

pb REPORT

Peace Brigades International - Project Colombia
Narrative and Financial Report 2008



Summary

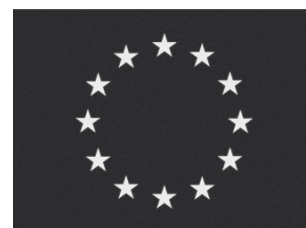
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Cover photo: Swiss volunteer Theresia Eigenmann with Sandra from CIJP and Alexis Mosquera from CAVIDA on the Perancho river (Cacarica).

Coordination and monitoring of strategies

International advocacy was strengthened

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. 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 Grassroots Women's Organization (OFP), the Regional

Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS), the Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (ACVC), and the Association of Displaced People of the Municipality of Barrancabermeja (ASODESAMUBA), that were accused of «supporting the guerrilla» 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.
- 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.



Displaced persons in the Chocó region of Colombia. Neither the government, nor the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has been able to ensure that the oil palm companies return land to their rightful owners in Curbaradó. The owners live under constant threat and two of their leaders have been assassinated.

- Working 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.
- In October 2008, the visit to Colombia of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

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. ●

Human rights defenders denounce extrajudicial executions

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 existence of conflict also generates and worsens the existence of other related phenomena such as internal displacement. According to Human Rights Watch, Colombia suffers the worst internal displacement crisis after Sudan, while the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) 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 2007.¹ 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 increase².

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.

PBI feels it is necessary to draw attention to facts which show that the human rights situation continues to be a cause of great concern for our organisation. 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 demobilisation process

The demobilisation process continues to unfold under Law 975. According to Human Rights Watch³ one of the difficulties is that of the 3.431 people who have applied to receive the benefits established under the Law, the majority of those interviewed said that they wanted to withdraw from 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

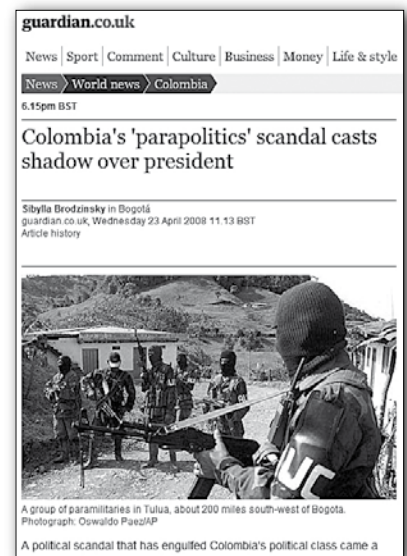
crimes in complete impunity.» In a number of cases, «youths with no criminal history took the place of the real criminals». Many demobilised paramilitaries say they have not committed crimes against humanity, like 'Ernesto Báez', who declared «that he had not committed any crimes apart from bribing a policeman and using a false identity»⁴. 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. 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.⁵

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 975.⁶ 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»⁷.

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. The Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the Organization of American States Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA) 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.⁸ 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.⁹ In April 2008, Salvatore Mancuso himself admitted

during an interview with Terra virtual magazine that «many former paramilitary groups» had rearmed.¹⁰ For Amnesty International,¹¹ 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. These organisations continue to use threats and real violence 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.»



'Parapolitics' continues to be an issue of concern.

'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».¹² Eleven of these politicians were subsequently elected to the Congress ►►

Political Context

► and Senate. Other pacts and agreements between politicians, businessmen and paramilitaries continued to come to light, as reported by the New Rainbow Corporation¹³.

Human Rights Watch expressed in both its special report on Colombia¹⁴ and its 2009 annual report¹⁵ a number of concerns related to these investigations.



Political violence against women

According to the Eighth Report from the Working Group Women and Armed Conflict¹⁶ «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.

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 police¹⁷.

Throughout 2008, NGOs working for the defence of human rights have continued to report cases of extrajudicial executions in the regions of Antioquia, Bolívar, Arauca, Boyacá and Casanare.

NGOs who make up the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group¹⁸

Civil society focuses on the issue of extrajudicial killings.

released a report, which shows a significant increase in this practice. The greatest number of reported cases was in the period from January 2007 to June 2008: 535 people were assassinated in this way, that is, one person every day.

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.¹⁹ This pressure continued when, in June 2008, a new threat was sent to a various organisations, including OFP, CREDHOS and ACVC, which accuses them of «assisting the guerrilla» and declares them «military objectives».²⁰ 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.²¹ The following day, a number of associations from Barrancabermeja, received a threatening e-mail signed by the Gaitanista Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC), referring to 'Panadero' as their commander.²²

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.

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 Community²³ (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 Community²⁴. In October, the community organised a pilgrimage to remember «the over 180 murders of members of the community, more than 90% of which have been carried out by the State»²⁵. In November, one leader from the community was threatened in broad daylight in the city of Apartadó by two men carrying a firearm²⁶.

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 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 to the new humanitarian zone of Caño Manso. Moreover, they are witnesses in the case of the murder of Orlando Valencia in 2005, who was leader of the Curbaradó community council. 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 in the Caño Manso community²⁷.

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 2008²⁸. They received simultaneous threatening ►►

► calls both in the field and in their offices in Bogotá²⁹. The situation worsened until 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 area³⁰. 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.

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.

During 2007, 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 year³¹. 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.³²

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 the Association

for Alternative Social Promotion (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 country³³.



Mass for Ualberto Hoyos assassinated in October 2008 in the Curbaradó river basin in the Chocó region.

At the end of April 2008, the Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP) received a threat dated 21 April and signed by the 'Black Eagles – rearmed'. It is not, however, the first time an other threat signed by the 'New Generation Black Eagles', declared 17 people military targets 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 now³⁴.

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

1 «Tapando el sol con las manos – Informe sobre desplazamiento forzado, conflicto armado y derechos humanos, enero – junio 2008», CODHES, 25 September 2008

2 [http://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)

3 «Breaking the control? – Obstacles to justice in the investigations into the paramilitary mafia in Colombia», Human Rights Watch, October 2008

4 «Justicia y Paz por dentro», Semana, n°1318, 4 de agosto de 2007

5 El Tiempo, June 2007, El Colombiano, June 2007

6 El Colombiano, June 2007

7 «A bienes ofrecidos por 'paras' les surgen dueños, El Tiempo, 9 November 2008, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-3179255>

8 El Espectador, 28 January - 3 February 2007

9 OEA/Ser.GP/Doc 4249/07, 31 October 2007

10 «Mancuso reconoce el rearme paramilitar», El Espectador, 5 April 2008

11 «Leave us alone!», Amnesty International, October 2008

12 Semana, January 2007

13 «Balance político de la parapolítica», New Rainbow Corporation, November 2008

14 «Breaking the control? – Obstacles to justice in the

investigations into the paramilitary mafia in Colombia», Human Rights Watch, October 2008

15 «World Report 2009», Human Rights Watch, January 2009

16 «VIII Informe sobre violencia sociopolítica contra mujeres, jóvenes y niñas en Colombia», Working Group Women and Armed Conflict, December 2008

17 2008 Annual Report Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

18 Observando newsletter no. 6, Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Groups, 16-31 October 2008

19 «Acción Urgente – Peligra la vida de Defensor de Derechos Humanos David Ravelo Crespo», CREDHOS, 14 February 2008

20 «Urgent Action, Communiqué from the Barrancabermeja, Magdalena Medio Human Rights Workers», Coordination Group, 20 June 2008

21 «Alias 'El Panadero' señala a ex Congresista en un crimen», Vanguardia Liberal, 5 November 2008

22 «CREDHOS denuncia correos amenazantes», Vanguardia Liberal, 9 November 2008

23 «Paramilitares asesinan a Diario», «Amenazas de los paramilitares» «Los Paramilitares Asesinan a Francisco», Public Communiqués from the San José de Apartado Peace Community, 13 and 14 July 2007 and 14 May 2007

24 Public communiqué: «Los Paramilitares están en nuestras fincas», San José de Apartado Peace Community, 30

September 2008

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

26 «Atentan contra el representante legal de nuestra comunidad», San José de Apartado Peace Community, 1 November 2008

27 «Urgent Call – Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders», OMCT/FIDH, 21 October 2008

28 For further details, see the organization's website, <http://www.justiciaypazencolombia.org/>

29 Report no. 93: «Urgent Action - Amenazado equipo de Justicia y Paz en Curvaradó», Inter Church Justice and Peace Commission, 24 August 2008

30 Report: «Por amenazas e intimidación salen de Curvaradó dos defensores de derechos humanos de Justicia y Paz», Inter Church Justice and Peace Commission, 30 August 2008

31 «Señalamientos y hostigamientos contra Iván Cepeda Castro», José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective, 14 May, 2007

32 Colombia's Human Rights Defenders in Danger, Human Rights First, Septiembre 2007, p6.

33 «Concern over threats and murders carried out against Human Rights Defenders», UNHCHR, 13 March 2008

34 Public communiqué: «Nueva ola de persecución a defensores de derechos humanos», FCSP, 6 January 2006.

Notable accompaniment

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



The Bajo Naya region – new territory for PBI.

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».¹

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. ●



Isabelino Valencia (centre) legal representative of the Naya river Community Council and Enrique Chimonja (right) of CIJP leave the region after receiving death threats.

¹ Report 31, Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, 19 March 2008

Accompaniment and presence of international observers in the field

◆ Bogotá

Social Corporation for Community Advisory and Training Services (COS-PACC)

Since November 2007, PBI has been in the process of exploring the possibilities of accompaniment with 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.



Italian volunteer Francesca Nugnes accompanies Reinaldo Villalba of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective.

The José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' 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.

In May, one of their lawyers travelled to the Guarjira department to investigate various cases: massacres and displacement of Wayuu and Wiwa indigenous communities and the population affected by the exploitation of the Cerrejón mine. 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.

In July, PBI accompanied CCAJAR to Trujillo, Valle del Cauca department, 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.

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 Luis 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.

Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSPP)

On several occasions, PBI accompanied the FCSPP whilst they gathered information regarding legal cases against the 16th Brigade of the Colombian Army, based in Yopal, in the department of Casanare. The FCSPP 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.

In February, COS-PACC and FCSPP were accompanied for four days to El Yopal, Sácamá, Aguazul and La Salina, municipalities in Casanare. The two accompanied organisations met with the 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.

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. 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 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. ►►

Summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments for 2008:

	ASFADDES	Manuel Cepeda Foundation	MINGA	CIJP	FCSPP (and COS-PACC)	CCAJAR	Others
Office visits	107	-	2	26	97	119	18
Accompaniments (1/2 days)	38	80	16	46	146	252	56
Meetings	9	19	22	57	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.

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► 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 temporarily during and following the March 6th demonstration, as a result of an increase in petitions and following the statements made by Colombian government officials that discredited the work of the Iván Cepeda and his role as the spokesperson for the National Movement for Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE). As a result, 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 Bolívar 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 Córdoba region, to visit the displaced population there and to visit Córdoba 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 paramilitary¹. 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.

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.

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.

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 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 Bogotá 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



Dutch volunteer Catiane Vander Kelen accompanying Gloria Gómez of ASFADDES in Popayan.

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

¹ <http://www.elspectador.com/opinion/columnistasdelimpreso/ivan-cepeda-castro/columna-prueba-monteria>

◆ Barrancabermeja / Magdalena Medio

During 2008, the PBI team in Barrancabermeja continued to accompany the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights, the Grassroots Women's Organisation, and the Luis Carlos Pérez Lawyers' Collective. 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, and consolidate an accompaniment agreement with them. Due to a number of security incidents suffered by ASODESAMUBA and the Regional Association of Victims of the Magdalena Medio (ASORVIM) 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 region. 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 charges of rebellion. Moreover, CREDHOS received several death threats in letter form, some of which also included threats against other organisations such as the OFP, 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 OFP.

Grassroots Women's Organisation (OFP)

PBI Colombia continues its weekly visits to the workplaces of the OFP in Bucaramanga, and also maintains its weekly visits to the work places of the OFP in Barrancabermeja (community kitchens, offices and homes of the members of the board). These visits raise awareness of the international support of the OFP, which has a dissuasive effect, preventing possible attacks against the organisation.



The OFP participated in the indigenous mobilisation (MINGA) in October 2008. The organisation was accompanied here by German volunteer Melanie Breiter.

The OFP coordinators continue to receive direct threats (emails, pamphlets, phone calls), and in response 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 OFP Director, Yolanda Becerra, to the I General Assembly of Indigenous Women in the Indigenous Zenu territory of Algodoncillo, Sucre, a region that the OFP had not visited for three years. In October, PBI also accompanied the OFP in their trip to Popayán for women's meetings, as part of the Coalition of Social Movements and Organisations in Colombia (COMOSOC), who accompanied the Regional Indigenous Council in Cauca (CRIC) 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 ►►

Summary of the office visits, meetings and accompaniments for 2008:

	CREDHOS	OFP	CALCP	ACVC	Other accompaniments
Office visits	194	397	30	65	-
Accompaniments	42	42	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.

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Italian volunteer Barbara Gala and United States volunteer Amanda Hooker together with a lawyer from CALCP in the Guamacó region.

▶▶ 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 the Motilón Bari Community Association (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, CALCP 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 Bari People, and during training workshops with small farmers and indigenous people. Given the organisation's important work with vulnerable people in the region, and also given their profile, PBI considers it important to continue accompanying the organisation.

Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (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 fulfilment 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.



The Cimitarra river valley, a priority zone for the ACVC and CREDHOS, accompanied here by Javier Pérez from Spain.

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, FCSPP, Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), Manuel Cepeda Foundation, Popular Training Institute (IPC) and ASFADDES. ●

◆ Medellín

Corporation Judicial Freedom (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



Andrea Zaengle from Germany in one of the regular visits to the CJL offices in Medellín.

Visitas a las oficinas, reuniones y acompañamientos realizados en el año 2008:

	IPC	ASFADDES	CJL	FCSP	Others: CODEHSEL / ACA / CIJP / ASOPROA
Office visits	53	60	70	61	61
Accompaniments (1/2 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 the two NGO coordination groups in the city: CODEHSEL, as well as the ASOPROA and the ACA, on an occasional basis and upon request.

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 CJL¹ and the Small Farmer's Association of Antioquia (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)². 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.

Popular Training Institute (IPC)

In 2008, the level of visits to the offices of the 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 Medellín.

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 and 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

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►► 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 FCSPP and CJL.



Commemoration of Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve, two members of ASFADDES, detained and disappeared in 2000.

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.



PBI international observation: German volunteer, Peter Biermann in the Social Forum march in October 2008.

In July, PBI 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 the Seeds of Liberty Human Rights Collective (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.

PBI Colombia has been in an exploration process with the ACA. This process will be evaluated in the Project's Assembly in June 2009.

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 region, 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»³ (see section on «notable accompaniment in 2008»). ●

¹ See article in newsletter ColomPBIa, No 9, PBI, November 2008

² «Denuncia Pública», Corporación Jurídica Libertad, 2 April 2008 and 19 September 2008

³ Informe 31, Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, 19 March 2008

◆ Urabá

Visitas, reuniones y acompañamientos realizados en el año 2008

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

San José de Apartadó 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 Tuberquia, legal representative of the San José de Apartadó 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.¹

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 region² and some weeks after the Peace Community had reported that «more than 100 paramilitaries arrived at La Unión hamlet».³ Before this, on September 2 and 31, there was fighting between the insurgents and alleged paramilitaries near La Esperanza hamlet.⁴ Give 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

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 the OAS Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OEA).

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



Spanish volunteer, Jaime Martinez during one of the frequent and necessary visits to the San Jose de Apartado Peace Community, because of constant harassment and threats.

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

This year, the Urabá team has maintained the planned level of accompaniment of CAVIDA and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission. 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.

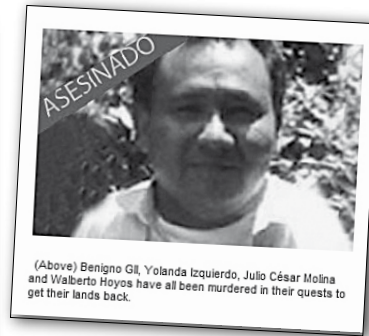
This fertile region, known as the Bajo Atrato, continues to be of interest to logging and banana export companies, placing the communities under extreme economic and political pressure and that, at the same time, threatening their food security and land rights. As a result of this situation, the communities fear for their lives and their right to self-determination.⁵



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Even national news magazines like Semana report on the worrying situation faced by victims and social leaders that are in the process of reclaiming their lands.



(Above) Benigno Gil, Yolanda Izquierdo, Julio César Molina and Walberto Hoyos have all been murdered in their quests to get their lands back.

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

▶▶ 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 Virgina, 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.

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.⁶ 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.⁷

Curbaradó and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission

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



Sara Ballardini and Sister Cecilia Naranjo of CIJP visiting the humanitarian zones in Curbaradó.

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. ●



The PBI vehicle facilitates the movement of the PBI volunteers throughout the Uraba region.

1 Press release: «Attack against the legal representative of our community», San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 1 November 2008; «Focus», PBI Colombia, November 2008
 2 Ibid
 3 Press release: «Los Paramilitares están en nuestras fincas», San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 30 September 2008
 4 Press release: «Combates colocan en riesgo a nuestra comunidad», San José de Apartadó Peace Community, 3 September 2008
 5 «TPP Colombia: final sentence in the biodiversity hearing», Peoples' Permanent Tribunal (TPP), March 2007
 6 «Intercepción telefónica compromete a General (r) Rigo Alejo del Río», Noticias Uno, 5 November 2008
 7 «Medida de aseguramiento contra general Río Alejo del Río», Semana, 12 September 2006

Raising awareness of human rights defenders' work

Reuniones realizadas en estrecha coordinación con el CIBO (Comité Inter-equipos en Bogotá) en el año 2008.

	Gobiernos y organismos de control colombianos	Fuerza pública	Cuerpo diplomático, Naciones Unidas, OEA y la Unión Europea	ONGs, Iglesia, agencias internacionales y espacios de coordinación
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 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.

Good and transparent contact

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.

Public accusations

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 March¹, we carried out various activities nationally and internationally to contribute to ending these dangerous accusations.



Jose Obdulio Gaviria insists that the FARC organised the March 6th demonstration march.

International support

These concerns were echoed, through our US representative's work, 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 UNHCHR², the European Union³ and the G24⁴, 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



Foto: CUI

The demonstration march on March 6th 2008 was organised as a national homage to victims of State violence in Colombia.

Advocacy



▶ Human rights organisations participate in the direct transmission of the Universal Periodic Review in Bogota.

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»⁵, 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.

High-level visits

In the context of these threats against CIJP and in response to the interest of the embassies, the coordination team 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, 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 raise awareness with accompanied organisations of the international support of various European countries.

The combination of these activities, 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 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, 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, Navanethen 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 Universal Periodic Review

The activities related to the UPR were articulated by the team coordinators, 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.



Signing of a letter of intent between ACNUR and PBI Colombia in December 2008.

Working with UNHCR

Finally, driven by the team coordinators, a letter of intent was signed between the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (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. ●

1 «Gobierno no participará en marcha contra paramilitares del 6 de marzo», Noticias RCN, 11 de febrero de 2008
 2 «Preocupación por amenazas y asesinatos contra defensores de derechos humanos», Bogotá, 13 de marzo de 2008
 3 Declaración de la presidencia, a nombre de la Unión Europea, sobre la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en Colombia, 22 de abril de 2008
 4 «Comunicado seminario de víctimas y construcción de paz desde la perspectiva regional», Centro de Convenciones Quirama, 27 y 28 de marzo de 2008
 5 Directiva Presidencial 07 de 1999

Political advocacy at the regional, national and international level

United Nations

In 2008, PBI began to notice the consequences of the reform of the former UN Human Rights Commission, which has now become the UN Human Rights Council. The PBI European Representative made three trips to Geneva, to participate in the Human Rights Council Sessions. The Universal Periodic Review, 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.

European Union

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». Many of the groups 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.

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.

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, the International Office for Human Rights – Action on Colombia (OIDHACO), Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights

(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.

In November, the subsequent French Presidency of the European Union 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, World Organization against Torture (OMCT), FIDH and Frontline.

Speaking tours in Europe organised by PBI Colombia

In Brussels, throughout 2008, we have welcomed representatives from the Corporation for Legal Freedom, the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, the Luis Carlos Perez Lawyers' Collective and the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners. 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.

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 travelled 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. 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



The European Parliament – important reference point for human rights advocacy work.

PBI Colombia in the recently-established international advocacy committee in PBI International. 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.

Visits

Various ex-PBI volunteers have presented the work of the Colombia Project, when they have returned to their home countries. We would like to highlight the event organized in Trento, Italy, by Roberto Paolazzi, a volunteer in the Barancabermeja team for two years. Various organizations that work for Colombia as well as individuals interested in learning more about the reality in the country. PBI followed up with those who attended in order to ensure their participation in the support network.

Speaking tours by former volunteers

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Advocacy – North America

Increasing PBI's Support network

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 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 and the CIJP in the Chocó and Bajo Naya regions.



Alice Garside, current PBI representative in the United States.

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.

The representative met with offices of members of Congress and the Western Hemisphere Sub-Committee Office.

The representative 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 Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and to talk about possible joint activities and consultation processes with civil society.

During the visit of Margaret Sekaggya, the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, PBI was invited to take part in a meeting between Sekaggya, the General Secretary of the IACHR and human rights organisations on the subject of human rights in the Organisation of American States (OAS) member countries.

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, and Fellowship of Reconciliation and to the Department of State.

The Representative supported the CIJP, CJL, FCSP, MINGA and CCAJAR 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 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 Canada of former volunteer Gilles Philippe Pagé, in particular his presentation before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Trade and his meetings with members of Parliament. Finally, the representative kept in regular contact with PBI Australia, and facilitated information for a question in the Senate.

Speaking tours

In April and May 2008, Gille-Philippe Pagé, a former Canadian volunteer who spent 18 months in the Medellin and Bogota teams carried out advocacy work in Ottawa with the support of Christine Jones, Director of PBI Canada. They met with various Members of Parliament (MPs) including Navdeep Bains, the Liberal Party MP for international trade. As a result of this meeting, Pagé was invited to give a statement about the human rights situation in Colombia to the Parliamentary Committee on International Trade. In this presentation and during the meetings, Pagé raised awareness among MPs and representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) about the patterns of extrajudicial executions attributed to the Colombian Army and the situation of human rights defenders in Colombia. ●

Communications and distribution of information

Working more strategically

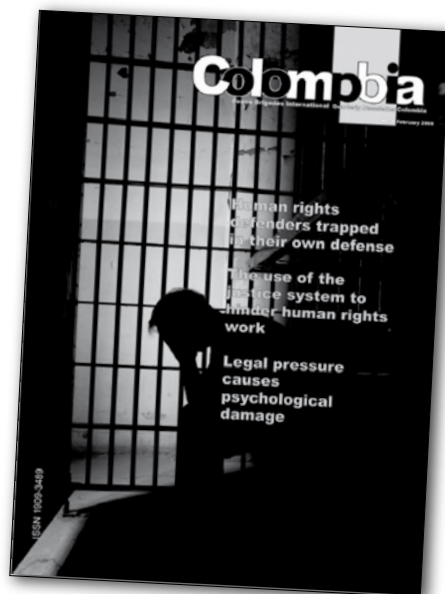
The year 2008 has been characterised by a series of new communications initiatives for PBI and several accompanied organisations. The PBI General Assembly held in June 2008 decided to change the area's name from Publications to Communications. This change in name is related to the expansion of the project's «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 subject, 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 March 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.

After threats were made against the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace in Curbaradó in August and September, PBI decided to produce an eight page newsletter 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.

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. 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.

Journalistic coverage

The communications workers also covered several events such as the 6 March demonstration, organised by the National Movement for Victims of State Crimes, 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. ●

Contacto con la prensa internacional durante el año 2008.

Media	Interest
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

Psychosocial assistance

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.

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.

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.



PBI Colombia male and female volunteers participate in a teambuilding exercise during the project meeting in September 2008.

This psychosocial support team also monitors 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).

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).

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).

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



Lisa Kunkel of the United States and Peter Biermann of Germany in a meeting 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). In all these situations, 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. 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 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 CODEHSEL, continuing a process which began in 2007; this was the final workshop with CODEHSEL 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 Popular Training Institute 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

Indigenous Organization of Colombia (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 National Indigenous Organization of Colombia 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.

In February, 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 in 7 meetings 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. ●



Vicente Vallies giving a workshop on protection and security in Medellín.

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.

During this period PBI has received requests for workshops that it could not accept due to lack of human resources. 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, COS-PACC, National

Human resources and training

Training of international observers for PBI Colombia

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.

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, Switzerland and USA 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.

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. 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.

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.



Roberto Montoya, responsible for training, with potential candidates during the selection process meeting in Spain.

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, 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.

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.

According to decisions made by the project, five recruitment processes were carried out in 2008 for new positions and 9 given that the previous post holders' contracts had ended.

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.

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.

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. ●



Satellite phones - an essential field communications tool.

The PBI teams systematically use various analytical tools, with clearly defined methodologies, to minimise the risks related both to the organisation itself and to accompanied organisations. In the regions, the field teams tend to carry out monthly analyses of the current situation to ensure a deep and up-to-date understanding of the local reality. These analyses provide the basis for additional more concrete analysis, such as risk, protection and security analysis, and travel security reports, all of which are more defined security analyses. 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 the past year, PBI Colombia has experienced a tenuous working environment, particularly in the Urabá region. During 2008, there was a general increase in violence in this area, related, in large part, to the unease created by the activities of illegal armed groups. International NGO that work in the Bajo Atrato region, including PBI, have been mentioned in the media (local radio, web sites, pamphlets and newspapers¹). In the case of PBI, the information used in the media distorts our role, and accused the organisation of having links with Colombian illegal armed groups creating a widespread climate of hostility against NGO.² 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 adapted its protection tools, activating and finding the most appropriate combination of its protection tools to confront the situation.

Security threats to the work of international organisations

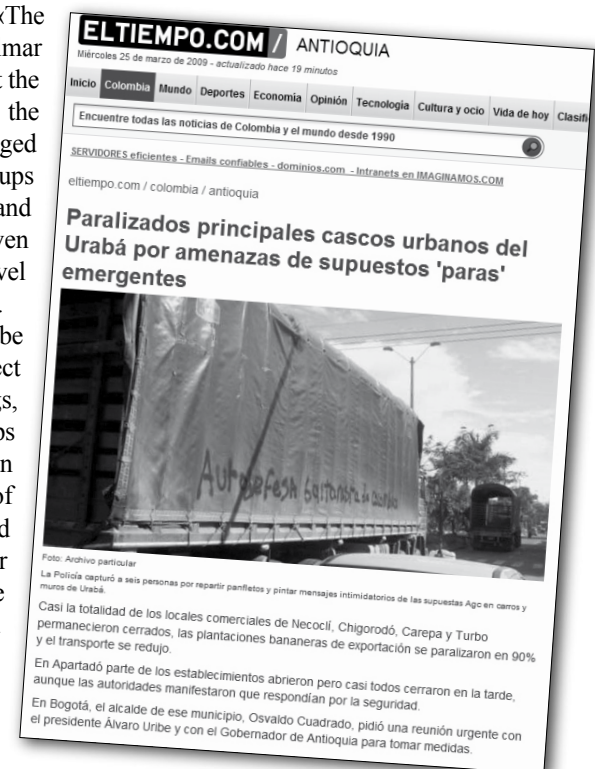
In a wider context, in October 2008, all commercial and transport activities were paralysed across the Urabá region, due to the open presence of the self-named new illegal armed group 'Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Urabá'. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman issued a public statement expressing its concern: «The Human Rights Ombudsman, Vólmar Pérez Ortiz, 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 (...)»³. PBI maintains a house and office in Turbo with a team of eleven international volunteers, who travel throughout the region from this base.

When it is considered to be appropriate, the PBI Colombia Project has carried out a series of meetings, at every level of the diplomatic corps and civil and military Colombian authorities, with the aim of counteracting these incidents related to the security or the image of our organisation, 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.

At the national level, we would like to highlight the fact that on 13 March 2008, PBI received a pamphlet signed by the Black Eagles, by email, declaring those that received the email to be a military objective. PBI took 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, included 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, suffered various incidents in the last year, including a death threat against one of its international members⁴ and the deportation of one of its

members, who was a German citizen, and two French citizens who were accompanying an analyst from the organisation⁵. The Colombian government's statement accusing international aid workers of coming to the country to 'provoke violence' is, therefore, of concern⁶.



Main towns in Uraba paralysed because of threats from alleged newly formed paramilitary groups.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that PBI has experienced several attempts to violate its IT network during the year, particularly after the March 6 protest march in Bogotá to commemorate the victims of state crimes. ●

¹ «Santos: la guerra que está ganando... y la otra», El Espectador, 20 December 2008

² In a meeting in the Riosucio municipality, the 'Autodefensas Gaitanistas' which has paramilitaries included in its members (...) decided to get rid of national and international NGO in the Bajo Atrato region. Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, October 25, 2008

³ Press release: «El defensor del Pueblo, Vólmar Pérez Ortiz, advierte con preocupación el riesgo que enfrenta la población civil de la región del Urabá por la presunta activación de grupos paramilitares (...)», Ombudsman Office, 16 October 2008, Ref: http://www.defensoria.org.co/red/?_item=03030004&secc=03&ts=2&hs=0303

⁴ «Death threat against international aid worker» European Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia. 18 July 2008. Amenaza cooperante internacional en Colombia», Red Europea de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia, 18 de julio de 2008.

⁵ Open letter to Colombian authorities, Red Europea de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia, 22 October 2008

⁶ Ibid

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 (ISEC) 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. 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, cooperation between the different entities has resulted in PBI being put forward for five important international prizes.

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.

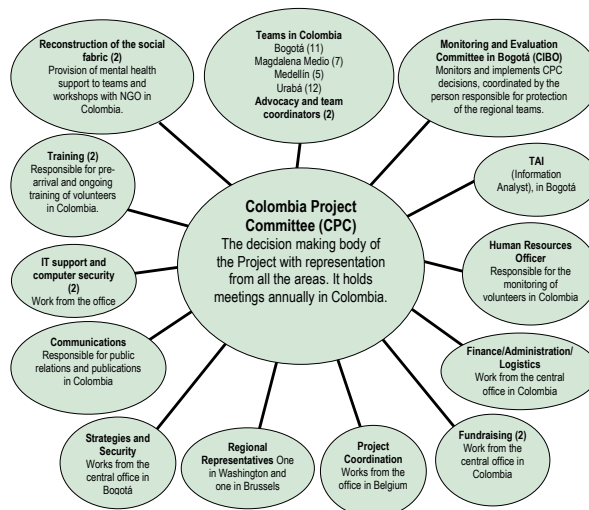
PBI General Assembly, Hamburg, Germany 16-21 November 2008

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.

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.



PBI Colombia project structure.

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, 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: a governance one and an operational one.

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. 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.

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.

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 as well as of PBI's International Secretariat (ISEC). Means of reflection about the functioning of the PBI national groups were also included in the joint evaluation¹.

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.

► Premises included in the process

- 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 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.

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. For example, 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.

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.

With regard to the relationship between PBI Colombia and the international structure², 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.

Gender

An external consultant carried out a three months review of the gender and diversity situation with the PBI Colombia Project in Colombia, Brussels and Washington. The methodology used to carry out the survey focused on individual interviews with questionnaires, specific workshops and a review of project documents.

Gender and Diversity analysis in PBI Colombia, August-September 2008

An external consultant carried out a review of the gender and diversity situation with the PBI Colombia Project in Colombia, Brussels and Washington. The methodology used to carry out the survey focused on individual interviews with questionnaires, specific workshops and a review of project documents.

Areas covered:

- Motivation to work with PBI
- Understanding of the meaning of gender
- PBI strategies
- PBI work areas
- Training process
- Selection of volunteers
- Division of work
- Participation
- Organisational structure
- Living together
- Sexual options
- Racism and cultural diversity

The consultant travelled to the four field teams in order to carry out 31 interviews and gave six workshops on the subject.

13 recommendations to improve the understanding of gender:

1. Carry out a training process on gender issues.
2. Establishment of a mutual understanding of the meaning of gender throughout the project
3. Use of international standards related to human rights with a gender and diversity focus.
4. Implementation of a gender focus throughout the work of the organisation
5. Development of a gender focus throughout the training process.
6. Establishment of a gender perspective for the analysis of information and in publications.
7. Revision of criteria for the selection of volunteers.
8. Establishment of a gender perspective in the psychosocial area.
9. Consolidation of the horizontal organisational framework and the principle of consensus within PBI.
10. Definition of protection strategies for people with non-heterosexual sexual preferences.
11. Design of a multicultural strategy.
12. Articulation and coordination with institutions and organisations with a gender or feminist focus.
13. Design of a strategy for monitoring and evaluating the gender perspective within PBI.

The Working Group on Gender and Diversity analysed the recommendations and in the General Assembly in November 2008, proposed the implementation of two workshops during the twice-yearly Project retreats, one training session for the members of, as well as to purchase of reference materials on the subject. ●

¹ 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.

² 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 the audited and definitive financial statements for 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 is used for the dollar conversion, taken from the www.oanda.com website. When the funds are received in Colombia, they are registered in the financial accounts as the amount actually received and in the financial statement as the dollar value sent by the funder that is reported in the monetisation 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 current Exchange rate for the month of December 2008 has been applied to the figures in the balance sheet 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



Claudia Lancheros, administrative assistant.

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 set out in funding agreements with agencies 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 Barrancabermeja team house, given that the owner had terminated the lease on the house. However, the move finally 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.

to the use the volunteers make of this option. They may use the provision for rest and recuperation either in the current or the following financial 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 the moves took place.

Volunteer tours

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

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

The cost of exchange rate differences, USD 75.042, stands out in the expenditure budget; , given the re-evaluation 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 income 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 accumulated reserves of USD 760,703, however, for the purposes of analysis 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 reserve that represents 20% of its income, in relation to the 2008 budget of USD1, 872,381; equivalent to the funds necessary to cover project costs for two months.

During this period, USD428-710 was received and registered as a liability in the «Income received in advance account» that corresponds to funds received in 2008, to be spent in 2009. ●



Henry Perez, project administrator in Bogota and Luis Alfonso Valverde, PBI Colombia accountant.

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, furthermore, there were no technical problems.

Rest and recuperation

This is an estimated figure that is subject

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2008

Income to December 31st 2008 was USD2,026,022, 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 includes additional income of USD 94,119, USD26,000 of which was received from Diakonia Sweden and is earmarked to be spent in 2009. The balance appears in accounts receivable, conditioned by the approval of reports presented to donors.

Financial Report

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL COLOMBIA PROJECT
EXPENDITURE BUDGET
1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008
EXCHANGE RATE USD\$/COP\$ 2,300.19

NO.COD	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDITURE \$USD
INCOME		
1	<i>National groups donations</i>	1,056,973
2	<i>Direct 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 committee 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

Financial Report

PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL – COLOMBIA PROJECT BALANCE SHEET

1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008

EXCHANGE RATE USD\$/COP\$

2,300.19

	SITUATION ON DECEMBER 31 2007		SITUATION ON DECEMBER 31 2008	
	US\$	US \$	US\$	US\$
Assets				
Fixed		142,434		141,768
Current Assests				
Grants receivable	392,147		392,998	
Interest bearing accounts	3,514		2,131	
Current accounts / Cash in Europe	155,867		317,456	
Current accounts / Cash in Colombia	469,852		360,541	
Advance payments to volunteers	3,615		15,120	
Other account receivable	12,517		16,138	
Total Assets	1,037,512		1,104,384	
Liabilities				
Income received in advance	516,884		428,710	
Accounts payable – goods and service	3,157		31,958	
Others accounts payable	4,166		1,496	
Total Liabilities	524,206		462,164	
Net current asset		513,306		642,219
Total Asset		655,740		783,988
Represented as:				
Excess/(deficit) income over expenditure		215,336		94,119
Adjustment to accumulated fund brought forward		113,542		34,129
Accumulated fund brought forward		326,863		655,740
Total fund balance		655,740		783,988

Financial Report

**PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL COLOMBIA PROJECT
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE DETAIL BUDGET
1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008
EXCHANGE RATE USD\$/COP\$ 2,300.19**

DESCRIPCION	EJECUCION \$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



www.pbi-colombia.org

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a non-governmental organisation registered before the United Nations that maintains a team of observers who have provided permanent international accompaniment in Colombia since 1994. The mission of PBI is to protect the working space of legally recognised human rights defenders that are repressed as a result of their non violent human rights work.

The PBI Colombia team, only at the request of a local organisation, remains in the field, accompanies threatened individuals and organisations. This field work is complemented by advocacy work with civil and military authorities, State bodies, NGO, the church, the diplomatic corps and other organisations to encourage international action and the publication of information about the human rights situation in Colombia.

If you think that the presence of PBI is necessary to protect those who work in favour of human rights, you can:

- Support us by means of an individual donation or a donation through your organisation.
- Join your nearest PBI group and support the international network from your town.
- Become a PBI volunteer, regardless of your nationality, race, sex or religion.



German volunteer Moritz Hartnagel accompanying during a demonstration march in Medellín.

«We are conscious of the fact that we are one of the return processes where there have not been many deaths; to a large extent, this is due to international presence. However, the threats continue and most of the commitments made by the government have still not been fulfilled. If PBI were to leave the river basin, we would become a very vulnerable population once again».

Elber Mora Arce, Member of the CAVIDA Coordinating Council, July 2008

For more information, visit our website or contact us:

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