



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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Cover photo: The Peaceful Resistance of la Puya celebrates the third anniversary of its resistance camp maintained by neighbors of San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc opposite of the entrance of the El Tambor mine (March 2015).

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INTRODUCTION

This document compiles the main events that have shaped PBI Guatemala's work in 2015.

2015 will go down in Guatemalan history as one of massive social protests sparked by large scale corruption cases with important media coverage. We would like to highlight other events that did not receive the same attention by the media, but are of great importance to the campesino and indigenous population. In San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz the families who live on La Primavera plantation attained land titles, a right they had been struggling for for 15 years. This struggle increased their vulnerability, placing them in the spotlight. They suffered threats of eviction and acts of criminalization. In Jocotán, Chiquimula six villages received official recognition as maya ch'orti communities. This recognition represents a step forward in the historical memory recuperation process and an important instrument

for the claim and defense of indigenous peoples rights. PBI has accompanied both processes and we have contributed so that they could maintain their claims, even in a context of strong threats against them.

Despite these achievements, defending human rights in Guatemala continues to be a high-risk activity that exposes defenders to defamation, criminalization, and persecution. During 2015, we attended to 13 emergency situations in which we activated some type of measure or support. This was done to help protect social actors that participate in processes of defending human rights. One of the most worrisome situations has been, and continues to be, that of the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya and their opposition to a mining project which motivated us to publish an alert due to an increase in threats.

To complement these interventions we have concentrated our advocacy efforts on strengthening the role of the international community in the protection of human rights defenders in the context of economic investment, one of the main spots of conflict and risks for this group. Based on our experience we have provided input for the development of plans and mechanisms for protection by international organisms – European Union and United Nations – as highlighted on pages 10 and 11, this is what has been recognized by these institutions.

In addition we have facilitated training space to increase self-protection capacity for human rights defenders, primarily in rural and indigenous areas. Over 100 people participated in said trainings. We have focused these trainings on tools that help them during criminalization processes, as well as how to analyze an attack, threat and measures to face these from a gender perspective. The healing process of women defenders has been especially important as a tool of global protection as mentioned on page 14.

The reflection on the situation of women defenders in Guatemala has been approached from different angles this year. We have also made visible the role of women in the spaces that defend human rights in Guatemala in our communication materials. The goal of these actions is to recognize the important work that they carry out and in turn strengthen their position before the rest of the actors. Within PBI we have also started a process to strengthen our focus on gender which is necessary for our analysis, formalizing spaces for training of volunteers on the subject, and creating an internal committee that will guarantee that the gender perspective be present in all aspects of our accompaniment work. Without a doubt we will need to dig deeper into the topic and we have a long road ahead of us.

We hope this report contributes to make visible the important work of women and men who defend human rights in Guatemala.



CURRENT NEWS

Political elections amidst large social mobilization

2015 in Guatemala was marked by political and institutional crisis unleashed by a penal process driven by the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP). This process initiated against a network of state actors and high level non-state actors, presumably implicated in corruption and tax evasion. As a result of these investigations and social mobilizations calling for the resignation of responsible politicians and cleansing of the legislative and judicial branch. Several high ranking government representatives stepped down from their positions. Among them, the former Vice President Roxana Baldetti and former President Otto Pérez Molina, both were sent to preventative detention and linked to a process for the crimes of conspiracy, conspiracy, bribery and customs fraud.

In the context of this crisis and social protests demanding reforms to the Guatemalan political system, elections for the Executive and Legislative branches and mayors took place. Jimmy Morales of the National Convergence Front

party won the Presidency in the second round of elections in October 2015. Analysts have highlighted the connections of the new president and his party to retired military officials linked to repression committed during the armed conflict. Also they have pointed out links to the structure of the former administration's political party, the Patriot Party, whose leaders ended up in prison as previously stated. On human rights matters, various sectors of civil society have expressed doubts about the new government's predisposition to dialogue to resolve existing conflicts and historical demands of the population (land, decent housing, health and education). There are also doubts about the promotion and respect of other rights related to ethnic, sexual, and gender diversity. In particular the women's movement has pointed out that the program of the new government does not address the reality in which women live in regards to land tenure which keeps them at a disadvantage.

In regards to the situation of human rights defenders, we assisted a significant decline in attacks compared to last year. None-the-less, according to statistics from the Unit

for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (UDEFEQUA) the level of violence has intensified. There has been an increase in severe attacks including: assassinations, attempted assassinations and processes of criminalization. People who defend economic, social, cultural and environmental rights are the group that face a greater number of attacks. Sixty-six percent of the 493 attacks suffered by defenders during 2015 were targeted at people who defend these rights. Of 12 people assassinated, nine were from this group of defenders. We also assisted an increased number of attacks against journalists. The Observatory of Journalists of the Center for Informative Reports on Guatemala noted the existence of judicial actions directed to inhibit the professional work of journalists and media, increasing violations of freedom of expression and press.

In the context of a weak justice system, one of the major threats against human rights defenders is the practice of defamation and criminalization. This happens using different strategies including: false accusations, lack of due process, arbitrary detention, particularly against people defending territory from extractive investment projects. International organizations like the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMTC) have noted this problem, especially the violation of the guarantees of due process.

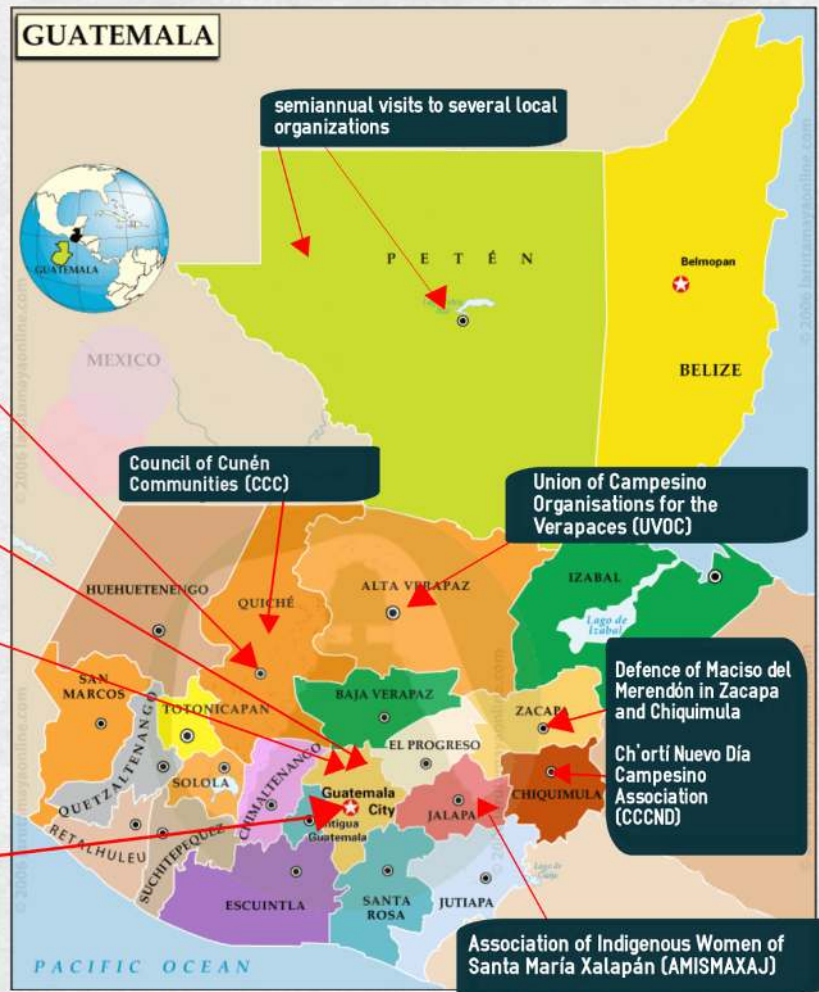
On the transitional justice front headway has been made in the fight against impunity. In January the trial in the burning of the Spanish Embassy case took place concluding with a conviction of 90 years in prison for the former National

Police chief, Pedro García Arredondo. Pedro García Arredondo was identified as the operational agent in the massacre of 37 campesinos from the Quiché region which took place in January 1980. The trial confirmed the state-backed terror tactics used during the of General Romeo Lucas García administration (1978-1982).

This year we have noted that numerous indigenous and campesino communities committed to the defense of territory and natural resources have denounced the intervention of private companies who impose, without consultation, extractive projects (mining, hydroelectric, petroleum, agriculture, etc.). There have been numerous human rights violations and attacks denounced by people involved in community and social resistance. One of the gravest examples is the ecocide that took place in July in the La Pasión River in the Department of Petén caused by toxic chemicals coming from African Palm plantations. This ecological disaster affected 12,000 people from 17 communities who depend on the river for their livelihood. On September 17 the REPSA company was ordered to temporally close for its alleged responsibility in the case. A day after the court's decision, Rigoberto Lima, one of the first people to publically denounce the ecocide, was assassinated. PBI has provided follow-up to the case on our trips to the region and we have made visible the situation of the affected communities in our publications.

The current context is marked by uncertainty and ambiguity in face of the new government's policies. We will continue to monitor this context, paying particular attention to human rights defenders situation of risk.

Who and where we accompany



PBI accompanies organizations or social processes that fight peacefully against impunity, for access to land, and against the negative effects of globalization on human rights in Guatemala.

In 2015 we accompanied 10 organizations or social processes including the Human Rights Law Firm and did follow up with the Historical Archive of the National Police (82 people - 48 men and 34 women).

We started two new accompaniment assignments including the process in defense of the macizo of the Merendón Mountains and the Peaceful Resistance of La Laguna in the Departments of Zacapa, Chiquimula, and Guatemala respectively. We finished accompanying the 12 communities in resistance of San Juan Sacatepequez.

On 2 trips to the Petén we followed up on the situation of various civil society organizations and members of the uprooted communities of the Sierra Lacandón and Laguna del Tigre who are resisting the installation of megaprojects in the region.

WHO WE ACCOMPANY



AFTER 15 YEARS OF PEACEFUL STRUGGLE, LA PRIMAVERA POQOMCHI' FAMILIES RECOVER THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS

Since 2005 we have accompanied Union of Campesino Organisations of Verapaz (UVOC) and the campesino and indigenous communities that UVOC supports in their struggles for access to land. Among these communities we have provided special attention to those who live on the "La Primavera" plantation lands in San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz.

The history of the maya poqomchi' families that live on "La Primavera" plantation is an emblematic example of historical dispossession that indigenous peoples of Guatemala have lived. The population was exploited and impoverished during colonial times followed by laws passed during the liberal revolution at the end of the 19th century which expropriated their communal lands converting them into private property dedicated to large scale agro-export products. Deprived of their lands where they carried out their own social and economic reproduction, the indigenous

population was an easy target for quasi-slavery for the new class of large agro-export landowners who were supported by legal instruments that guaranteed cheap labor for the coffee harvest. This practice made the indigenous families of the area tenant farmers at the service of the landowner. In exchange for their work, they were allowed to live on and use the land.

"From mother earth we produce, on her we walk, without land we cannot live..."

The maya poqomchi' families who live on the 1,425 acres of "La Primavera" plantation settled there as tenant farmers in 1799. They maintained a work relationship with the Azurdia family who were the plantation's owners until the end of the Twentieth century. Although the documents that registered tenant farmers in "La Primavera" have been destroyed, there are several factors, including the testimonies of the families themselves, the size of the settlement and the fact that the State itself built a health center and school on the plantation. All of these things show historical permanence of the communities in this place. The families never received salaries nor benefits for their work which gives them a right to part of these lands. From the time of termination of the employment relationship, the families started a negotiation process to normalize the Ibenea property of the plantation through the Land Investment Fund with the support of UVOC. In this process of dialogue and negotiation aimed to normalize the situation of the land where they live, the families have had to face the appearance of new plantation owners who do not recognize the families' right to permanence and tried to evict them from the property. This is the case of conflict with the

Maderas Filitz Diaz, S.A. and Eco-Tierra companies. Maderas Filitz Diaz, S.A. cultivates and logs trees for commercial use while Eco-Tierra offers legal certainty of the land through loans. These companies have denied the existence of tenant farmer - landowner relationship and have accused the families of "La Primavera" of the crime of usurpation of land. This crime is included in the penal code and according to a UVOC lawyer they are using a tactic to criminalize the tenant farmers without property titles for plantations whose current owners want to vacate the land. This case shows a common situation in Guatemala in which the workers and families' right to stay on a property that arises from a legitimate working relationship and this is violated when the property changes hands.

Insecurity and lack of protection while facing attacks, criminalization and threats of eviction

The poqomchi' families have suffered threats and intimidation by private security guards from the companies who currently own the land. Also murders have gone uninvestigated by authorities. The companies have also tried to weaken the social movement by encouraging

divisions within communities by promising legal certainty to those families who stand by the companies' interests. In this conflict UVOC and the families of "La Primavera" have stated on multiple occasions the unsuitable role and even negligent role of the State of Guatemala in regards to developing strategies to prevent eviction of the communities. The competent authorities, Secretariat for Agrarian Affairs (SAA) and Land Investment Fund, have not encountered a solution to this conflict. The communities have lived a process of criminalization through penal accusations by individuals and the emission of arrest warrants for community leaders which have been out for months without acting on them. This has been a constant threat for those accused and has had negative implications for them to continue defending their right to land and decent housing. This has also had negative effects on their personal lives and the lives of their families.

The families of "La Primavera" have lived under the constant threat of eviction by public forces of the state since July 2004 when a judicial order has handed down. Although this is no longer applicable due to the injunction UVOC filed, it has been used by the business people involved in the conflict as a way to pressure the communities to resolve the conflict in their favor.



PBI accompaniment: helping the communities maintain the dialogue process to obtain legal security of their lands

Over the years "La Primavera" families have had support and legal counsel from UVOC and accompaniment from PBI during their search for recognition of their land rights through dialogue. In the last six years we have maintained a periodic presence in the communities on the plantation, observing the families' situation and gathering firsthand information of the situation.

"There are defenders who are incarcerated in their own communities - they can't go out due to arrest warrants out for them. If it weren't for the visits from PBI to the communities where those leaders are - no one would know anything about the situation they are living" (Carlos Morales, UVOC coordinator)

We have accompanied UVOC's lawyer, Jorge Luis Morales, and the criminalized communities to hearings on the case to guarantee due process. In addition on numerous

occasions we have observed meetings and discussions with the SAA.

We have featured the struggle of poqomchi' families of "La Primavera" and the agrarian conflict in the Verapaces region in two articles and the video documentary "Tierra del Maiz" (see text box on page 10). On two occasions in 2012 and 2013, we alerted our network to the vulnerable situation of "La Primavera" families in face of threats against their physical integrity and a possible eviction from the plantation. In different meetings with the diplomatic corps we have provided information on the situation and requested attention and intervention on the case. In 2013 we facilitated a tour to Europe for Jorge Luis Morales who participated in international panels organized by the United Nations and the European Union speaking on the situation of rural communities in Guatemala and the violation of their right to decent housing. As a result of these activities, UN representatives and representatives from the Dutch, Norwegian, and German Embassies traveled to the Verapaces to meet with UVOC and "La Primavera" members bringing more international attention to the case.

"With the arrival of the Embassy people, they (community members) feel like they are being heard and they have international backing and advocacy with the government so that they can give in even if it's just a portion of what we are demanding as a pueblo" (Sandra Calel, UVOC's women's group)

PBI's work facilitated that UVOC be invited to a meeting with Grupo Filtro, European Embassy representatives in Guatemala, to speak about the situation of families on the plantation.

"To be able to take La Primavera community case before the Grupo Filtro has been a great opportunity" (Justino Xollim Tilom, "La Primavera" community member)

The aforementioned actions contributed that communities could maintain their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue, in a context where, at the same time, several other communities in similar situations were evicted.

"La Primavera" starts a new path

At the beginning of 2015 the communities reached an agreement with the company Maderas Filizt Diaz, S.A. and the Azurdia family about the ownership of the land. One third of the "La Primavera" plantation or approximately 395 acres became property of the 279 families. In July of the same year land titles were handed out. In addition the agreement stipulates the withdrawal of the arrests warrants against community leaders. After 15 years of peaceful struggle and a commitment to resolve conflict through dialogue, the community has started a new path with a new community name, Cablaju Beé. The communities continue to have the support of UVOC and PBI observation.

WHO WE ACCOMPANY



STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION OF AT-RISK CH'ORTI' DEFENDERS

Since 2009 we have accompanied the Campesino Central Coordinator New Day Ch'orti' (CCCND) organization who informs and trains communities in several municipalities in the Department of Chiquimula. Their work is focused on the promotion and defense of human rights in diverse areas like indigenous peoples, gender, rights of children, environment and territory. CCCND also advises communities on the process to become recognized and legally register as indigenous communities. An aspect of their work had great success in 2015, which PBI observed, with the registration of six communities as indigenous with the rights that this entails and the opportunities that it opens for the defense of their land.

Since 2014 the people that form part of CCCND have suffered an increase in acts of intimidation, threats, defamation, and attacks on them. This increase is related primarily to their activities informing communities and their

work on the promotion of community rights in face of large hydroelectric projects.

In 2015 we organized two advocacy tours so that the CCCND could speak out about their situation and talk firsthand about the attacks they suffered. The goal of these tours were to make visible their situation and facilitate links to international support for the CCCND to then have a dissuasive effect on aggressors and thus reduce the attacks. On the first tour Lesly Ramirez traveled to Spain, Belgium, and Switzerland in the months of April and May. Lesly met with members of civil society, members of parliament, representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, cooperation and national commerce. At the same time, she met with European Union officials in charge of human rights and the geographical region of Central America and with United Nations special mechanisms. Omar Jerónimo traveled to Europe in June to meet with representatives of the Lutheran

Church in Germany. Omar also had meetings similar to those of Lesly in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

One of the biggest problems highlighted by both CCCND representatives during their tours was the growing vulnerability of defenders in Guatemala. They emphasized the toll that the strategy to criminalize defenders is taking on local human rights defenders. One clear example is the case of Agustín Díaz Ramírez and Timoteo Suchite members of the Indigenous Council in the community of Las Flores (Chiquimula) and members of the CCCND who were convicted in 2014 to 25 years in prison for murder. The legal process and trial was called out by several social organizations for being an example of the phenomena of criminalization that social activists suffer in Guatemala.

It is important to note that during that time and on CCCND's petition a delegation of legal experts from the United Kingdom visited the region. They met with different actors and shared the results of their visit with the diplomatic corps. They wrote a report that highlighted the violations of indigenous rights in the context of the hydroelectric project

Jonbo on the Rio Grande River in Chiquimula.

Members of the UK parliament and several lawyers' associations wrote letters to Guatemalan authorities requesting information and expressing concern for the case of the two members of CCCND sentenced to prison. In July 2015 the CCCND was invited to present their situation before the Grupo Filtro in Guatemala and members of this group visited the region and met with members of the organization, communities, local authorities and representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office to inform themselves on the situation of the convicted defenders. Despite these results, the CCCND defenders continue at risk which motivates us to maintain a commitment to their protection and security.

"In our evaluation of PBI's work, we have seen that their visits to our offices, accompanying us to communities, talking with local authorities substantially decreases the level of aggression that we have been subjected to" (Omar Jerónimo, coordinator of CCCND)

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC INVESTMENT: DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH

In recent years the majority of the accompaniment requests we receive are from organizations that suffer attacks and threats due to their work informing and promoting human rights in the face of extractive projects. Many of these projects are carried out with the participation of transnational companies. Some of the elements that have characterized these requests in the context of economic investment and have deep effects on the work and security situation of defenders are: defamation against the people who oppose the project, unreasonable legal accusations against them, fostering divisions in the communities, violent and illegal actions by private security forces, and militarization processes in the regions. All of these coupled with a high level of impunity. We have prioritized this issue as an important component to our advocacy work by promoting policies and protective mechanisms for defenders and communities whose rights and security situation have been affected by these types of investment projects in their area.

In July 2015 we presented in Brussels before the Working Party on Human rights –COHOM– (representatives of Member States responsible for the topic of human rights attended). Our presentation was entitled “protective mechanisms for defenders in the context of European investment.” In addition in September, we met with those in charge of the European Union Delegations in Latin America to further discuss the topic.

Criminalization of social protest: a strategy to paralyze the defense of human rights

We focus our attention on the defamation and criminalization of social protest process that happened especially in the context of conflicts around economic investment projects. In September we organized a breakfast meeting with 25 defenders from different areas of Guatemala and representatives of European Embassies to talk about four specific cases: the accusations against eight members of the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya; the process against two ancestral leaders in the community of Las Flores, Chiquimula; the situation of eight defenders of territory in Huehuetenango in preventative custody; and the situation of women from San Juan Sacatepéquez after the dismantling of the coalition of resistance of 12 communities against the building of a cement factory in the municipality.

This event was complemented by hosting a public panel discussion which presented two investigations on defamation and criminalization including the mechanisms used and the effects they have on defenders and their surroundings. With these activities we looked to raise

awareness of the international communities on these practices that hinder and paralyze the defense of human rights and greatly affect all of the people that dedicate their time and energy to this line of essential work.

After these activities, we facilitated a workshop on prevention strategies and how to approach stigmatization and criminalization of social protest along with legal tools to fight them. Forty defenders from different regions of Guatemala participated in the workshop which contributed to create and strengthen alliances among organizations that suffer such attacks.

All of these spaces and activities have helped make visible the problem and call attention to the need to better protect defenders in the context of economic investment, both on the development of policies and assuming commitments as well as the implementation of specific protective mechanisms.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION



LAND OF CORN

With PBI projects in Colombia, Honduras and Mexico, along with PBI United Kingdom, we put together a documentary to make visible the different human rights problems stemming from the large economic investment. *Tierra de Maíz* tells the story of four women and men in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Colombia who are fighting for land and territory. The defenders who defend land and territory in Latin America work in an extremely hostile environment risking their lives, liberty and their families' security.

In the case of Guatemala, the documentary highlights the struggle of Adrian Cal and the communities of the La Primavera plantation to recover their ancestral lands that were sold to a logging company.

The documentary is available in the Resource page on the PBI Guatemala website.

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BRIGADAS
INTERNACIONALES DE PAZ
PROYECTO GUATEMALA
Segundo Boletín Popular 2014
No. 2



BOLETÍN POPULAR NÚMERO 3 "CRIMINALIZACIÓN DE LA PROTESTA SOCIAL"

To strengthen the capacity of defenders when faced with a criminalization process and its effects, we published the Boletín Popular número 3. This publication targets organizations and communities with information on the significance of criminalization and how it plays out, what are the objectives of criminalization, how criminalization affects those who experience it and the legal instruments to combat it.

This Bulletin is available in the Publications section on the PBI Guatemala website.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION



NETWORKING FOR THE PROTECTION OF DEFENDERS

The PBI Guatemala project is an observer member of several networks of organizations in Guatemala and in other countries. Outside of Guatemala we participate in: Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico (CIFCA), comprised of more than 30 organizations, mostly development focused, who coordinate advocacy work on Central America and Mexico before the European Union; and the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN), made up of 40 human rights organizations who share information and coordinate advocacy before the EU on general topics of human rights. In Guatemala we are an observing member of the Forum of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Guatemala (FONGI).

In 2015 we provided inputs for advocacy documents presented by HRDN to the European Union. Through the network we requested the inclusion of an explicit clause for the protection and participation of rural defenders as well as other vulnerable groups in the European Union's Action Plan for Human Rights 2015-2018. In addition we called for the internal coherence between different aspects of the relations with third States, focusing on the prevention of human rights violations. These points are reflected in sections 7, 9, 17 and 18 of the new EU's Action Plan for Human Rights 2015-2016. With this network we also actively participated in the development and launching of the campaign "Stand for Human Rights Defenders" which

promotes actions for European institutions to attain the liberation of human rights defenders who are wrongfully imprisoned.

Aside from our participation in these networks, we coordinate and closely collaborate with other PBI projects and other organizations, sharing relevant information in different spaces. For example in December 2015 for the proposal of the resolution on human rights defenders for the United Nations General Assembly we recommended that there be explicit mentioning of the need for preventative actions for the protection of defenders by paying special attention to the early participation of writing

policies and programs that pay special attention to attacks in the context of economic investment. Finally on December 17, 2015 under the title "Recognizing the role of human rights defenders and the need for their protection" the resolution was ratified by the Assembly with 127 votes in favor. This resolution condones all violent and intimidating acts directed toward defenders making special mention of the responsibility that companies have in respecting rights of human rights defenders.

SUPPORT NETWORK



During 2015 we activated the Support Network on two occasions:

- In January 2015 out of concern for the security of members of BDH with the re-opening of the genocide case trial. With this alert we managed to get several representatives from Embassies in Guatemala to observe the trial and respect for due process.
- In August 2015 out of concern for the situation of risk of members of the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya due to the disregard for the judicial order from a San Pedro Ayampuc court suspending the gold extraction project by the North American company Kappes, Cassidy & Associates. These circumstances provoked high levels of tension and an increase in security incidents. Our concrete petition on this occasion was to express via letter or bilateral dialogue with the government of Guatemala their preoccupation for the situation demanding the guarantee of the physical integrity of the people involved in the Resistance, as well as respect and compliance of the law. The Swiss and British governments as well as the European Union delegation in Guatemala approached members of the Resistance inviting them to their missions and asking them about other forms of support like legal advice to combat the criminalization process. We also obtained commitments to approach bilateral dialogue with the diplomatic corps (not publicly) with the Guatemalan government.

Our evaluation is that even “small” actions by the international community can have great impact on-the-ground and visibly improve the security of defenders, reducing the danger in cases of high risk. In the Puya case, these actions contributed to increased follow-up by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH) on the case, the Resistance had meetings with the PDH, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) at the Casa Presidencial. In these meetings they transmitted the relevance of their grievances to the transitional government so that the information could be passed on to the new government and given priority in its agenda. Also, they expressed the urgency to respect the injunction handed down in their favor.

ALERTS TO MOBILIZE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN AT-RISK SITUATIONS

The essence of PBI's work is based on dissuasion: the presence of international observers can serve to dissuade and thus prevent human rights violations from occurring. This dissuasive capacity depends on the “political weight”, among other things, of the support behind this presence. It is crucial that PBI's on-the-ground work is sufficiently backed at the international level. To the effect that PBI can obtain and show this international support, it can ensure in a solid manner the usefulness of their on-the-ground presence as well as the effectiveness of their work and the security of volunteers.

For this we have a Support Network made up of people and entities willing to express direct political support to the PBI Guatemala project and in turn for the defenders we accompany who are at risk. The diverse nature of these people and entities is critical and strengthens the network providing a solid foundation. These include members of Parliament, officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other institutions, political personalities, churches, professional associations, NGOs that know of PBI's work in Guatemala, etc. The Support Network is activated when we note a worrisome situation of risk for an organization or person we accompany, after a previous evaluation of the necessity to

exert external pressure to reduce the risk and in turn increase the protection capacity.

Activating the Support Network offers different possibilities that depend on the graveness of the situation. It can be activated by only contacting a few select people considering that they can respond to a concrete petition or we can activate a wider network of contacts. If necessary in a specific case we can call for massive actions to make visible the support and international attention concerning the security of a person or specific organization.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY



HEALING PROCESSES: A CRITICAL TOOL FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN DEFENDERS

One of PBI's main work areas is training as a component to the global strategy of providing protection to human rights defenders. The goal in this work is to help strengthen the capacity of defenders and their organizations so that they can improve their security situation. PBI facilitates training and space for defenders to share under the guidance of local experts, to further strengthen local actors and their capacity.

In recent years we have hosted meetings with women defenders to provide a space to exchange experiences and knowledge. Many times it is women who lead the struggles and resistance in face of the violations to individual and collective rights. This often happens in situations of extreme vulnerability and without their contribution in defense of human rights being recognized and made visible.

For this reason PBI considers facilitating such spaces as essential.

"Women defenders in communities are not visible on many occasions and this makes them more vulnerable compared to their male counterparts who are more visible. The vulnerability of women defenders occurs in two areas: in the family setting because many times their husbands are clearly opposed to their participation, impeding directly or indirectly; the politician and/or government - women who actively defend human rights in communities are insulted by authorities" (María Elena García, Indigenous Council in the community of Las Flores, Jocotán, Chiquimula)

In collaboration with Xinka defender Lorena Cabnal (who is also accompanied by PBI) we hosted two events, one in Cobán, Alta Verapaz and another in Petén in 2015. Both events were aimed to strengthen the healing of women defenders, an essential tool to protect their work and address the emotional crisis that they currently endure. In the encounters a total of 60 indigenous women defenders participated, members of 25 organizations or social movements.

The meetings incorporate a vision of community-based feminism which makes visible the situation of indigenous women who struggle to defend their territory, yet they live in conditions of sexual, economic, psychological and cultural violence because their bodies continue to be expropriated. In light of this situation, community-based feminism encourages conscience recuperation of the first territory or the body as an emancipatory political act.

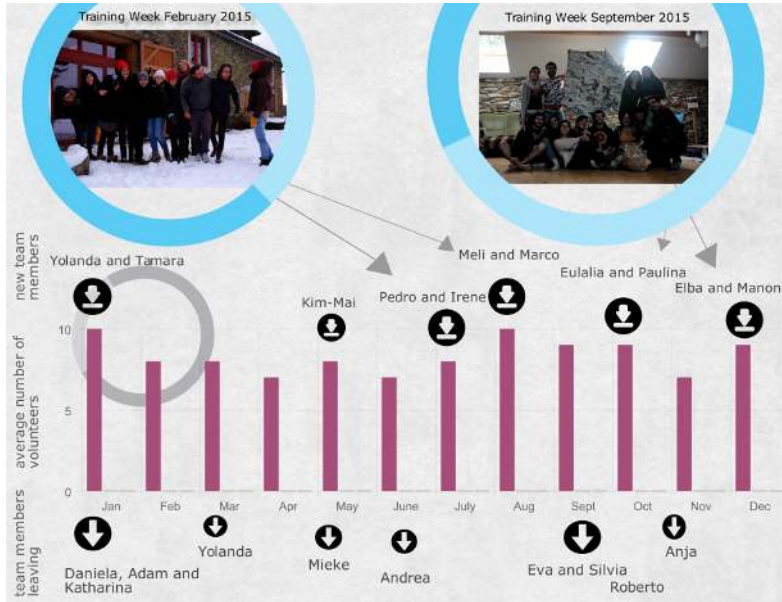
"I don't defend my land territory only because I need the natural resources to live and leave a decent life for other generations. In the approach to the recovery and historical defense of my territory/body/land, I embrace the recuperation of my expropriated body to generate life, vital

happiness, pleasure and the construction of liberating wisdom for making decisions and this potential I join with my defense of my territory (land) because I cannot imagine this woman's body without a space on the Earth that dignifies my existence and promotes my life to the fullest" (Lorena Cabnal).

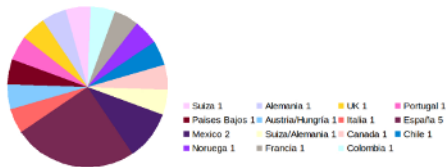
The meetings also aim to build political alliances and moral support between women defenders to sustain political networking as a security measure in their daily lives for the defense of human rights.

"These healing spaces are very important in our lives as women - to overcome the forms of violence we encounter daily and in our political work - for the multiple risks and threats that come with defending women's human rights, communities and defending territory and land and also in the movement derived by different forms of machismo that exist" (Opinion of one of the women defenders who participated in an event).

VOLUNTEERS IN GUATEMALA



In 2015 a total of 20 accompaniers formed part of our team – 16 women and 4 men from 15 different nationalities. This demonstrates the diversity in our teams and reflects the international nature of PBI.



**The collaboration of National Groups in recruiting volunteers is extremely helpful and critical to the project. We appreciate their efforts.



"The effects of Peace Brigades' presence is at times very intangible and at times very subtle that for many it goes unnoticed. For this reason, once you understand more about the why behind PBI's work, you find situations in which it is very evident that our presence has an impact – and it is very impactful to feel that. In my case, I have seen that our presence has great significance at high level hearings. Our impact can be seen at two levels – in the observation of due process and the moral support to witnesses and lawyers involved in the cases. I have also seen that our presence at marches and protests feels like the eyes of the international community are observing. In general, in the advocacy work with national and international authorities – I can see that our words contribute to the mobilization in favor of human rights in the country." Irene

"8 months in Guatemala and I feel like the weeks are flying by. I continue to learn everyday about the project and from my fellow accompaniers and the people we accompany. The contact with the people we accompany continues to give me a lot and I continue to learn from each accompaniment and every meeting. Above all, in moments when I realize that our work has great impact. Something that I also learned this year is to know and accept the limits of PBI's mission. I feel that there are many opportunities and potential for the project and team – a diverse team rich in valuable personal knowledge-.

Dinners to discuss current events, visits to the house from the people we accompany, seeing people in their communities and feel their appreciation that we came to visit them. These are only a few of the moments that fill me with energy and motivation to continue working. I know that I will miss these moments when I finish my year with PBI.

I appreciate everyone for the support during these months. We will continue to walk together." Marco

PBI IN NUMBERS

Presence on the ground

Accompaniments to organizations and social institutions	182
Meetings with local organizations and social entities accompanied	99
Meetings with other Guatemalan organizations	49

Advocacy

Meetings with Guatemalan authorities at state, regional and local level	64
Meetings with the diplomatic corps and embassies, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)	37
Meetings with Ministries of Foreign Affairs and international entities in Europe	27
Speaking tours of human rights defenders in Europe	3
Meeting between human rights defenders and the international community in Guatemala	1

Strengthening local capacities

In total we organized **4** workshops*, for at least

- * **1** Security Workshop
- * **2** Workshops for women human rights defenders
- * **1** Workshop on defamation and criminalization of social protest

Publications



12 Monthly Information Package

2 Semi annual bulletins

1 Special article on Petén

2 Alerts

1 Video



MEMBERS OF PBI GUATEMALA IN 2015:

Volunteer team in Guatemala:

Katharina Ochsendorf (Germany), Adam Paul Lunn (Great Britain), Daniela Jesus Dias (Portugal), Annemieke van Opheusden (Netherlands), Andrea Czollner (Austria/Hungary), Roberto Romero García (Mexico), Silvia Parmeggiani (Italy), Eva Virgili Recasens (Spanish State), Anja Nielsen (Norway), Tamara Castro Pousa (Spanish State), Yolanda Garzón Montero (Colombia), Kim-Mai Vu (Switzerland), Irene Izquieta García (Spanish State), Pedro Cárdenas Casillas (Mexico), Melisande Seguin (Canada), Marco Baumgartner (Switzerland/Germany), Eulàlia Pradó Giral (Spanish State), Paulina Martínez Larrain (Chile), Manon Fenoy (France) and Elba Estrada Gutiérrez (Spanish State).

Project committee:

Montserrat García (United States of America), Maïke Holderer (Guatemala), Anabella Estol (Argentina), Danilo Guerrero Diaz (Australia), Samuel Jones (Great Britain), Kerstin Reemtsma (Belgium), Amaya de Miguel (Spanish State), Cristina Barbeito (Spanish State)

Formation team:

Maïke Holderer (Guatemala), Anabella Estol (Argentina), Engel Montuenga (Spanish State), Kathrin Ruegg (Switzerland), Maria Cayena Abello (Colombia), Erika Martínez García (Guatemala), Sanne de Swart (Australia), Kristel Best Urdy (Peru), Felix Weiss (Germany)

Project staff:

Amaya de Miguël (coordinator), Kerstin Reemtsma (representative to the European Union), Mayte Quesada (administrator), Jacques van Luytelaar (financial supervisor), Paola Sarti (fundraiser), Silvia Weber (field support), Maïke Holderer (responsible of formation)

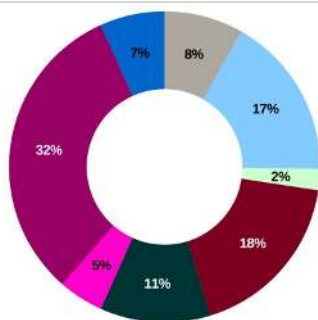
Project consultants:

Evangalina Scarfe (Guatemala), Fermin Rodrigo (Spanish State)

2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

How we spend our money?



- Formation, training and orientation of volunteers
- Physical presence and advocacy in Guatemala
- Workshops/training for human rights defenders in Guatemala
- Publication, alerts, image and visibility outside of Guatemala
- Coordination – strategy, monitoring and evaluation
- Audit
- Fund-raising, Administration, Finance
- Support to the work of PBI International

EXPENSES 2015

Formation, training and orientation of volunteers
Physical presence and advocacy in Guatemala
Workshops/training for human rights defenders in Guatemala
Publication, alerts, image and visibility outside of Guatemala
Coordination – strategy, monitoring and evaluation
Audit
Fund-raising, Administration, Finance
Support to the work of PBI International

Euros

19.168	6,75%
90.354	31,83%
13.327	4,70%
32.639	11,50%
50.576	17,82%
6.227	2,19%
48.290	17,01%
23.264	8,20%

Total EXPENSES

283.845 Euros

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME AND EXPENSES

17,527 Euros

At the end of 2015 we had a surplus of 6% of the budget. This reserve allowed the project to cover six months of operational costs in 2016. Such reserves are part of the good practices in management of nonprofit entities and are outlined in the financial norms of PBI international office.

Once the reserve is over six months of the operational costs, they are used to cover operational expenses for the year. This surplus generated in 2015 was due to lower expenses compared to the budget for the year, with an unexpected departure of three team members which made for a lower

Breakdown of the Financial Statements

2015
EUR

OPERATIONAL INCOME 301.339

Government aid 147.173

Germany	86.009
Zivilier Friedensdienst (ZFD)	
Catalunya	23.995
Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)	
Spanish State	1.140
Ayuntamiento de Reinosa	3.442
Diputación de Córdoba	4.007
Generalitat Valenciana - Periferies	
Switzerland	10.541
FEDEVACO - Lausanne	3.258
FEDEVACO - Renens	1.928
Ville de Bemex	12.853
Kanton Basel-Stadt	

Non-government aid 144.151

Germany	18.300
Brot für die Welt	12.263
Misereor	
Belgium	5.041
Orfam Solidarité	
Canada	11.049
Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)	4.748
Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)	6.594
UNIFOR/CEP	
Spanish State	950
Colegio de Trabajo Social de Cantabria	
United States of America	2.650
Overbrook Foundation	
France	3.600
Non Violence XXI	
Ireland	28.316
Trocair	
Mexico	8.000
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung	
Netherlands	2.000
International Service for Peace (ISPAZ)	
Guatemala	2.015
Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad	
United Kingdom	3.957
Sigrid Rausing Trust	15.043
Open Society	
Switzerland	650
Jenö Stahelin Stiftung	12.853
Gesamtkirchengemeinde Bern und Umgebung.	3.213
Berti Wicke Stiftung	2.909
Solidarité Int. Ginebra	

Income from PBI country groups 2.001

PBI Italy (Valdese Evangelic Church)	2.000
PBI Switzerland	1

Private donors 6.884

Fees from training participants 1.130

NON-OPERATIONAL INCOME 33

Interest yield	33
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TOTAL INCOME 301.372

number of international accompaniers than budgeted for the year. All of the expenses and income presented in this report are in Euros.

We thank all donors for their financial support that allowed us to carry out all of the expected activities in 2015.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a nongovernmental organization with 35 years of experience in international accompaniment. PBI has had a presence in Guatemala since 1983 (with a break between 1999 and 2003) protecting the space of people, organizations and movements that promote human rights in a nonviolent manner and who suffer repression in their work. PBI works at the request of local organizations in accordance with nonviolent, noninterventionist and nonpartisan principles using a horizontal organizational structure and reaching decisions in consensus.

PBI maintains a physical presence alongside threatened defenders with its international field volunteers. PBI performs tasks of dialoguing with local authorities, as well as with human rights organizations and other civil society actors in Guatemala. PBI maintains a dialogue with the diplomatic corps and multilateral organisms in Guatemala, Europe and North America. PBI disseminates information and requests international support to guarantee the security of Guatemalan human rights defenders.

PBI aims to contribute in the creation of necessary conditions so that defenders, their organizations and communities can continue to work to increase respect, observance and protection of human rights and strengthen the Rule of Law in Guatemala.

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