiving the session reports, monitoring the external psychosocial support in Brussels, and preparing and signing the formal agreement with *AVRE* and *Vínculos*.

Support and monitoring of project volunteers

Throughout 2008, the Psychosocial Officer interviewed the 37 new members of the PBI Colombia team who joined the project during this time period, in order to identify their needs and offer psychosocial support and monitoring.

All those who have been incorporated into the project have received, upon arrival, training in the psychosocial tools offered by the project, making a total of seven orientation workshops this year.

This psychosocial support team also monitor volunteers during their time in the project and up to two months after they leave. This year, the Psychosocial Officer visited all the teams in the field, kept in constant communication with the volunteers by telephone and e-mail, and held 17 individual consultations (eleven with people on the teams, three with support volunteers and three with staff in Brussels).

The psychosocial worker has given feedback on 18 volunteer self-evaluations and eight support volunteer self-evaluations, in order to help these people relate to their daily realities.

During visits to the teams in the field, workshops were held on psychosocial tools: one on emotional accompaniment and one on Conflict Resolution.

Also, in Barrancabermeja, a workshop was held on security and crisis, during which participants discussed the project's Crisis Protocol, for cases of situations where the emotional impact is high. The team has given feedback on the draft version of this protocol, and in 2009 it will be discussed with the other teams and with the support office.

In 2008, there have been critical situations in two teams, and in these cases the Psychosocial Officer has facilitated external support and monitored the situations in the following ways:

Critical situation in Barrancabermeja. External support with AVRE was facilitated (one visit to the team and two follow-up meetings) and the project monitored the situation (one coordination visit).

Constant contact was maintained with the members of the Barrancabermeja team, especially with two members who asked for individual support.

Critical situation in Urabá I (internal). External support with Vínculos (two sessions and one follow-up meeting) and monitoring from the project (one coordination visit, and follow-up communication).

Constant contact was maintained with the members of the Urabá team, including interviews with five people and telephone conversations with team members.

Critical situation in Urabá II (external): A series of activations due to the context in the region. External support was facilitated (two sessions with Vínculos and one follow-up meeting), and the project monitored the situation (visit by the psychosocial worker and meeting about the team's mental health)

Constant contact was maintained with the members of the Urabá team by telephone and e-mail.

The Psychosocial Officer participated in the two team retreats in 2008 where she facilitated a workshop on relationships with accompanied people, and on the psychosocial effects of exhumations.

In 2008, 32 people left the project: 22 volunteers, seven support workers, and three people from the support team outside Colombia; these people have all been attended a final consultation meeting, to help them prepare both psychologically and logistically for their reintegration after they leave the project. Two months before leaving, materials were sent to help begin these preparations. The project has also fulfilled its aim to communicate with volunteers up to two months after they have left the project. In several cases, this time period has been increased. During the year, one former volunteer asked for and received psychosocial support after leaving the project. The list of ex-volunteers has also been updated at regular intervals, and has been sent to all relevant working areas in the project.

The person responsible for the Psychosocial Officer has informed the national groups when each volunteer leaves, to facilitate support for these people when they return to their countries of origin.

Awareness raising on psychosocial, security and protection issues in local NGOs

In the Project's Assembly in November 2007, the fourth working strategy was evaluated, and decisions were made on how to implement this work in 2008, namely to include increasing the work covered, by including further activities alongside the psychosocial and protection workshops. It was decided that the area would now coordinate with and support the Project's work on publications and advocacy, and would now be called SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL FABRIC RECONSTRUCTION.

Throughout the year 2008, seven workshops have been held, one on institutional strengthening and the other six on all-round security, which includes both physical and emotional protection, as the problem of insecurity has significant emotional consequences for human rights defenders, which can have impact on their work, such as creating the sensation of physical vulnerability. The aim of these workshops is to facilitate a debate on all-round protection and security within each organisation. Using this discussion as a starting point, organisations are given tools to carry out analyses and security protocols, adapted to the needs of each organisation in question, and tools to revise the emotional situation of teams and to take measures towards self and group care.

In these workshops subjects include conflict and the different actors influencing each organisation in particular, identity, rumour management, constructing teams, fear management, and stress management. Tools are also provided for risk analysis and institutional security evaluation, and the construction of protocols or action plans.

In February, PBI facilitated a workshop with members of Codhesel, continuing a process which began in 2007; this was the final workshop with Codhesel for the time being.

In April, the Colombian Commission of Jurists received the first part of their workshop on all-round protection, and the second half was completed in May.

At the end of May, PBI facilitated a workshop on institutional strengthening and group identity with ASFADDES.

In July, a two-day workshop was held on all-round security with the Bogotá team from the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, in which 27 people participated. Specific subjects were covered such as fear and risk analysis.

In the month of August, a workshop was facilitated in Medellín with the Grassroots Training Institute (IPC) with the participation of 20 people from both the IPC and organisations they accompany in the East of the Antioquia region.

In November, two workshops on all-round security were held in the region of Sucre, one in the capital of the region Sincelejo and the other in the town of San Onofre, in which a total of 30 people participated. The workshop was requested by the FCSPP as a member of MOVICE at the national level, and was attended by organisations belonging to MOVICE in the Sucre region. This workshop was carried out as part of the Truth, Justice and Reparation project, funded by the European Union. Each workshop lasted for two days.

During this period PBI has received requests for workshops that it could not accept due to lack of human resources. Tasks carried out within PBI by the person responsible for the project's psychosocial work, and the person responsible for the analysis of information, mean that they can not cover all external needs. In 2009, we hope to be able to respond to more requests, as in the middle of October a PBI contracted a new person to help satisfy this demand, as agreed in the Project's Assembly in November 2007. Requests have been received from a number of organisations, including: FCSPP, CCAJAR, COSSPAC, ONIC, CALCP, HUMANIDAD VIGENTE and MOVICE.

As part of the project funded by the European Union, PBI has developed a questionnaire to gather information on requests for workshops from communities who PBI's accompanied organisations work with.

PBI has held two meetings with the CCJ, one with Humanidad Vigente and one with the ONIC to plan workshops or in order to share security strategies.

The area attended 15 events organised by accompanied NGOs, thereby permitting PBI to monitor the wellbeing of the organisations by keeping in close contact and maintaining communications. This helps with mutual confidence-building which is necessary when carrying out these workshops.

Two accompanied people have been referred to the psychosocial support network which PBI has established as a means of attending to their psychosocial needs.

Another decision taken in the November 2007 Assembly was that the area should write at least two articles per year for our newsletter on psychosocial issues and their effects on the work of human rights defenders. In January, one article was produced, on the psychosocial effects of unfounded legal proceedings, which was published in the February newsletter. Then in November, the area prepared an article on the psychosocial impacts of impunity, entitled "Effects and Resistance" which was included in the newsletter at the end of the year.

PBI is a founder member of the "Psychosocial Working Group", in which the organisation participates as observers. So far this group has met seven times, and includes a number of organisations working on psychosocial issues, such as AVRE, Vínculos, CIJP, Terre des Hommes Italy, Equitas, PIUJ and PBI.

PBI has also participated as observers in the psychosocial support group for MOVICE (AVRE, Vínculos, CIJP, MOVICE, PIUJ, the Manuel Cepeda Vargas Foundation, Cátedra Libre and PBI), which has held four meetings to date.

This working area has also supported organisational debates within Colombia Project itself, by participating in discussions on unfounded legal proceedings and exhumations from the point of view of psychosocial effects and impacts. Moreover, the area participated in a discussion on emotional accompaniment as part of the work of PBI Colombia.

Human resources and training of international observers

During 2008, the training team has continued with its work of training accompaniers/international observers although we would like to highlight the fact that Luís Pérez Miguel left the organisation at the end of June, having been linked to the organisation in one way or another since it began.

The selection process:

In 2008, 198 people, from mainly European countries, contacted PBI to request information about joining the organisation. This is considerably less than in 2007 when 305 people got in touch. Although less people have made an initial contact to request information, there has been an increase of 14% in those who have subsequently sent an application, compared to 2007.

2008 began with 62 candidates in the training process, which added to the 106 applications sent throughout the year, making a total of 168 candidates in the process, more than in 2007, when there were 131.

Of the 168 candidates, 78 left the process for different reasons; they did not comply with the proposed training activities, personal or work circumstances, insufficient level of Spanish. A total of 90 are currently participating in the training process. Of these, 67% are women, continuing with the trend within PBI; 24



people joined the team in 2008, 11 more passed the selection meeting and will join in 2009. Furthermore, it is expected that 20 candidates will participate in the selection meeting, 28 in June and seven in October.

The selection process is comprised of an interview, ten training exercises on different subjects (including Colombian history, displacement, human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL), the psychosocial dynamics of the conflict), a range of reading material about the human rights situation in Colombia and a selection meeting that takes place three times a year in Spain. One of the challenges for the area in 2009 is to review and update the training exercises.

The countries of origin continue to be mainly European; in 2008 Spain, Germany, Italy and Switzerland stand out, the same as last year. It is also worth mentioning here, that approximately 50% of those who make initial contact and then continue with the training process have known about PBI through the national groups and the work of former volunteers and through similar organisations (such as Amnesty International). It is therefore noteworthy that of those in the training process, three have come from Greece, one from Malta, one from Liechtenstein and one from Slovenia, countries that currently have no PBI presence.

Colombians were invited to the three selection meetings to offer the future international observers their vision about the Colombian situation and their personal experience as human rights defenders: César Jerez, Coordinator of the Rural Press Agency, that forms part of Small Farmers' Association from the Valley of the River Cimitarra (ACVC), organisation accompanied by PBI Colombia, Carlos Alberto Ruiz Socha, a lawyer at the Externado University in Colombia, a human rights defender and an external adviser for the Colombian Government Commission for the Humanisation of the Armed Conflict and the Application of IHL, father Alberto Franco Giraldo of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission and currently legal representative of that organisation.

The training process does not end with the selection meeting. From their acceptance until the volunteers arrive in Colombia, they should continue to read about the current situation in Colombia in press articles and press releases and reports from local organisations and to analyse what they have read.

On arrival in Bogotá, the new volunteers receive two complementary weeks of training before being sent to their respective teams. In 2008, seven training processes took place on volunteers' arrival in the country; in January, March, May, August, September, October and November. This year, a new initiative has been taken to incorporate first aid workshops into the process, to add to the usual workshops that include the different areas of work and the internal functioning of PBI, the structure of the Colombian State and analysis of the current situation. The Bogotá team is responsible for the preparation and presentation of many of these workshops.

On arrival in the field, the volunteers receive more specific training about the region and the accompanied organisations as well as the internal dynamics of the field teams. This training is the responsibility of the field team the new person is joining.



The training team is also responsible for on-the-job training that includes obligatory workshops that take place at least once a year, as well as optional workshops that depend on the needs and requests of the teams. The objective of the obligatory workshops is to strengthen knowledge of PBI tools and almost all of them were completed in 2008. The optional workshops, given by people that do not work in PBI, included: photography, talks about Colombian history, indigenous organisations in Colombia, forced disappearance and mega projects. For 2009, the area has to meet the challenge of finding

people from accompanied or non-accompanied organisations to present these talks and workshops as they are considered to be very useful to complete the training of the project members.

An additional training process has been implemented for those support volunteers who have not previously worked in the organisation. On joining the project, they receive training about their work plans and other areas that are necessary to improve their knowledge of the project. We are in the process of implementing a plan so that these people attend the selection meeting in Spain within the first months of joining the project. Four people attended a meeting this year.

After arrival in Colombia:

The volunteers are the most important part of the project; they are the defining element that allows us to support the defence of human rights in Colombia.

It is therefore important that they are given the necessary tools and resources to meet our mission; and so it is essential to establish a system to improve the management of the volunteer process.

The Human Resources area was established in May 2008, as a result of a study carried out in November 2007, to look at how best to respond to the planning and maintenance of human resources in terms of the type and number of volunteers required, according to established objectives of the project.

All the recommendations of the study have been implemented appropriately by the Human Resources area during 2008, the personal files have been organised, annual leave has been monitored, contracts have been revised, support has been provided to volunteer and personnel selection committees, job descriptions have been drawn up, the human resources situation in the teams has been coordinated, an analysis of the situation of voluntary human resources in the project has been carried out, and recruitment processes have been set up for both accompaniment and support volunteers.

There are three different types of staff members in the project:

- Accompaniment volunteers who carry out an accompaniment and international observation role in Colombia for the protection of human rights defenders.
- Support volunteers who carry out specialist work in each area; support functions that contribute to carrying out the mandate of the Colombia Project.
- Salaried staff:
 - Internal. Staff members of Colombian nationality contracted according to Colombian labour laws who carry out specific, limited functions within PBI and its offices in Colombia.
 - External: Staff members contracted according to the labour laws in the country in which they are located, who carry out specific work; support functions that contribute to carrying out the mandate of the Colombia Project. They are based in offices outside of Colombia, in Washington and Brussels.

During 2008, the number of field accompaniment volunteers was maintained at 34. During this year, 24 new volunteers joined and 7 decided to extend their time in the project.

Furthermore, there are candidates who have responded to calls for applications, and who are currently participating in the training and selection process. These candidates will enable the project has the sufficient number of candidates, until September 2009.

According to decisions made by the project, five recruitment processes were carried out in 2008 for the following new positions: Strategist and Security Officer in Colombia, Volunteer Communications Specialist, a second Information Systems Officer, Human Resources Officer and an intern for the Brussels office.

Recruitment processes were also carried out for the following positions, given that the previous post holders' contracts had ended: Communications Officer, Fundraisers (2), CIBO officer, Administrator, Project Coordinator and intern in the Brussels office.

All recruitment processes are carried out, taking into account PBI Colombia's policy of non discrimination on the grounds of race, age or religion; they are all open recruitment processes and include the person profile, job description and contract terms and conditions.

PBI Colombia also has a selection committee for each position which must comply with a process established by the project, using evaluation tools and respecting established policies.

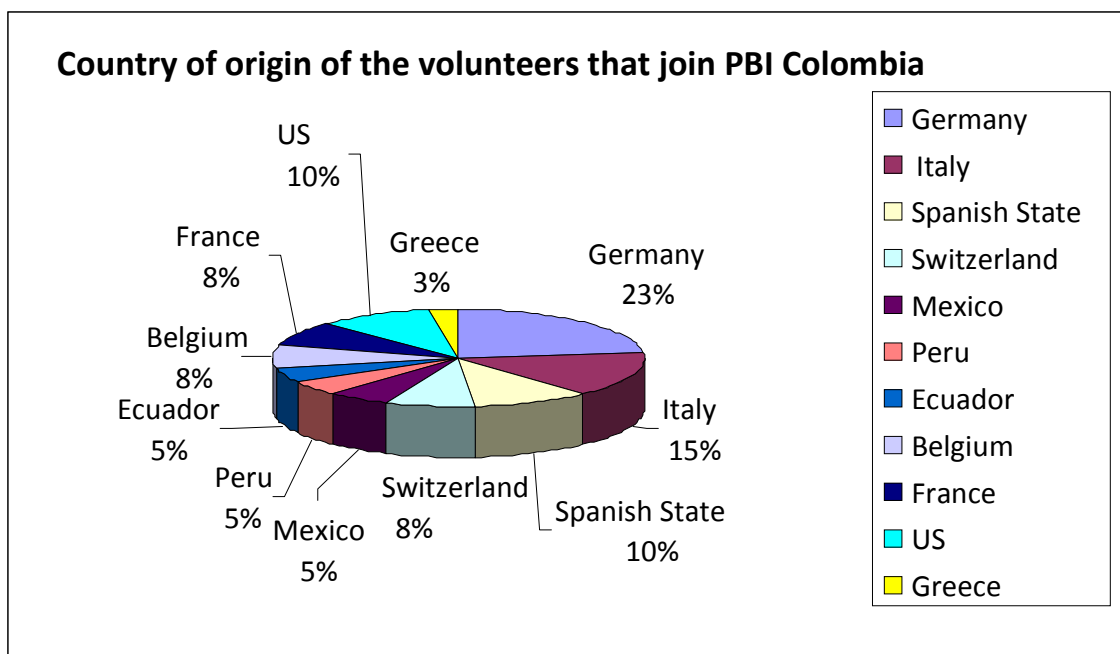
During 2008, support documents were produced for the Human Resources area, namely a code of ethics and a human resources manual. These include policies related to the human resources within the project, and are pending approval in the next project General Assembly in June 2009.

The human resources officer implemented the recommendations of the gender survey in 2008. In 2009, the project will decide whether the human resources officer position will continue and/or be strengthened.

The following is a brief graphic analysis of the volunteer situation:

Regarding the nationality of the volunteers – most of those who joined in 2008 are of European origin, primarily Germany, as a result of the excellent work carried out by the German national group.

With regard to gender, there was still a greater tendency for women to join the project in 2008 (69% women and 31% men); a subject that was mentioned in the gender study carried out in the second half of 2008.



Security and working space of international organisations

The PBI teams systematically use various tools, with clearly defined methodologies, to minimise the relative risks to the organisation itself.

In the region, the field teams carry out monthly analyses of the current situation for a deep and up-to-date understanding of the local reality. These analyses provide the basis for additional analysis, such as risk, protection and security analysis, and travel security reports, all of which are more defined analyses.

A twice yearly security analysis is carried out by the field and support teams. This tool provides information about security incidents and enables the identification of weaknesses in security policies and the improvement of their implementation. Furthermore, they provide the information necessary for the identification of a change in the level of risk or the appearance of new security risks. The PBI Colombia Project considers that these tools enable informed and responsible decisions to be made and provide mechanisms to ensure protection and security measures are adapted as appropriate.

In 2008, a Colombian employee of PBI received a telephone threat related to their work with the organisation. PBI took the appropriate measures, including expressing concern to various national authorities and the diplomatic corps and is grateful for their support. The threats have not been repeated and PBI continues to be aware of the security situation of its local and international staff.

Regarding security conditions under which PBI Colombia carries out its work, the creation of a tense working environment was noted throughout the year, especially in relation to the work carried out in the Chocó region of Urabá. There has been a general increase in the violence in the Urabá region since the beginning of 2008 (in fact since the beginning of 2007), which is reflected by the Security Councils that the Colombian government has carried out in the region in 2008, most of which are related to the unrest caused by the appearance of armed groups.

On the other hand, international NGOs that work in the Chocó region of Urabá have had accusations made against them and on occasion PBI has been named in various scenarios. For example, in the Urabá region, local radio stations have mentioned the name of PBI, generating confusion about the organisation's role. In a separate incident, pamphlets were distributed in Bogotá creating confusion about the organisation's role and accusing PBI, as well as other organisations, of having links with Colombian illegal armed groups, in every case, related to our work in Urabá. According to a report by the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, on Saturday 25 October, 'in a meeting in the municipality of Riosucio, the "Autodefensas Gaitanistas", which include members of the paramilitary groups "Aguilas Negras" Black Eagles, the "Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá", the "United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia", (AUC) and the "Elmer Cárdenas" Block, decided to run the national and international NGOs out of the Bajo Atrato region. In addition, PBI has been mentioned on websites and in press articles, once more creating confusion about our role and accusing PBI of having links with illegal armed groups in Colombia.

PBI considers that a number of these accusations have the potential to put our field volunteers at serious risk, especially those who are travelling to insecure regions on a permanent basis and the organisation has therefore adapted its protection tools (as is the case of our national and international advocacy work and communications).

To widen this context, at the same time as international NGOs have been singled out in Urabá, the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, Colombian organisation accompanied by PBI in the Chocó region of Urabá, has seen an increase in its risk, that culminated in the temporary kidnapping of one of its members in August and the assassination of one of the people they accompany in October. The day after this murder, all commercial and transport activities were paralysed across the region, including the towns along the Via del Mar in Urabá and in the port of Turbo, following the open presence of the self-named new illegal armed group 'Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Urabá'. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman issued a public statement expressing its concern: "The Human Rights Ombudsman, Vólmar Pérez Ortíz, shows his concern about the risk faced by the civil population in the Urabá region as a result of the alleged activation of paramilitary groups". PBI has a house/office in Turbo with a team of international volunteers who travel throughout the Urabá region from this base.

At every given opportunity, the PBI Colombia Project has carried out meetings, at every level, with the diplomatic corps, civil and military Colombian authorities, with the aim of counteracting these incidents related to the security or the image of our organization, clarifying our mandate and/or requesting specific support. The Colombian government, on the one hand, and the diplomatic corps on the other have expressed their support for the work of PBI and taken the requested measures.

We would like to highlight the fact that on 13 March, PBI received by email a pamphlet signed by the Black Eagles declaring those that received the email to be a military objective. PBI took the appropriate measures but focused its attention on the protection of the human rights defenders that belong to the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes and who had received similar threats. The organisation Human Rights Watch includes these events that took place in 2008 in their 2009 annual report.

With regard to the security situation of other international organisations, the European Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia, an international accompaniment organisation, has suffered various incidents this year, including a death threat against one of its international members and the deportation of three of its members, one of who was a German citizen, and two French people who were accompanying an analyst of this organisation. The Colombian government's statement accusing international aid workers of coming to the country to 'provoke violence' is of concern.

PBI is concerned about the events mentioned and continues to be very conscious of a possible deterioration in the working conditions of international NGOs in Colombia.

Institutional development and strengthening

There have been a number of noteworthy events for PBI Colombia in 2008. As part of PBI International, the Colombia Project participated in the three yearly external evaluation that was carried out within the framework of the evaluation of the global organization and the PBI's three yearly General Assembly.

The Colombia Project as part of the International Secretariat of PBI:

The ISEC carries out a quality control and coordination role, in terms of the development of strategies and policies, directed by the organisation's six-year Strategic Plan, approved in the 2005 General Assembly and reapproved in view of the progress made in the past three years. Furthermore, the ISEC monitors and develops global financial systems.

Members of PBI Colombia represent the project in various ISEC committees; finance, advocacy, fundraising, gender and diversity, and the International Council. In 2008, the important objectives have been financial management and fundraising, as well as focusing on the development on centralized advocacy reaction mechanisms in the case of emergency, the strengthening of the international profile and advocacy, and the development of the National Groups. The capacity of the International Office of PBI has been increased by the creation of two new positions, International Finance Director and Administrator. With regard to raising the international profile of PBI, coordination at a global level has improved and cooperation between the different entities has resulted in PBI being put forward for five important international prizes.

An important step forward is the increased capacity of the International Personnel Committee (IPC). The committee was redesigned according to the model of the committee itself, the IPC's mandate is to develop and implement volunteer policies and best practices via the ISEC.

Following approval last year, from the end of 2008, PBI has used an intranet system to share information between all the projects and the international structure. The intranet has a system for the exchange of files, photographs, the international contact database of all PBI entities, news articles related to the work of the Projects and the National Groups, and forums for debate.

In addition to the support of volunteers that carry out protection work in the field, a framework of minimum standards has been created in relation to mental health support and rights. This policy supplements and complements the support systems already set up by the Projects and the National Groups.

PBI General Assembly, Hamburg, Germany 16-21 November 2008

The Peace Brigades International General Assembly took place in Hamburg, Germany in November 2008. Representatives of almost all PBI entities came together on this occasion: the five projects, 10 national groups, the International Offices and individual members, with the aim of sharing information, progressing debates and making decisions about the global organisation.

As well as being a forum for the exchange of ideas and information within PBI, the Assembly is a global decision making forum for the organisation. It, therefore, has the role of defining and amending the principles, mandate, mission and vision statements and defining the strategic direction of the

organisation until the next General Assembly in 2011. The Assembly considers and makes structural and organisational changes within the organisation, which includes the amendment of internal standards, reviews and approves financial reports, evaluates the work of the projects, the International Secretariat and the PBI national groups and approves the project mandates for the following three years on the basis of evaluations presented by the project committees.

The subjects discussed in the November meeting were diverse and there was considerable debate. Important decisions were made about the current situation and the development of the organisation. Among them, we would like to mention the strategic direction for 2009-2011 in view of the progress made in the past three years, the approval of the mandates of the projects and the integration of gender and diversity in the PBI principles and statutes.

The Assembly decided to prioritise the following key points in the development of our organisation:

- To strengthen the institutional structure and identity of PBI
- To increase strategic and efficient working methods
- To increase the profile of PBI as an international, global organisation
- To develop work tools to strengthen the impact of our work
- To systematise the human resources policies

Within the framework of the global PBI evaluation, including of the International Secretariat (ISEC), the subject of organisational coherence and strengthening was discussed, with the decision being made to begin a restructuring process of this body. A major change is the dissolving of the current International Council that will be replaced by new bodies. The next steps in the implementation of this decision will be decided in the next meeting of the International Council in 2009.

The organisational objective of the development of the National Groups is a priority for PBI in order to strengthen the international structure of the organisation. In view of the results of the evaluation of the ISEC, the essential support offered by the National Groups in terms of funding was taken into account: the National Groups raise 60% of the organisation's funds and, in addition, support the recruitment and training of the volunteers, manage media contacts and carry out advocacy work. Within this framework, recommendations were made regarding the achievement of this objective, including the creation of a new joint coordination and planning position to work on the different support elements of PBI's mission with the national groups. It was considered that the coordination of joint fundraising and advocacy activities were both needed. The implementation of this decision is dependent on funding, however, in 2009, the fundraising and advocacy working groups will meet to progress their work on a global organisational level.

Within the framework of the strategic direction for the next three years, the priorities include fundraising and financial management, joint advocacy work, the human resources policy and the expansion of PBI's work to other regions of the world. With regard to the organisational objectives, an important achievement is the creation of a minimum standards policy for volunteer support.

As a result of proposals made in the previous Assembly in 2005, the proposal of changing the principles and mandate of PBI was revisited. A wider definition of non-violence was approved, that takes into account the dynamic of the philosophy and the policies of non-violence in a historical context and the resistance to the different forms of violence. Gender discrimination and other types of discrimination and socio-economic exploitation are also being included.

The ethical fundraising standards that govern the work between the projects and the national groups were approved in the General Assembly.

The Assembly has been an excellent opportunity for the members of PBI to get to know each other personally, after months of joint work based in the different countries where the entities that make up the organisation carry out their activities.

External evaluation of the Colombia Project, May-June 2008

The evaluation of the PBI Colombia Project took place in 2008 within the framework of the three yearly global evaluation of Peace Brigades International. The previous evaluations took place in 2001 and 2004. An evaluation of the Guatemala, Mexico, Nepal and Indonesia projects took place within the same framework, as well as an evaluation that reviewed and made recommendations about the organisational structure of PBI's International Secretariat (ISEC). Means of reflection about the functioning of the PBI national groups were also included in the joint evaluation⁶³.

The chosen methodology of the PBI Colombia evaluation used the reflections of the Colombia Project on the previous 2004 evaluation as a starting point, which was used as a basis for producing the terms of reference. The premise and questions included in the process included:

- Evaluation of the Colombia Project; its structure, methods and strategies
- Identification of its strengths and weaknesses and the formulation of recommendations
- Positioning of the Colombia Project evaluation within the context of the work of PBI International
- A focus for the indicators related to the activities carried out by certain areas of the Colombia Project: the regional representatives in Europe and North America and also the field teams that carry out the accompaniment work in Colombia.

A variety of participants, both in- and outside Colombia, have contributed to the analysis and were interviewed by the evaluation team: Project staff – volunteers that carry out the accompaniment work, support volunteers, salaried staff, as well as Colombian civil society organisations, particularly those accompanied, representatives of international bodies and the diplomatic corps based in Colombia, representatives of the Colombian state and of public bodies in the United States and representatives of international bodies and nongovernmental organisations based in the United States.

⁶³ The evaluations were developed by six independent external experts during the first half of 2008. The Colombia project evaluation team was made up of i) Dr Rainer Huhle, political scientist and specialist in Latin American politics and culture. He lives in Germany. He is also the author of numerous publications about human rights, politics, history and culture in Latin America and ii) Susan Nistal, lawyer and specialist in Spanish environmental law, as well as in the human rights situation in Mexico and Central America. She has worked in different German human rights organizations and, since 2000, with different PBI bodies.

There are three categories of recommendations:

Regarding the **organisational structure of the Project** that has been developed over the past 15 years, it is recommended that the project implements a process of reviewing the structure and function that corresponds to the current situation faced by the Project and the country. The creation of a committee of consultants is recommended, made up of independent advisors to strengthen a global vision for the strategic direction of the Project. It is recommended that the coordination in Colombia comprise the four current coordinators, but with differential responsibilities. Regarding external representation, it is recommended that teams of two people in Europe and North America be created with functions of representing the Project in the international structure of PBI and the National Groups, including fundraising support in these two regions.

In terms of **guidelines for the work**, it is recommended that the beneficiaries of PBI's work be diversified, that this should be accompanied by a strengthening of both the capacity of the volunteers to meet with a wide variety of actors, and the profile and awareness raising of the public face of PBI Colombia. In the development of these considerations, recommendations are made related to the historical memory within the project, work on protection analysis and accompaniment methods that could be improved within the context of the current situation in the country.

With regard to the relationship between PBI Colombia and the international structure⁶⁴, it is recommended that there be an optimum coordination of tasks, in areas such as political advocacy work, fundraising and the development of organisational structures within the Project, together with the PBI International Council and Secretariat and PBI National Groups, and that full advantage should be taken of the opportunities for direct dialogue across these groups for supporting the Project's work.

The Project has subsequently decided to create working groups to analyse the recommendations related to internal needs, with a focus on communication, historical memory, new forms of accompaniment and the structure of the Project, the working groups will produce analysis and develop proposals to be debated in the PBI Colombia Project General Assemblies in 2009.

The report of the evaluation was published in January 2009, and the English version will be available by the middle of the following month.

⁶⁴ Peace Brigades International includes the five Projects, the International Office, the International Secretariat, the International Council and 16 National Groups.

Financial Report January-December 2008

The following figures are preliminary financial statements for the year 2007, which may be subject to minor adjustments before PBI's annual auditing procedure in February 2008.

The financial operations of the project are registered in Colombian pesos and converted to US dollars according to international standards for the presentation of financial statements and the requirements of some funders. In the income and expenditure statement, when the funds are received in an account outside of Colombia, the current exchange rate for the month the funds are received in used for the dollar conversion, taken from the www.oanda.com website. When the funds are received in Colombia, they are registered in the accounts as the amount actually received and in the financial statement with the dollar value sent by the funder that is reported in the monetization document issued by the bank.

The project costs are presented in dollars, applying the exchange rate for the month of the expenditure, taken from the www.oanda.com website.

The figures in the balance sheet are shown, applying the current Exchange rate for the month of December 2008, taken from the www.oanda.com website (USD/COP = 2.300.19).

2008 EXPENDITURE

Expenditure for the year 2007 stands at 97.41%, compared with the final budget. Throughout the year, adjustments were made which increased the budget by 4.23%, from USD 1,796,378 to USD 1,872,381, following the mid-year Project Assembly, taking into account funding possibilities that became clear in the first half of the year. Spending was carried out in line with initial budget calculations for the year 2008.

When planning the 2008 budget, the financial team calculated an average projected exchange rate for the year of USD1:COP2200. However, the dollar depreciated, so that in December the exchange rate stands at USD1:COP2300.19 (according to website www.oanda.com).

At 31 December 2008, the PBI Colombia Project has a reserve of USD 68,119. This reserve is necessary to ensure adequate cash flow at the beginning of 2009.

Below we detail the most significant costs in 2008, explaining variations in budgeted costs and actual expenditure. Please note that this analysis is based on differences greater than 10%.

Budget lines showing an over spend

Maintenance Costs

By the end of 2008, there was overspend on this budget line, as it was necessary to carry out maintenance in the Urabá house, to accommodate the arrival of an additional volunteer in 2009 to the region. In addition, it was necessary to improve the general living conditions of the team, being one of the largest in the project.

Psychosocial support

This budget line shows an overspend because the project has temporarily employed an additional person to carry out workshops agreed in funding agreements with organizations that receive funding from the European Union.

Project evaluation

This budget line shows an overspend because in the month of October 2008, adjustments were made to the budget as it was thought that all the costs had already been covered, however, a final bill to be paid was received in December 2008.

PBI International Public Relations and Central Support

This budget line showed an overspend as when the modifications were made to the budget, the total costs for 2008 were underestimated.

PBI Central Administration

This budget shows an overspend as when the modifications were made to the budget, the total costs for 2008 were underestimated.

Budget lines showing an underspend

Rent

This budget line shows an underspend in 2008, as a higher value was budgeted for the rent of the house of the Barrancabermeja team, given that the owner terminated the lease on the house. However, the move only took place in January 2009.

Furniture, household items, and electrical goods

This budget line shows an underspend in 2008 because many necessary purchases for the houses where the volunteers live were made in the month of December 2007, which represents a saving for 2008.

Maintenance of computer equipment

The installation of a satellite internet service was budgeted for the team in Urabá as the region has a poor service, however, for technical reasons, it was not possible to set up this service in 2008.

Postage

Some documents that were due to be sent in December 2008 were sent in January 2009.

Repatriation

This budget line shows an underspend because some people delayed their return to their country at the end of the year, for work reasons.

Vehicle maintenance

The vehicle is two years old, therefore, the provision for maintenance was not used as it was covered by the insurance and there were no technical problems.

Rest and recuperation

This is an estimated figure that is subject to the use the volunteers make of this option, in terms of the current or the following year, depending on the contract duration of the volunteer.

Moving costs

At the end of 2008, moving costs for two buildings were budgeted, but only one of them took place.

Volunteer tours

There was on under spend on this budget line as it is an estimated costs for tours made by ex-volunteers to raise awareness of the work of PBI in Colombia.

Income and expenditure 2008

Income to December 31st 2008 was USD2,000,000, of which USD168.077 is shown in accounts receivable. The total expenditure for the budget period is USD 1,931,904.

The movement for this period generates additional income of USD 94,119, which is actually in the project's bank account the value of USD26,000 received from Diakonia Sweden, this money would be spend in 2009 as authorized received. The balance appears in accounts receivable, conditioned by the approval of reports presented to donors.

El movimiento del periodo genera un excedente de recursos por valor de USD 94,119, de los cuales está efectivamente en las cuentas del proyecto el valor de USD26,000 recibidos de Diakonia Suecia, que serán ejecutados en el año 2009 según autorización recibida. El saldo restante, esta representado en cuentas pendientes de cobro, condicionadas a la aceptación de los informes presentados a los donantes.

Depreciation costs

This corresponds to the estimated value of the loss, as a result of the use of the project's fixed assets, the most important values are related to the depreciation of the motor boat, the car and the computer and communications equipment.

Costs due to exchange rate differences

In the expenditure, the cost of exchange rate differences stands out; the value is USD 75.042, caused by the reevaluation of the dollar in this period.

The other budget lines were spent in accordance with the budget established for 2008 and those that presented variations are mentioned above.

Balance sheet for 2008

The comparative balance sheet reflects a situation of financial stability for the project in the short term. There was an increase of 15% compared with the previous year. However an increase of 12.5% represent intcome received in advance for the next year. Therefore, if this percentage is discounted, the increase is 2.5%.

It is important to note that the project apparently has reserves of USD 760,703, however, for analytical purposes, USD 392.998 should be discounted as they are funds from the government of Navarra that were spent during 2007 and 2008, pending receipt after approval of reports. This amount also includes funds not yet received from Caja de Burgos, Civil Peace Service, Weltwaerts Programme and Project Counselling Service.

In terms of liquidity, the project has a 20% reserve, compared to the 2008 budget of USD1, 872,381; equivalent to the resources necessary to cover project costs for two months.

**PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL - COLOMBIA PROJECT
BUDGET EXPENDITURE YEAR 2008**

EXCHANGE RATE USD\$/COP\$ (EXCHANGE RATE APPLIES TO CHANGE MONTHLY EXPENSES EACH MONTH)

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2008 \$USD	EXPENDITURE \$USD	AMOUNT UNSPENT	PERCENTAJE EXPENDITURE
TEAMS COST				
House Rent	56,226	48,898	7,328	86.97%
Domestic Service	25,710	24,602	1,108	95.69%
Maintance Cost	14,411	18,869	(4,458)	130.93%
Furniture	18,073	7,041	11,032	38.96%
Office and equipment maintenance	80,506	54,426	26,080	67.60%
Office Supplies	14,441	15,495	(1,054)	107.30%
Domstic service	45,904	47,000	(1,096)	102.39%
Administrador	15,769	16,500	(731)	104.64%
Administrative Asístanse	14,113	14,195	(82)	100.58%
Team Logistic	31,427	31,211	216	99.31%
Team Coordinators	25,534	24,401	1,133	95.56%
CIBO monitoring officer	16,568	17,272	(704)	104.25%
Boat Driver	19,417	19,654	(237)	101.22%
Assitant to boat driver	1,809	1,709	100	94.45%
Accountant	31,003	32,425	(1,422)	104.59%
Information análisis officer	18,547	19,451	(904)	104.87%
Computer Technician	16,269	16,500	(231)	101.42%
Psycologist	17,769	19,806	(2,037)	111.46%
Trainer	23,665	24,450	(785)	103.32%
Comunications Officer	15,769	16,500	(731)	104.64%
Fundraiser	32,230	33,244	(1,014)	103.15%
Comunications cost	65,373	65,195	178	99.73%
Postage	13,720	11,768	1,952	85.77%
Reference Material	4,738	4,802	(64)	101.35%
Photocopies	1,718	1,646	72	95.79%
Image and visibility	3,696	3,327	369	90.02%
Food	105,899	108,832	(2,933)	102.77%
Local travel	16,137	16,200	(63)	100.39%
Intercity Travel	107,398	103,177	4,221	96.07%
Intecity food and accomodation	22,942	25,381	(2,439)	110.63%
Intercity petrol	67,562	68,522	(960)	101.42%
Stipends	101,337	106,794	(5,457)	105.38%
Other costs	1,515	417	1,098	27.54%
Medical Insurance	39,197	35,777	3,420	91.28%
Bank Costs	8,615	9,341	(726)	108.42%
External audit.	14,860	21,113	(6,253)	142.08%
Visa and legal cost	23,041	22,776	265	98.85%
Return flights for volunteers	66,153	65,045	1,108	98.32%
Repatriation	38,240	33,187	5,053	86.79%

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2008 \$USD	EXPENDITURE \$USD	AMOUNT UNSPENT	PERCENTAJE EXPENDITURE
Medical Cost	230	230	0	99.92%
Car maintenance	2,000	1,385	615	69.23%
Boat maintenance	11,332	11,282	50	99.56%
Insurance	1,392	1,392	(0)	100.01%
Psychosocial support outside Colombia	1,450	1,898	(448)	130.88%
External Psychosocial Support in Colombia	9,055	11,224	(2,169)	123.95%
R&R travels	3,712	3,052	660	82.21%
Team meetings	16,899	16,290	609	96.39%
R&R allowance	19,694	21,624	(1,930)	109.80%
Project evaluation	17,000	21,633	(4,633)	127.25%
Move out Cost	38,345	29,180	9,165	76.10%
Gastos de Instalación	8,145	8,595	(450)	105.53%
External Consultant Professionals	4,600	4,563	37	99.19%
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND TRAINING & VOLUNTEERS PERMANENT TRAINING				
Trainer	26,322	26,130	192	99.27%
Food and accomodation	16,907	16,753	154	99.09%
Travel	15,220	13,880	1,340	91.20%
Material	2,985	2,971	14	99.54%
Tel/fax/e-mail	777	761	16	97.90%
Postage	104	98	6	93.91%
Human Resources Expert	9,325	10,058	(733)	107.86%
Staff Training	800	799	1	99.86%
ADVOCACY, AWARENESS RAISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS				
Washington Representative	38,701	40,891	(2,190)	105.66%
European intern	16,925	17,835	(910)	105.38%
US office maintenance	13,777	14,676	(899)	106.52%
European intern	56,062	49,101	6,961	87.58%
Publications and publicity	21,119	20,212	907	95.70%
Volunteer speaking tours	3,000	970	2,030	32.33%
Central support – PR	35,730	42,970	(7,240)	120.26%
Travel	7,705	0	7,705	0.00%
PROJECT COMMITTEE AND COORDINATION				
Project Coordinator	59,000	52,073	6,927	88.26%
PBI Central Governance Cost	35,730	42,970	(7,240)	120.26%
Committe travel	33,712	30,918	2,794	91.71%
Meetings	4,502	2,040	2,462	45.31%
Comunication	3,171	3,713	(542)	117.09%
Strategy and security officer	27,446	27,443	3	99.99%
SUPPORT COST – PROJECT OFFICE				
Administrador	33,261	30,252	3,009	90.95%
Salary administration	3,028	2,756	272	91.03%
Redundancy payments	7,014	6,981	33	99.53%
Office insurance	1,599	1,768	(169)	110.59%
Office maintenance	3,580	3,398	182	94.93%
Office equipment	4,958	4,751	207	95.83%
Postage	1,536	1,239	297	80.64%
Tel/Fax/Correos-E	4,629	4,379	250	94.60%
Referente materials	1,289	1,300	(11)	100.86%
Rent / Service	11,312	10,488	824	92.71%
TOTAL	1,872,381	1,823,868	48,513	97.41%

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL COLOMBIA PROJECT
EXPENDITURE BUDGET
De : ENE 1/2008 A : DIC 31/2008

NO.COD	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDITURE \$USD
INCOME		
1	<i>National groups donations</i>	1,056,973
2	<i>Direcy Income</i>	957,264
3	<i>Individual Donations</i>	531
4	<i>Bank Interests</i>	1,720
5	<i>Exchange rates variations</i>	1,471
6	<i>Other income</i>	8,063
TOTAL INCOME		2,026,022
EXPENDITURE		
1	<i>Team Costs</i>	1,339,294
2	<i>Volunteers recruitment, preparation and training</i>	71,450
3	<i>Advocacy, Awareness raising and public relations</i>	186,654
4	<i>Project commitee and coordination</i>	159,156
5	<i>Support cost – Project Office</i>	67,314
6	<i>Depreciation</i>	32,993
7	<i>Adjustment for variations in exchanges rates</i>	75,042
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		1,931,904
Excess / (Deficit) of income over expenditure		94,119

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**PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL COLOMBIA PROJECT
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE DETAIL BUDGET
De: ENE 1/2008 A: DIC 31/2008**

DESCRIPTION	\$USD
INCOME	
DIRECT INCOME	957,264
CHRISTIAN AID	63,863
CAFOD	37,707
OXFAM UK	11,500
DIAKONIA	138,325
CMC	116,545
TROCAIRE	36,546
PROJECT COUNSELLING SERVICE	24,022
INTERMON (UNION EUROPEA)	5,969
MISEREOR	51,386
BROEDERLIJK DELEN	23,669
MUGARIK GABE- GOVERNMENT OF NAVARRA	144,900
FONS MALLORQUI	3,930
SODEPAZ - CITY COUNCIL OF PALENCIA	3,094
REFUNDS OF CONTRACTS OF PREVIOUS YEARS	213,714
DIAKONISCHES WERK	47,218
PCN KERKINACTIE	34,875
FUNDING FOR NATIONAL GROUPS	1,056,973
PBI NORWAY - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NORWAY	230,458
PBI GERMANY - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GERMANY	131,820
PBI SWITZERLAND - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SWITZERLAND	47,215
PBI CANADA - CANADIAN AUTOWORKERS	37,759
PBI CANADA – OPSEU	5,596
PBI UK - SIGRID RAUSING TRUST	73,512
PBI CATALUÑA – CATALAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION	30,320
PBI NAVARRA – CITY COOUNCIL OF PAMPLONA	23,166
PBI EE – GOVERMENT OF CANTABRIA	36,123
PBI EE – SPANISH AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	202,896
PBI EE - CAJA DE BURGOS	19,903
PBI GERMANY - ZIVILER FRIEDENSDIENST	183,455
PBI GERMANY – WELTWAERTS	9,632
PBI UK - TINSLEY FOUNDATION	1,134
PBI USA - OVERBROOK FOUNDATION	7,500
PBI – ITALY	3,290
PBI – HOLLAND	7,352
PBI - INTERNATIONAL	1,000
PBI UK - Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation	4,843
Individual Donations	531
Bank Interest	1,720
Exchange rate variation	1,471
Other income	8,063
TOTAL INCOME	2,026,022

DESCRIPTION	\$USD
EXPENDITURE	
House Rent	48,898
Domestic Service	24,602
Maintance Cost	18,869
Furniture	7,041
Office and equipment maintenance	54,426
Office Supplies	15,495
Domstic service	47,000
Administrador	16,500
Administrative Asístanse	14,195
Team Logistic	31,211
Team Coordinators	24,401
CIBO monitoring officer	17,272
Boat Driver	19,654
Assitant to boat driver	1,709
Accountant	32,425
Information análisis officer	19,451
Computer Technician	16,500
Psychologist	19,806
Trainer	24,450
Comunications Officer	16,500
Fundraiser	33,244
Comunications cost	65,195
Postage	11,768
Reference Material	4,802
Photocopies	1,646
Image and visibility	3,327
Food	108,832
Local travel	16,200
Intercity Travel	103,177
Intecity food and accomodation	25,381
Intercity petrol	68,522
Stipends	106,794
Other costs	417
Medical Insurance	35,777
Bank Costs	9,341
External audit.	21,113
Visa and legal cost	22,776
Return flights for volunteers	65,045
Repatriation	33,187
Medical Cost	230
Car maintenance	1,385
Boat maintenance	11,282
Insurance	1,392
Psychosocial support outside Colombia	1,898
External Psychosocial Support in Colombia	11,224
R&R travels	3,052
Team meetings	16,290
R&R allowance	21,624
Project evaluation	21,633
Move out Cost	29,180

DESCRIPTION	\$USD
Gastos de Instalación	8,595
External Consultant Professionals	4,563
VOLUNTEERS RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND TRAINING & VOLUNTEERS PERMANENT TRAINING	
Trainer	26,130
Food and accomodation	16,753
Travel	13,880
Material	2,971
Tel/fax/e-mail	761
Postage	98
Human Resources Expert	10,058
Staff Training	799
ADVOCACY, AWARENESS RAISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	
Washington Representative	40,891
European intern	17,835
US office maintenance	14,676
European intern	49,101
Publications and publicity	20,212
Volunteer speaking tours	970
Central support – PR	42,970
Travel	
PROJECT COMMITTEE AND COORDINATION	
Project Coordinator	52,073
PBI Central Governance Cost	42,970
Committe travel	30,918
Meetings	2,040
Comunication	3,713
Strategy and security officer	27,443
SUPPORT COST – PROJECT OFFICE	
Administrador	30,252
Salary administration	2,756
Redundancy payments	6,981
Office insurance	1,768
Office maintenance	3,398
Office equipment	4,751
Postage	1,239
Tel/Fax/Correos-E	4,379
Referente materials	1,300
Rent / Service	10,488
Adjustment for variations in exchanges rates	75,042
Depreciation	32,993
TOTAL	1,931,904
Excess / (Deficit) of income over expenditure	94,119

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL – COLOMBIA PROJECT
BALANCE SHEET
ENE 1/2008 - DIC 31/2008

EXCHANGE RATE USD\$/COP\$

2,300.19

	SITUATION ON DECEMBER		SITUATION ON DECEMBER	
	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$
<u>Assets</u>				
Fixed		142,434		141,768
Current Assests				
<i>Grants receivable</i>	392,147		392,998	
<i>Interest bearing accounts</i>	3,514		2,131	
<i>Current accounts / Cash in Europa</i>	155,867		317,456	
<i>Current accounts / Cash in Colombia</i>	469,852		360,541	
<i>Advance payments to volunteers</i>	3,615		15,120	
<i>Other account receivable</i>	12,517		16,138	
Total Assets	1,037,512		1,104,384	
<u>Liabilities</u>				
<i>Income received in advance</i>	516,884		428,710	
<i>Accounts payable – goods and service</i>	3,157		31,958	
<i>Others accounts payable</i>	4,166		1,496	
Total Liabilities	524,206		462,164	
Net current asset		513,306		642,219
Total Asset		655,740		783,988
<u>Representado por</u>				
Excess/(Deficit) income over expenditure		215,336		94,119
Adjustments to accumulated fund balance brought forward		113,542		34,129
Accumulated fund brought forward		326,863		655,740
Total Fund Balance		655,740		783,988

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