

PRES KIT - OCTOBER 2010

PBI COLOMBIA PRESENTS

CAMPAÑA
MEMORIAS CONTRA EL SILENCIO Y LA
IMPUNIDAD
Nunca Más Crímenes de Estado

Abril 27 de 2007

organizaciones sociales y de derechos humanos integrantes de la
Comisión del Estado, informa ante la opinión sur el día 30 de abril de
el **Estado**, **Ramón Saiza**, comandante de las Autodefensas
de la Nación debe presentarse ante la Unidad de Justicia y
de la Nación libre en el marco de la Ley 975 de

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Corporation for Judicial Freedom

The Corporation for Judicial Freedom (CJL) was founded on 22 March 1993 by a group of lawyers and law students in the city of Medellín.



Bayron Góngora (CJL) and Miriam Futterlieb (PBI).

CJL carries out a variety of activities, including criminal defence for people accused of belonging to insurgent groups as well as for members of community and social organisations under investigation due to their political activities or public statements. The organisation also handles cases in which the State is implicated in human rights violations, providing representation to victims of crimes against humanity in their search for truth, justice, and reparation. CJL presents cases before international bodies devoted to the protection of human rights. Additionally, the organisation assists and trains communities and social organisations in understanding and demanding their rights and guarantees as citizens, accompanying them in their efforts to defend their territory and food security. CJL publishes reports and conducts research to raise awareness on the human rights situation in Medellín.

Projects:

- Human rights and impunity
- Community accompaniment
- Research and communications

CJL carries out some of their work in **Eastern Antioquia** where they offer legal consultation and workshops to the Association of Small and Medium Producers of Eastern Antioquia (ASOPROA). CJL provides psychosocial, organising and human rights workshops (which also include the children and youth), in addition to legal consultation in cases of human rights violations.

In the department of **Chocó**, CJL's objective is to support indigenous organisations. In this respect, CJL works in coordination with the Catholic Church's Indigenous Ministry, the indigenous higher councils, and the Indigenous Organisation of Antioquia (OIA), with a

IN THE CITY OF MEDELLÍN, CJL REPRESENTS MORE THAN 60 VICTIMS OF EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS IN CASES AGAINST ARMY PERSONNEL AND MORE THAN 30 VICTIMS OF PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE CACIQUE NUTIBARA BLOCK

special emphasis on the effects caused by large-scale development projects in the region (for instance, mining operations).

In the city of **Medellín**, CJL represents more than 60 victims of extrajudicial executions in cases against army personnel and more than 30 victims of paramilitary activities carried out by the Cacique Nutibara Block¹.

CJL has emphasised the urgent need to organise the search for the more than 70 people forcibly disappeared as a result of the military operation known as Operation Orion² in Medellín's District 13 in 2002. CJL also continues to speak out against the existence of common graves under tons of rubble in the place known as La Escombrera³. Furthermore, CJL has denounced the continued presence of paramilitary groups in several of Medellín's urban districts, and their strategies of social control and the forced recruitment of minors.

CJL members trapped in their own defence

THE CASE OF ELKIN RAMÍREZ

In November 2009, the Prosecutor's Office in Bogotá reopened judicial proceedings against CJL lawyer Elkin Ramírez, who was under investigation for making false statements. At the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2005, Ramírez testified that Colonel Néstor Iván Duque (then commander of the Bejarano Muñoz Battalion) had participated in the 2005 massacre in La Resbalosa (Peace Community of San José de Apartadó). The Colonel filed a complaint against Ramírez, alleging slander, libel, and false statements⁴. The Prosecutor's Office in Bogotá conducted an investigation, did not find any evidence to determine fault, and subsequently dismissed the case in 2006. The proceedings were reopened at the end of 2008⁵ and the 188th Prosecutor's Office once again dismissed the case in April 2009⁶.

In addition to this case, a warrant for his arrest had been in place since 29 November 2006. This time, the 74th Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation against Mr. Ramírez for the crime of rebellion and ordered his arrest⁷. In May 2009, the arrest warrant was overturned.

THE CASE OF BAYRON GÓNGORA

At the end of February 2010, CJL learned that hit men from an illegal armed group in Medellín had been contracted to kill CJL lawyer Bayron Ricardo Góngora Arango. At the time, Mr. Góngora was representing the family members of victims in 65 cases of extrajudicial executions and had requested that the Prosecutor General's Office investigate the possibly criminal conduct that may have been committed by army general Mario Montoya and police general Leonardo Gallego. 'Don Berna' claimed these men were responsible for coordinating State security forces and the Cacique Nutibara Block during Operation Orion⁸.

Protection measures

Since 2007, CJL members have been recipients of precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The Colombian government has yet to respond to the IACHR's request to discuss adequate protection measures⁹.

Awards

“2010 “GEORG-FRITZE-GEDÄCHTNISGABE” HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD”¹⁰

On 10 May 2010, the Evangelical Churches of Cologne (Germany) honoured CJL with this award which was received by CJL member Liliana Uribe Tirado. During the award ceremony, the Churches highlighted the work carried out by the Corporation for Judicial Freedom in the defence of human rights in Colombia. In particular, special mention was made of Liliana Uribe's efforts to work for justice in cases of extrajudicial executions.



Liliana Uribe (CJL). Photo: Sebastian Roetters

International accompaniment

In October 2000, CJL formally requested accompaniment from PBI. This petition was approved and the organisation began to be accompanied in April 2001. PBI accompanies CJL members on their trips to Eastern Antioquia and in the department of Chocó. In Medellín, CJL receives accompaniment during public demonstrations and in visits to District 13. CJL also belongs to the European Network of Friendship and Solidarity with Colombia (www.redcolombia.org).

Publications¹¹

→ **«Ejecuciones Extrajudiciales: Caso Oriente Antioqueño»¹²**: At the end of May 2007, the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination (CCEEU) —a coalition of 187 human rights and grassroots organisations from several regions of the country— and the Seeds

of Liberty Human Rights Collective (CODEHSEL) published a report asserting that members of the Army's IV Brigade were responsible for killing 110 people who were later presented as «guerrilla members killed in combat». After this report was publicly presented by CJL members, General Jorge Rodríguez Clavijo —then commander of this military unit— made statements in newspapers that the report «was part of the political and legal war»¹³.

→ **«Informe preliminar de la Misión internacional de observación sobre ejecuciones extrajudiciales e impunidad en Colombia»**, October 2007¹⁴

→ **«Colombian Troops Kill Farmers, Pass Off Bodies as Rebels»¹⁵**, Washington Post Foreign Service, 30 March 2008, page A12



Bayron Góngora (CJL). Photo: Charlotte Kesl

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Foto portada: Elkín Ramírez (CJL)

1. The Cacique Nutibara Block was a paramilitary organisation which emerged in 2001 and operated in Medellín under the command of Diego Fernando Murillo, aka «Adolfo Paz» of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) and known in the world of drug trafficking as «Don Berna». This paramilitary chief was extradited to the United States by the Colombian government on 13 May 2008. To learn more about the demobilisation of the Cacique Nutibara Block, please consult: «Acerca de la desmovilización del Bloque Cacique Nutibara en Medellín», Matilde del Mar, Prensa Rural, 25 November 2003
2. During Operation Orion, one person was killed, 28 were wounded, and 355 were detained.
3. «Tras la verdad enterrada en La Escombrera», El Colombiano, 6 November 2008
4. «Estado colombiano debe responder a la continuación de acusaciones sin fundamento contra los defensores de derechos humanos»,

Human Rights First, 20 March 2009

5. «Comunicado a la Opinión Pública», Corporation for Judicial Freedom, 9 March 2009
6. The Jesuit priest Javier Giraldo Moreno and human rights ombudsman in Urabá Miguel Ángel Afanador Ulloa are under investigation in the same case.
7. Public statement, CJL, 18 August 2006
8. On 23 June 2009, during a confession hearing at a US prison, 'Don Berna' confirmed what had already been claimed by inhabitants from Urban District 13 and human rights organisations. «Abogado de Corporación Jurídica Libertad, víctima de amenazas de muerte», Corporation for Judicial Freedom, 12 February 2010; Public Statement, Grassroots Training Institute (IPC), 12 February 2010; and Urgent Action, Amnesty International, 5 March 2010
9. «Urgent Action», Bread for the World, 25 February 2010
10. «Premio en derechos humanos "Georg-Fritze Gedächtnisgabe-2010"», CJL, 11 May 2010
11. See complete list of publications: http://www.cjlibertad.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=4&Itemid=55.
12. Download report: <http://www.dhcolombia.info/spip.php?article362>.
13. «ONG documenta 110 ejecuciones sumarias», El Colombiano, 23 May 2007.
14. Download report: <http://www.dhcolombia.info/spip.php?article428>.
15. Download article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/29/AR2008032901118.html>.