

Peace Community Leader Assassinated in Colombia

by Angie Garling
PBI National Coordinating Committee

Luis Eduardo Guerra, a well-known leader of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community in Antioquia, Colombia, was massacred last month along with seven other people, including women and children. Luis Eduardo was one of the community leaders most admired for his total commitment to peace and human rights despite systematic death threats. PBI has accompanied him since 1998.

Eyewitnesses confirm that on February 21, Luis Eduardo Guerra and three others were detained by armed, uniformed men who identified themselves as belonging to the 11th Army Brigade. The Peace Community organized a fact-finding commission, including Peace



Luis Eduardo Guerra

PBI Photo

Brigades representatives and about 100 members of the Peace Community. At a nearby farm they discovered the bodies of Luis Eduardo Guerra and his family. This massacre joins the list of constant attacks the San José de Apartadó Peace Community has faced since it was founded in 1997, resulting in more than 130 murders for which as yet no one has been convicted.

PBI urges protection for the people of the Peace Community and the Colombian organizations supporting the community. PBI has called for a thorough investigation of these assassinations. We reiterate our commitment to Peace and join them in their grief. ■

PBI Launches Nepal Project Exploratory Mission Confirms Need for Protective Presence in Troubled Country

by Andrew Miller
PBI Nepal Project Committee

Peace Brigades International has launched a new initiative to support peace activists and human rights defenders in war-torn Nepal. The project was developed in response to aggressions by the Nepalese security forces and Maoist insurgents and requests for international peace presence by local civil society members. PBI will provide international accompaniment and presence, offer security and self-protection workshops, bring international delegations to Nepal, and organize speaking tours in the exterior.

The Situation in Nepal

Following the coup by Nepalese King Gyanendra on February 1, the situation in Nepal continues to be severe. Amnesty International reports that political leaders, students, human rights activists, journalists and trade unionists arrested in the immediate aftermath of the declaration of the state of emergency remain in detention more than two weeks later. While some leaders have been released, more are being arrested, particularly at the district level. There is strict media censorship enforced by the army and a total clamp down on political dissent. A number of leading human rights activists,

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PBI Volunteer Remembers Luis Eduardo Guerra

by Kath Nygard
PBI Colombia Volunteer

I add my tears to the fountain of water that flows over the brightly painted stones bearing the names of the victims the recent massacre of eight campesinos from the rural zone of San José de Apartadó.

In my nearly two years on the sub-team in Urabá I have unfortunately been part of many activations and multiple commissions for forced internal displacement, economic blockades and the assassination of campesinos. I have received innumerable phone calls regarding threats, armed incursions, and the assassination of people close to the communities and NGOs that PBI accompanies.

However, Luis Eduardo is the first victim that I have personally known, and the first accompanied human rights defender for whom I have had to grieve. Luis Eduardo was known nationally and internationally as a regular campesino, humble and hardworking, but also as a charismatic human rights defender and champion of the peace community he helped to form eight years ago. Not long ago I heard him speak and was taken aback by his clarity and conviction as he explained the history of the area and of the Peace Community before a human rights verification commission.

I add my voice to all those that ask for justice, to those that plead that the death of Luis Eduardo Guerra, Deiner Andres Guerra Tubequia (son of Luis Eduardo, 11 years old), Beyanira Arieza Guzman (17 years old), Nataia Andrea Tuberquia Muñoz (6 years old), Santiago Tubequia Muñoz (2 years old), Sandra Milena Muñoz, Alfonso Bolivar and Alejandro Perez Cuiles not be added to the long list of cases still in impunity.

It is in the times of silence when grief weighs heaviest on one's soul. In the first days after the massacre, our time was filled by phone calls and meetings as we began the activation. However in this moment of silence and reflection I also remember Miledis, a little

girl of three who died nearly two years ago from a gunshot wound while with her grandmother inside of their house. I remember Pedro, a historic leader of the river communities of Jiguaminando, Chocó who died from gunshot wounds two months ago. I remember Yorbelis, a young merchant from the town center of San Jose de Apartadó, whose body was found with signs of torture after she tried to bring goods to her small store six months ago. I remember. I remember more victims than can be named here.

And of course I cannot forget the human rights defenders who continue their work regardless of the loss of friends and family to the violence and regardless of continuing threats and fear.

Although this year I will not be present in the celebration of the eighth anniversary of the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartadó, I will be with them in spirit as eight new stones are added to the monument in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the development of a community of peace. I will take a moment of silence. I will grieve. ■

PBI/USA's Official Policy on U.S. Government Funding

PBI/USA does not accept any U.S. government funds, including fees from U.S. government agencies to conduct training workshops. In addition, PBI/USA does not accept fees or grants from secondary sources which receive their funding from the U.S. government, such as Freedom House, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), government contractors, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), etc.

For those civil society organizations requesting PBI/USA's workshop and training services with underwriting from the U.S. government, we offer the following exemptions:

1. Workshop expenses, such as travel costs for PBI trainers, should be paid directly by the NGO to the airline, hotel, etc.
2. PBI/USA will not sign any agreement which restricts the content of the workshops or training programs.
3. PBI/USA will not be required to identify the workshop as a U.S. government sponsored event.
4. PBI staff time will not be reimbursed by the U.S. government. ■

PBI Returns to Aceh

The Indonesia Project returned to Aceh in January at the request of local NGOs to provide a protective presence for local groups who are under threat. PBI is augmenting our unique security and safety presence with an assessment by a short-term trauma counseling team also fluent in Indonesian.

PBI feels there is justified concern that, at this time, civil society organizations are at an increased threat, where disappearances could more easily occur under the guise of 'missing from the tsunami.' The Indonesian government has not lifted the current civil emergency, newspapers run stories about the ongoing operation and fighting, and we continue to receive unconfirmed reports about the military continuing operations against the insurgent Free Aceh Movement.

PBI is deeply concerned that Aceh continues to be a war zone. Specifically, we are concerned that the belligerent parties may try to take advantage of the current situation, and hamper the distribution of aid. According to information posted on the homepage of the Military's Operational Command in Aceh, half the troops deployed in the province have been transferred to the "Operation Humanity in the Province of Aceh", while "Operation Restoring Security" continues with the objective of crushing the Free Aceh Movement. We are receiving unconfirmed reports that some humanitarian aid workers are being delayed, i.e.: being



PBI Photo Archive

Ulee Lheue, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

stopped by Indonesian military officials to have their identity checked, and citizens bringing trucks to gather aid to take and distribute are being turned away because 'they don't have the right papers.' The field team will be based in Banda Aceh or Lhoksuemawe.

PBI is contracting with former as well as current volunteers with experience in Aceh. PBI has also deployed project members with experience and knowledge in trauma counseling and emotional healing processes to help determine how PBI might contribute to the process of dealing with the emotional wounds of the conflict compounded by the disaster. ■

PBI Mexico Client Released from Prison

By Liam Mahony

PBI/USA International Committee Representative

On March 1, 2005 as a result of legal actions taken by his defense, political prisoner Alejandro Cerezo was released from prison by court order. Alejandro's two brothers Hector and Antonio, and indigenous activist Pablo Alvarado Flores remain in prison. All four men were arrested in late 2001 and accused of terrorist attacks against Mexican banks. PBI has been accompanying members of the "Cerezo Committee" including their other siblings, in their struggle for justice for over three years. Members of the committee received a series of threats during the last year.

The Cerezo brothers told PBI they feel they are primarily being persecuted because of a long history of political action by their parents. When a Mexican newspaper reporter asked what Cerezo would do upon his release, he replied, "get my brothers Hector and Antonio out! Popular pressure and solidarity mobilization were the key to my liberation, and the work of the Cerezo Committee. Now we're going to launch a new denunciation before the Interamerican Human Rights Court. In Mexico we have no other alternatives; we have to turn to international forums." ■

PBI Field

Mexico Project: PBI currently deploys volunteers in Chilpancingo, the capital of the southern Mexican state of Guerrero, where PBI is the only international organization with a permanent physical presence. This past year, PBI greatly increased our immediate protection of 50 human rights workers in Mexico and our dialogue with Mexican authorities and other international institutions. This progress has notably improved awareness and recognition of our work; a vital factor in protecting the people and organizations we accompany.

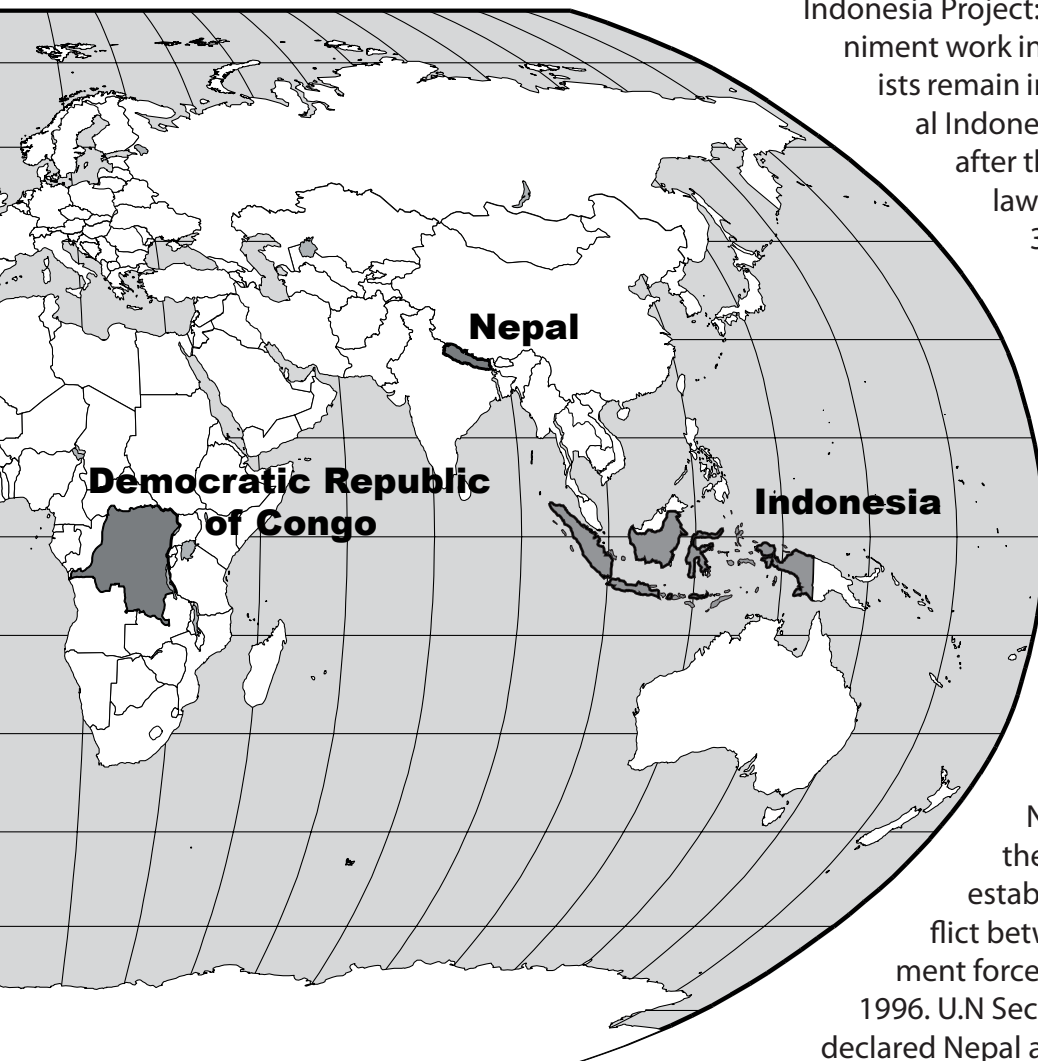
Guatemala Project: PBI re-established our peace teams in Guatemala in 2002-2003 and re-activated an international support network to provide help in a country with one of the highest rates of violent deaths in Latin America. A team of seven PBI volunteers accompany the following types of Guatemalan organizations and individuals:

- 1) Witnesses, lawyers and human rights investigators in high profile human rights trials;
- 2) advocacy groups which document allegations of human rights violations, publish the information, and lobby on behalf of victims;
- 3) family members of human rights victims who provide mutual support networks and denounce on-going human right violations;
- 4) a community of returned refugees who receive death threats;
- 5) civil society organizations which monitor elections;
- 6) members of peasant organizations involved in land claims;
- 7) the family of a human rights activist who was assassinated during 2002;
- 8) a community of displaced people involved in legal prosecution of the perpetrators of a massacre;
- 9) members of a teacher's union involved in a strike.

Colombia Project: PBI deploys sub-teams in four areas of Colombia: Urabá, Magdalena Medio, Medellín and Bogotá. The refugees and internally displaced communities we protect in Colombia, such as the pacifist community of San Jose de Apartado (see related stories on pages 1 and 2), have declared themselves neutral in the Colombian civil war. In the summer of 2004, the Colombian President declared in a national address that he will arrest, imprison and deport our teams if PBI obstructs his security forces from entering San Jose de Apartado and other refugee camps. Our grassroots emergency response networks here in the U.S. and Europe appealed to our elected officials. President Uribe received a letter from 53 United States Congressional representatives requesting that he withdraw his statements and instead declare his support for our human rights observation teams and other humanitarian groups operating in Northern Colombia.



Project Updates



Indonesia Project: PBI teams continue their accompaniment work in Indonesia where human rights activists remain in danger. Peace Brigades International Indonesia Project has re-deployed into Aceh after the Indonesia military declared martial law in May 2003 (see related story page 3). PBI offices are now operating in Banda Aceh, Greater Aceh District and Lhokseumawe, North Aceh. PBI established an Aceh Tsunami Relief Fund for the victims and survivors of the earthquakes and tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia. Please consider making a grant to support PBI's efforts to send in security teams and a trauma counseling team to support survivors of the tsunami. PBI also has teams in the capital city of Jakarta and Jayapura, Papua.

Nepal Project: In February of 2005, the International Council of PBI formally established a Project in Nepal, where a conflict between Maoist insurgents and government forces has claimed over 10,000 lives since 1996. U.N Secretary General Kofi Annan recently declared Nepal as "one of the top four worst human rights situations in the world." At the request of

local activists, PBI sent exploratory missions to Nepal in August through October 2004 and in January 2005. The missions concluded that PBI's methods could be effective in protecting the lives of local human rights defenders. Since early February, the situation has deteriorated drastically, with the king establishing martial law. In collaboration with PBI Country Groups and the International Secretariat in London, an eight person Project Steering Committee is working to build the support necessary to field permanent peace teams. At the moment we are planning to send an advance team in April to offer security trainings to human rights defenders and lay the groundwork for a long-term presence. (See related story on page 1)

Central Africa: Between 3 and 4 million people have been killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1998. PBI has conducted security and protection workshops for human rights organizations in the Great Lakes region and is continuing to explore additional work in the area.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a civil society organization that protects human rights and promotes nonviolent transformation of conflicts. When invited, we send teams of volunteers into areas of repression and conflict. Volunteers accompany human rights defenders, their organizations and others threatened by political violence. Perpetrators of human rights abuses usually do not want the world to witness their actions. The presence of volunteers backed by a support network helps to deter violence. We create space for local activists to work for social justice and human rights.

Nepal

Continued from page 1

journalists and trade union leaders are in hiding or have fled the country.

Volunteer Opportunities

PBI is seeking qualified individuals to serve in a number of posts for the Nepal Project. Basic qualifications include excellent spoken and written English skills, regular access to internet communications, and the ability to commit the designated amount of time.

Project Committee: This Committee is responsible for the overall health and strategic direction of the Nepal Project. Committee members will need significant PBI experience, significant Nepal experience, and/or previous participation on a Nepal Project Sub-Committee. **Time commitment:** 15-20 hours for six months, to be extended as the Project grows.

Thematic Sub-Committees: At the founding of the Project, there are three thematic Sub-Committees: Fundraising and Finance, Advocacy and Education, and Human Resources and Training. Each Sub-Committee will include at least one Project Committee member and other participants. **Requirements:** expertise or a strong interest in the Sub-Committee's area of work and the ability to devote the adequate time. **Time commitment:** roughly 10 hours per week, for six months, possibly to be extended in the future.



Map of Nepal

Country Group Liaison: Country Group liaisons will work closely with the Project Committee. Requirements are an interest in Nepal and close relationship with the Country Group in question. Responsibilities: receiving information from the Nepal Project, distributing that information to their constituency, soliciting feedback from the constituency, and communicating that feedback to the Project, fundraising; advocacy and Emergency Response Network activations; international education activities such as speaking tours and encouragement card actions; and volunteer outreach and recruitment.

To Apply

Please e-mail the following to Andrew Miller at andrew@peacebrigades.org:

- 1) A cover letter indicating which position you are applying for, why you are interested in the position, what skills and experiences you would bring to the position, and an affirmation that you would be able to comply with the minimum term and time commitment;
- 2) A curriculum vitae; and
- 3) Names and contact information of three references, ideally at least one within PBI. ■

Recent PBI Accolades

Peace Brigades continues to receive public recognition and accolades. In 2004 PBI was re-nominated for the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize. We were selected out of a large pool of non-profits to be featured in the Washington, DC version of the Catalogue of Philanthropy. PBI's accompaniment methodology was one of the promising human rights tools featured in the "New Tactics in Human Rights" project. The publication, written by PBI's Liam Mahony, is available from the PBI/USA office and clearly makes the case for PBI's approach to protective accompaniment.

Michael Joseph Joins PBI/USA as Co-Director

by Gina Amatangelo
PBI National Coordinating Committee

In January Michael Joseph joined the PBI-USA staff as Co-Director of Peace Brigades International/USA. Michael is working alongside Co-director Barbara Wien and will focus on individual donor development, publicity and outreach, field volunteer recruitment and support, and strengthening PBI's political response capacity. We hope that you'll join us in welcoming Michael to our team. We are thrilled to have such a skilled and committed individual lead our organization.

Michael brings extensive international experience to PBI, having lived in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Nicaragua for a total of 14 years. From 1997 to 2001, Michael served on the International Team of Witness for Peace.

During his tenure with Witness for Peace, Michael lived and worked in Nicaragua, Cuba and Colombia. In Colombia, Michael worked with PBI's Colombia Project volunteers. Michael commented, "I had been a member of the PBI Emergency Response Network during college, but it was during my work in Colombia that I came to truly understand and admire the work of PBI."

Originally from Cleveland, TN, Michael grew up in Belo Horizonte, Brazil as a child of Southern



Photo by Shonnie Ball

Michael Joseph, new Co-Director of PBI/USA.

Baptist missionaries. After high school in Brazil, Michael earned his BA in Latin American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His studies, focused on US intervention in Latin America, led Michael to join the movement to close the School of the Americas. This work cemented Michael's desire to work for peace and justice, and lead him to international accompaniment work.

In May of 2004 Michael obtained a MA in Theology, with a focus in Ethics from Union Theological Seminary, in New York City. Michael was awarded the 2004 Anne M. Bennett and John C. Bennett Fellowship "for promise of excellence in a ministry of social service and advocacy for justice in the public arena."

In July of 2004 Michael was ordained a Baptist minister by Metro



ABOVE: Michael giving an interview to Atlanta Indy-media during the November 2004 Vigil at the School of the Americas/WHINSEC. (Photo by Jesse Loper.)

Michael at a meeting with ASFADDES: the Association of the Families of the Disappeared (a PBI client organization) in Popayan, Colombia while working with Witness for Peace.

Baptist Church, in Hell's Kitchen, New York City. Michael worked with inner-city youth at Metro Baptist Church and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries from April to December of 2004. Michael is now a Board member of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries.

Michael states, "I am excited to continue my ministry of peace and justice by working for PBI. I believe that, now more than ever, prophetic movements for peace and justice are what our world needs. I've seen firsthand the effectiveness of what we have to offer at PBI, and I'm honored to be a part of the work. I am grateful that my spiritual and professional journeys have led me to PBI and I'm eager to share in the next years of Peace Brigades work." ■



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PBI Photo

Protestors carry a banner requesting the release of Cerezo at a march of the Cerezo Committee in the Federal District.

As a result of legal actions taken by his defense, political prisoner and PBI Mexico client Alejandro Cerezo was released from prison by court order on March 1, 2005. Read full story on page 3.

PBI/USA's Newsletter is Going Electronic!

In order to expedite delivery of PBI/USA's newsletter, we will be utilizing the Internet for distribution of future issues. Please refer to the insert page for information on how you can sign up for this new delivery option.

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Proving the Power and Possibility of Nonviolence

Dear Friends of PBI,

This is my concluding year on the National Coordinating Committee for PBI/USA. Already, I'm considering ways I might serve in some other capacity in the future. I've found ways to be part of the network for more than 20 years now, and I hope I'll be able to contribute something for another twenty.

No other organization I know has the same spirit among its volunteers. Projects and people come and go, and volunteers change roles and tasks, in a cooperative and fluid way. No one owns or directs the PBI constituency, rather, the constituency guides the organization. PBI is a truly "living organism," and not an institutional NGO.

Another unique characteristic of PBI is its commitment to consensus decision making. I watched the General Assembly with representatives from 60 world-wide constituencies work through very contentious issues and come to consensus. Some conflicts took days of hard work to negotiate. PBI recognizes that "how" one gets to the goal is as critical as getting to the goal. PBI's practice of "means and ends" is rare and admirable.

In a time when Foundation giving is down, individual contributors like you make the difference. I'm sending an extra donation to PBI today. Please join me. If you are able to contribute to PBI at a \$100 level, it would provide immunizations for a PBI volunteer on our field team in Indonesia; perhaps the team recently returned to Aceh. Or maybe you want to help support our new project in Nepal.

Please understand that any contribution is appreciated. Your aid supports a unique effort that is proving the power and possibility of nonviolence.



Carl Kline, PBI-USA Coordinating Committee



PBI depends on supporters like you! Join PBI's peacemaking effort with a tax-deductible donation of:

- \$35 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other

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You can also make a donation online using our web site: www.peacebrigades.org/usa

*See the back of this page to receive this newsletter electronically!

Interested in working with Peace Brigades International as a human rights observer? All of our current projects are accepting applications for upcoming trainings this year. PBI field volunteers must be 25 years old, be able to commit for one year, have the appropriate language skills, and be willing to operate under PBI's basic principles. If you are interested, please contact Michael Joseph at michael@pbiusa.org.

PBI/USA to Meet in San Francisco Bay Area in May

The National Coordinating Committee for PBI/USA will hold its spring meeting in Berkeley, California on May 20-23, 2005. Our valued PBI supporters and prospective volunteers will be invited to attend a reception and fundraiser (with special entertainment!).

For more details please call the PBI/USA office or email Co-Director Barbara Wien at barbara@pbiusa.org.



PBI/USA's Newsletter is Going Electronic!

In order to broaden the delivery of PBI/USA's newsletter, we will be sending future issues of the newsletter via the Internet. Please check your preferences below:

Electronic option: Yes! Sign me up for the electronic newsletter. I prefer to receive future newsletters via email. (You may also email Michael Joseph at michael@pbiusa.org to sign up for this option.)

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