



ANNUAL REPORT 2016



making space for peace
GUATEMALA PROJECT

Annual Report 2016 – PBI Guatemala July 2017

Writing and editing: PBI Guatemala

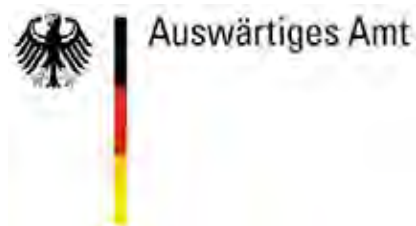
Design and layout: Pedro Ferrigno - info@iride502.com

Photographs: PBI Guatemala

Cover photo: Accompanying an assembly of the Ch'orti' Campesino Central "New Day" (CCCND) in Matasano, Jocotán, Chiquimula (June 2016).

The Annual Report of the Guatemala Project is a publication written and edited by PBI Guatemala. PBI Guatemala does not assume responsibility for statements issued by third parties in this publication.

This Annual Report is funded by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) with resources provided by the German Federal Foreign Office.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License. You can remix, tweak, and build upon it non-commercially, as long as you credit PBI (coordinacion@pbi-guatemala.org) and license your new creations under the identical terms.

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	4
CURRENT NEWS	8
WHO WE ACOMPANY.....	12
Petén – Following the human rights situation and social processes on the defense of territory and natural resources.....	14
La Puya: peaceful resistance against the plunder of common goods	15
The struggle for justice and against impunity in Guatemala: a high risk activity	18
ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION.....	20
Political advocacy for the mobilization of international community on the protection of defenders	20
Our work in coalition with others	22
Public Forum: 20 Years since the signing on the Peace Accords – the situation of human rights defenders	24
STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY	26
VOLUNTEERING IN GUATEMALA	28
PBI IN NUMBERS	30
MEMBERS OF PBI GUATEMALA IN 2016:	31
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.....	32
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS	34



INTRODUCTION

2016 commemorated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords in Guatemala. PBI organized a public forum focused on the participation of civil society in democratic Guatemala and in the situation of defenders. Speakers pointed out the accomplishments and identified the pending challenges in the permanent peace building process.

Contrary to the Peace Accords, this year we have seen an increase in militarization of territory carried out by Jimmy Morales'

government. The most affected zones are those where there are conflicts around economic projects related to extraction of natural resources. The departments in Eastern Guatemala and the Quiché department have been scenario to this process. Also the towns of Nebaj and Jocotán are "pilot municipalities" for the Alliance for Prosperity Plan, put forth by the United States in Central America. In this situation PBI has responded by increasing our presence in the area by accompanying organizations in those departments. We have also expanded the dissemination of information to the international community and facilitated



the participation of two defenders from these areas to participate in advocacy tours in Europe.

The political context in Guatemala is still characterized for its systematic violation of rights. In 2016, PBI responded to nine critical situations that put at risk the security situation of diverse social actors who participate in processes to defend human rights. We responded to those emergencies putting forth support measures to contribute to their protection.

Aside from the described context, the people, organizations and collectives who defend human rights in Guatemala have

continued to make a firm commitment to the peaceful demand for changes in favor of the majority.

In this sense throughout the year we have observed the participation of Guatemalan society in the proposed Constitutional reform to the justice sector. The most significant are the proposed reforms that aim to recognize, at the Constitutional level, the indigenous peoples own legal system which would mean admitting the existence of a plurinational State in Guatemala. Unfortunately, the State apparatus has not allowed this reform to be passed, showing that the path to



full recognition of rights of the entire population continues to be long and full of obstacles.

We would like to point out the important legal advances achieved by the communities through their tireless defense of territory and natural resources as well as through

dialogue. This is the case of the Peaceful Resistance of the San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc communities facing the installation of a mining project. Said Resistance achieved two judicial sentences that called for the suspension of mining project operations. Despite this triumph, at the end of 2016 the mine remained



open furthering the concerns for the lack of compliance for the court sentences both on behalf of the mining company and the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM). As a consequence of this situation we continue attentive for any possible violent

manifestations that could occur towards local communities, as explained on page 12 to 14.

This year brought new hope for victims and survivors of the internal armed conflict (1960-1996) seeking justice with the celebration of trials that involve the army in grave human rights violations. Following the opening of these trials, justice operators and national and international organizations that work against impunity have been victims of grave threats. PBI has strengthened its accompaniment of the Human Rights Law Firm (BDH) who represents the joint complainant in several transitional justice cases. Also we have started accompanying the Neighbor Association of Chicoyogüito (AVECHAV) who includes witnesses for one of the cases. We use our political advocacy tools to guarantee the security of these actors by activating our support network. This activation contributed so that the international community would be concerned about the security of the justice operators and carry out actions in favor of their protection which helped increase the security sensation of these actors, as described on page 16.

This year we continued to support the capacity of self-protection of defenders especially in rural areas. We have facilitated trainings focused on: healing processes for women defenders; tools of prevention and how to react in cases of defamation and criminalization; and IT security. In these spaces more than a hundred people have participated, the great majority being women. On page 23 to 24, we focus our attention on the space for IT security as an example of this work.

Guatemalan men and women continue their efforts daily for the peaceful defense of human rights, providing a great contribution to the construction of democracy in the country. PBI continues to wager on their protection and for maintaining their space of action.

CURRENT NEWS

2016 was the first year of Jimmy Morales' National Convergence Front administration, elected in an electoral process that took place in an environment of social protests due to the existence of criminal mafia structures that coopted power by way of polls during previous government. Although the elections took place in this context, the outcome was not consequence of social protest, but rather readjustments within the military, political and economic power structures. In this sense according to different analysts, the political and institutional crisis remains in force, demonstrating a crisis of legitimacy and stability that conditions the exercise of political power in the country.

This first year of the administration has shown the willingness to maintain intact the extraction-based economic model that is the cause of different existing conflicts in Guatemala. In response, social and community organizations and especially indigenous peoples have continued to request the construction of a new State through the adoption of structural and integral measures that approach an economic model and the need for a state and social organization that responds to the existence of the peoples with their own identities and organizational ways. None the less, faced with these demands and proposals, the political institutions have shown they do not have the will to carry out reforms: the open debate during 2016 to reform the Constitution in the justice sector did not move forward. According to different analysts, this demonstrates the intention of the majority of the legislators to maintain a pact of impunity.

This is context the high risk situation in which human rights defenders live continues, especially for those who defend the environment, nature, natural resources, water and access to land. We have assisted an increase of the number of murders – a situation that has been denounced by international organizations,



by the European Union (EU) and by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Guatemala. As well as the ongoing strategy of criminalization. Several national and international entities have called attention to the improper use of the judicial system to impede or place obstacles in the work defending human rights. Likewise, the Ombudsman in Guatemala stated in a statement on December 10, 2016 that the "improper" use of criminal law to intimidate, coerce, persecute and imprison social leaders, community leaders, legal advisors, prosecutors and all types of defenders with the purpose of appeasing their social demands and the fight against impunity.



Likewise, defamation campaigns driven by actors linked to military power have increased. Strategies to incite violence and discrimination towards defenders by using “hate speech” that looks to delegitimize the work they do have also increased. The OHCHR has expressed their concern for threats that these messages imply on the life and integrity of defenders. These campaigns have been specifically directed towards justice operators and actors involved in paradigmatic trials of human rights violations perpetrated during the internal armed conflict that are being heard in the Guatemalan courts and have placed the Guatemalan Army of that time in

the spotlight. Defamation is also one of the tactics used mainly against women defenders who denounce human rights violations in their work and defy the patriarchal system that wants to make them invisible and seclude them to private spaces. In this context, the sentence handed down in the Sepur Zarco case against two former military members accused of acts of sexual violence and domestic and sexual slavery committed between 1982 and 1986 and also the forced disappearance of several men is of special importance. Said verdict is considered historic as it is the first national case that recognized domestic slavery, sexual slavery and sexual



violence against indigenous women during the internal armed conflict as a crime against humanity.

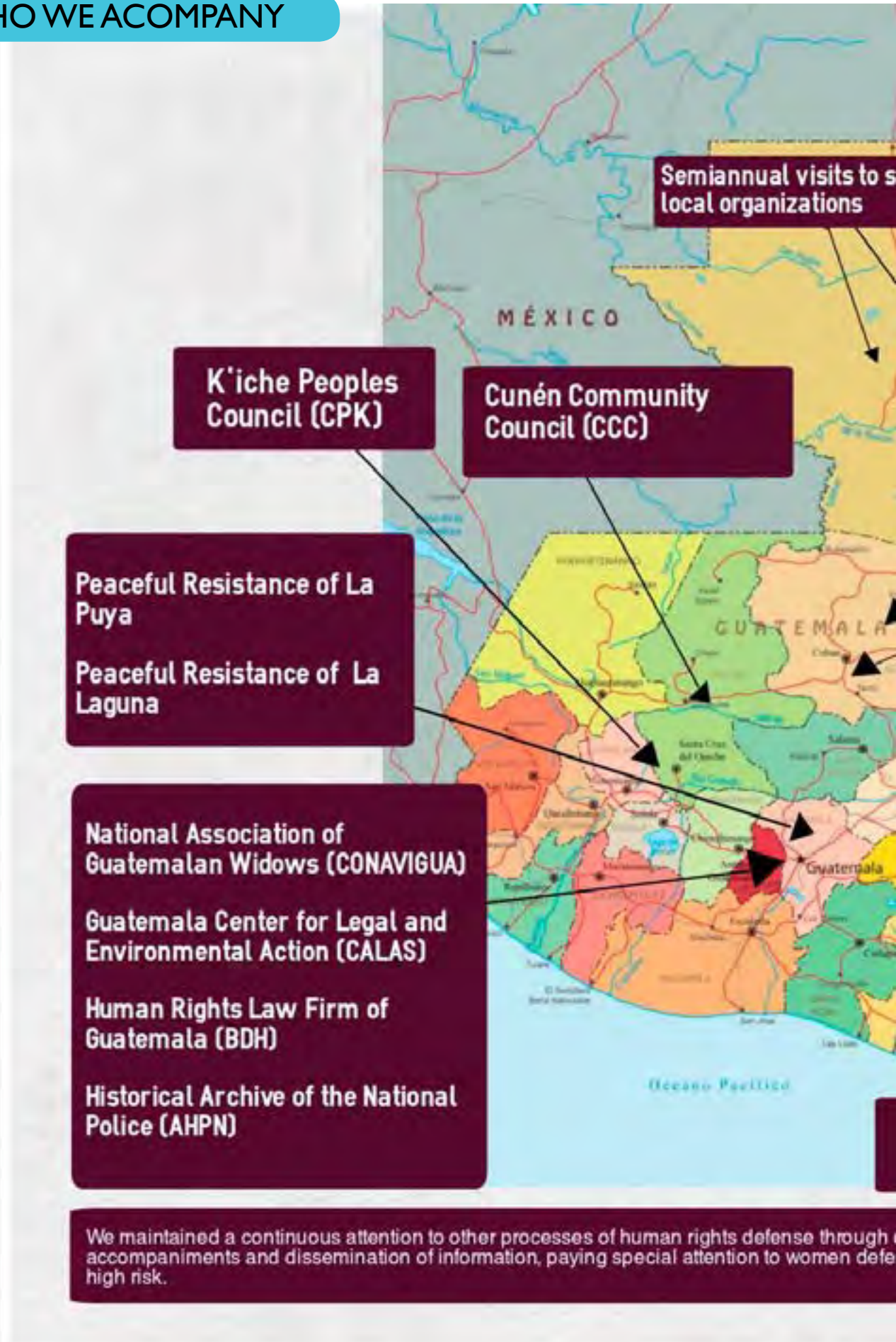
The State of Guatemala continues to have a weak role in the protection of human rights defenders. On one hand there is still a lack of prompt and efficient investigation to identify and sanction people responsible for aggressions. This is something that has been publically denounced by several Guatemalan civil society organizations. On the other hand, the State has started a

process to revise protective measures for defenders. Which has led in some cases to the withdrawal of these measures, leaving these people in a situation of greater vulnerability and in a condition of high risk to exercise the defense of human rights. Given this scenario, local and international social organizations have called on Guatemalan authorities to develop an integral public policy with the participation of those who defend human rights. Such policy would protect them and allow them to carry out their work in a free

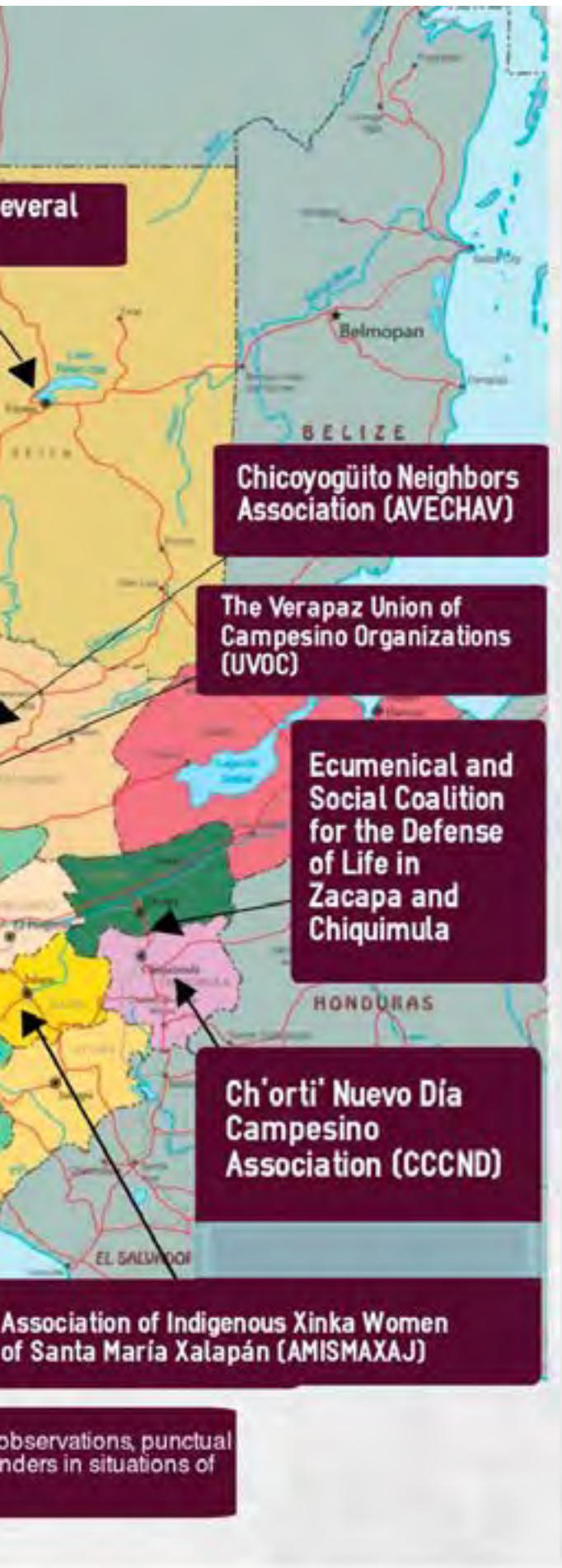


and secure environment. While concluding his visit to Guatemala at the beginning of June 2016, UE Special Representative on Human Rights, Stavros Lambridinis also emphasized the importance of national policy on human rights to guarantee the economic, social, labor and cultural rights as well as the need to create and implement a policy on the protection of defenders.

PBI will continue our attention on this process providing support and accompaniment to those involved.



We maintained a continuous attention to other processes of human rights defense through accompaniments and dissemination of information, paying special attention to women defense high risk.



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

In 2016 we accompanied 12 organizations or social processes and two individual defenders in high risk situations (84 people, 52 men and 32 women).

We started accompanying AVECHAV and provided occasional accompaniment to the Center for Legal, Environmental and Social Action (CALAS) during the months of November and December 2016 due to the high insecurity experienced by the organization after the murder of one of its members.

We ended our accompaniment with the Historical Archive of the National Police (AHPN) and to the Association of Indigenous Women of Santa María Xalapán (AMISMAXAJ) due to the significant decrease in risk of their security situations.



Petén – Following the human rights situation and social processes on the defense of territory and natural resources

Since 2010 we have made annual visits to the department of Peten to follow the human rights situation and specific problems that concern and affect defenders, social organizations and rural communities. After the visits we have made visible the situations we observed via publications and meetings with public authorities and the international community, both in Guatemala and in other countries.

In 2016 we made two trips that allowed us to observe different worrisome aspects including an increase in militarization; an

increase in African palm cultivation and its consequences on communities; persisting violence against women and the LGBTI community; and problems felt in Protected Areas. We visited Centro 1 and Triunfo de la Esperanza, displaced communities. In the article "Petén - surviving in Protected Areas: Life in Sierra del Lacandón and Laguna del Tigre communities" we made visible the infringement on their fundamental rights and other concerns of these communities. Likewise, we observed an increase in persecution against communities in Protected Areas after they presented to Congress a proposal for Alternative Integral Development in September. In several meetings with Guatemalan authorities and the international community we addressed our concerns for the persecution suffered by these communities and the deterioration of their security situation.

La Puya: peaceful resistance against the plunder of common goods

Since 2010 residents of 12 villages in San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc on the outskirts of Guatemala City have carried out peaceful resistance activities to protest their disagreement with the gold extraction project, Progreso VII Derivada. This project is currently owned by the US company Kappes, Cassidy & Associates with local subsidiaries Exploraciones Mineras de Guatemala S.A. and Servicios Mineros de Centro América S.A. In March 2012, villagers decided to block the entrance to the mine and set up La Puya protest camp where they take 24 hour shifts to prevent the entrance of machinery to the mine.

Since then the Resistance calls for a free and informed consultation prior to starting operations as well as an independent environmental impact study as the study conducted by the company has been highly questioned. These demands are due to concerns of the impact that the mine could have by reducing access to water, water pollution, death of local fauna and general damage to the ecosystem and ultimately to life itself. La Puya has important participation of women. They are the ones who have occupied the front lines of the resistance defying assigned gender roles and confronting the patriarchal system while defending life itself.

Assassination attempt, criminalization, violent evictions and threats: the insecure situation in La Puya

Ever since the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya started its work several of its members have suffered threats and aggressions. For example, it is important to mention the assassination attempt against one of its members in June 2012. Others have been subject to defamation and legal accusations without substance, due to their commitment to the Resistance. Currently at least 30 community members suffer

different legal accusations, three of which have been convicted to prison for nine years convertible to a fine. La Puya defenders and other civil society organizations denounce irregularities plaguing this legal process. On May 23, 2014 the protest camp that the Resistance maintained blocking the entrance to the mine was violently evicted by police elements. None-the-less, after these events the Resistance rebuilt a protest camp and continued its peaceful demands directed towards the Guatemalan State who has not complied with its duty to protect the interests of the population. To the contrary, on several occasions it has defended the rights of the company putting structures at their service.

International accompaniment: supporting peaceful resistance strategies

In light of the violence exerted by the company and the Guatemalan State through its security apparatus, the communities have consciously decided to protect life through a non-violent struggle and the generation of trust and articulation among the same communities.

The Peaceful Resistance of La Puya has and continues to seek dialogue with the State to find impartial solutions aligned with human rights commitments. They also seek justice through legal measures looking to uphold respect for national laws and international conventions ratified by the State of Guatemala.

To carry out these strategies and widen their reach, the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya has sought alliances and accompaniment of international organizations among them is PBI.

PBI started accompanying La Puya in November 2012. Since that time we have maintained a periodic presence at the protest camp at the entrance to the mine. We have been present, especially in emergency situations like on occasions when the company escorted by the National Civil Police (PNC) tried to disperse the protest camp to enter or remove machinery



and allow for work to continue at the mine despite community opposition. PBI's presence at those times has guaranteed the security of the members present and in the case of the violent eviction of the protest camp in May 2014 denounce the disproportionate use of force on behalf of the police elements.

"The fact that there are outside companions who are monitoring (the situation) has been a great help – it has given us security given the business alliance with some public institutions" **(Miriam Pixtum, member of Peaceful Resistance of La Puya).**

Through international accompaniment we have supported the strategy of dialogue with government entities driven by the communities. We have accompanied them to high level meetings and maintain a continuous dialogue with Guatemalan authorities to discuss the security situation of the Resistance

and the need to keep open political spaces for dialogue. The communities have continued to dialogue with State institutions yet to date the spaces have not led to results of opening real possible solutions to the conflict of the parties involved.

"Political advocacy allows us to meet with members of the international community committed to human rights, so that they can be witnesses to our dialogue with the Guatemalan government. Because when we dialogue with public officials (of the Guatemalan government), we run the risk that they will twist the information and generate a defamation campaign against those of us who converse with them - we exercise and defend the rights of the people. This creates fear of speaking. We want the international community to observe these things." **(Miriam Pixtum, member of Peaceful Resistance of La Puya).**



From the time we started the accompaniment, we have brought knowledge of the communities' security situation to numerous meetings with representatives of the international community, both in Guatemala and in other countries. Along the same lines, we have facilitated two advocacy speaking tours with Resistance members in Europe and the United States. On three occasions between 2013 and 2015, we have activated our Support Network in response to an increase in threats and intimidation toward the Resistance. In particular after the violent eviction of the protest camp, PBI's work has been essential in mobilizing the diplomatic corps, the OHCHR, the Human Rights working group of the Council of the EU (COHOM), journalists and distinguished people in the political-social environment both on the national and international level. These institutions and people expressed to the Guatemalan government and to its embassies abroad their concerns on the closing of spaces for the defense of human rights. In particular their concern for the

use of violence in the eviction of the La Puya protest camp. They also spoke out on the cancelation of temporary residency permits of two PBI volunteers as a result of observing these events which was later reversed thanks to these interventions.

All of this work contributed so that the Resistance could count on the support of different embassies present in Guatemala whom have conducted visits to the protest camp, held meetings with members, and have observed hearings of defenders criminalized for their work. Likewise, according to Resistance members, PBI's advocacy work contributed to greater presence at the protest camp on behalf of State organisms charged with promoting and defending human rights, like the Office of Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH). These actions also made for a decrease in incidents with PNC elements installed there permanently.

**"The security incidents with the permanent police (PNC) unit present at the protest camp decrease when there is international presence because this dissuades more violent actions".
(defender of Peaceful Resistance of La Puya).**

International attention on La Puya helped to keep open political action spaces for communities which has allowed the Resistance to continue its work. Since 2015, the communities have achieved important successes in their legal strategy in front of the mine. Several favorable sentences have been handed down by the courts. The most recent was handed down by the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) who on November 23, 2016 determined that the mining company had violated the communities' right to consultation and ordered the suspension of the exploitation license. The mine nor the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) have respected the judicial sentences that favor the communities and at the end of December 2016 the mine continued without closing. For this reason there remains concern about possible violent situations towards the communities and PBI maintains attention and support for the Resistance.

The struggle for justice and against impunity in Guatemala: a high risk activity

The Human Rights Law Firm (BDH) led by attorney Edgar Pérez Archila is a law firm with international recognition whose lawyers represent free of charge, both victims of grave human rights violations committed during the internal armed conflict in Guatemala (1960-1996) as well as victims of present day human rights violations. The BDH has participated in some of the most important legal processes for transitional justice. Among these is the Ixil genocide case who achieved a conviction of 80 years in prison to the ex de facto head of state José Efraín Ríos Montt in May 2013. The sentence was later annulled by the Constitutional Court requiring part of the trial to be repeated. Yet this represents an emblematic process for the quest for justice, not only in Guatemala but around the world.

Several of the legal processes that BDH works on are very high profile which increases the risk level of the lawyers who have suffered different security incidents, among which are multiple defamations. For this reason PBI has accompanied them since 2010. In 2016 with the opening of a case for disappearance that took place between 1981 and 1988 of civilians in the former Military Zona 21 of Alta Verapaz, also known as Regional Command of Training Operations for the Maintenance of Peace (CREOMPAZ), there was an increase in threats and intimidations both toward BDH lawyers and witnesses. It is important to note that in this case retired military officials are involved, some of whom are linked to the current administration who governs Guatemala.

In light of this situation, we have seen the need to increase visits to the BDH office in Guatemala City as well accompaniment for attorney Edgar Pérez between his law office and court, looking to prevent possible direct attacks.

Likewise in March we started accompanying the AVECHAV association, made up of 250 families from the uprooted community of Chicoyogüito in Cobán (Alta Verapaz) that in 1982 was razed

by the army. This association is one of the joint complainants in the CREOMPAZ case. We have traveled with witnesses between Coban and Guatemala City and we have observed hearings in which they have attended to offer testimony.

"[PBI] accompanies us in our transfers and inside the Supreme Court. With your presence we feel more secure, they help us a lot and they give us the courage to move forward" (AVECHAV member).

During the majority of these court proceedings the situation outside the court was tense and acts of intimidations against involved actors took place and also directed towards international organizations who accompany them. Although attacks have not decreased with international presence, it has been important moral support of those involved.

"The presence of international accompaniment organizations at the hearings make us feel more secure in light of the numerous security incidents against complainants and who we represent" (BDH lawyer).

PBI will continue to monitor the security situation of these actors for the duration of the trials.



Activation of PBI Support Network for the protection of actors involved in transitional justice cases

The severe increase in the number of threats and intimidations towards lawyers and lawyers who work on human rights violations made it necessary for PBI to activate its Support Network in April. We distributed detailed information to reach a wide audience of local, national and international actors requesting specifically that the international community observe hearings and express their concerns to the Guatemalan government on the security situation of the actors involved in these trials. This contributed to that on several occasions representatives from six European and North American Embassies, the European Union Delegation in Guatemala and the OHCHR observed hearings of the case and they held meetings with the BDH lawyers. Likewise, OHCHR representatives conducted a visit to the department of Alta Verapaz and met with AVECHAV members, increasing their

protection. On at least four occasions in high level bilateral discussions with the Guatemalan government, concerns about the security situation of justice operators were mentioned. Communication was sent to President Jimmy Morales by the Law Society of England and Wales and by one of the three European members of Parliament who visited Guatemala at the beginning of 2016 as a part of the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights (DROI). Both communications were direct results from PBI activating its network and exhorted the government to guarantee the security of the actors involved in transitional justice processes. The BDH lawyers and witnesses expressed feeling more support and security as a consequence of PBI's activation of emergency network as well as expressing better conditions to continue the path for justice and the construction of peace in the country.

"We feel that the attention from international embassies on our case increases our personal security" (AVECHAV member).



ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION

Political advocacy for the mobilization of international community on the protection of defenders

This year we want to make visible PBI's ongoing work informing and its advocacy work contributes elements that translate into a greater attention by the international community on the situation of human rights defenders in Guatemala. This contributes to the fact that international missions and organizations pronounce and apply protective measures for defenders, thus improving their security situation.

As a result of PBI's past advocacy work at the beginning of 2016, the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights decided to send a delegation to Guatemala. Along with other organizations we met with members of this delegation to share aspects of the human rights situation in Guatemala that we believe to be of most concern. PBI placed special emphasis on the problem of criminalization, highlighting those who most suffer are defenders who work on economic, social, cultural and environmental rights topics as well as those work against impunity. We also gave them a report we wrote in collaboration with other organizations.

The delegation of three European members of Parliament carried out a variety of activities during its visit to Guatemala. They visited defenders who have been incarcerated for a long time on non-substantiated accusations and have not yet had their first hearing. They also met with government representatives expressing their overwhelming concern for the situation. This concern was also reflected in their statement disseminated at the end of their stay in Guatemala.

Months later the defenders visited by the delegation finally had their first hearing and were released. The judge in charge of

the case declared the accusations without reason and specifically stated in the sentence she handed down that the accused had been victims of criminalization.

PBI has followed-up with this delegation, keeping its members informed on the development of events in Guatemala. We requested their support due to the increase in risk that members of the Human Rights Law Firm (BDH) have experienced during trials of several high impact cases. As a result, one of the members of the delegation wrote a letter to the President of Guatemala requesting security guarantees for justice operators and threatened lawyers, as we state on page 15.

Another important moment in our advocacy work this year was the presentation we made before the working groups on human rights and Latin America, COHOM and COLAC, of the European Union Council. We presented the problem of murders of defenders, called attention to patterns of attacks which are critical moments where States and the international community can and should intervene applying protective and preventative measures.

The European Parliament's working group on Central America returned the increase in attacks on Guatemalan defenders to its agenda and gave the opportunity to PBI Guatemala to present the most identified risks in the defense of human rights. Likewise, PBI recommended better application of protective measures by the UE delegation in Guatemala and called for public support of the efforts in defense of human rights.

Along the same lines of work informing the international community and highlighting key concerns based on PBI's accompaniment and requesting public support and protective measure for defenders also throughout the year our team in Guatemala has carried out similar work in meetings with the diplomatic corps.



With these continuous actions, PBI contributed to the fact that several missions made statements on the need for the Guatemalan government to protect defenders on December 10.

Likewise throughout the year, different diplomatic missions implemented concrete protective measures as solicited by PBI, among others. Some examples are: observing trials where BDH represented the joint complainants and visits to BDH's law office; the participation of defenders accompanied by PBI in meetings with the European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights; meetings of defenders with Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative on Human Rights, during his visit to Guatemala; visits from several diplomats to Quiché, where

they met with Council of K'iche' Peoples (CPK), organization accompanied by PBI; meetings with Peaceful Resistance of La Puya members with embassy representatives; and visits of the diplomatic corps to Alta Verapaz, where they met with organizations accompanied by PBI, AVECHAV and Union of Campesino Organizations of Verapaz (UVOC).

In a highly conflictive and threatening context directed towards those who defend human rights, we think this attention and support by the international community for the work and security of human rights defenders helps protect them and maintain the space to search for peaceful solutions to their needs and demands.



Our work in coalition with others

PBI Guatemala participates in joint initiatives with the rest of PBI entities along with other NGOs, networks or associations, both in Guatemala and on the international level. From the perspective of protection for defenders and taking into account the unique nature of our work on the ground which allows us to learn firsthand about the security situation of these people, this year we have contributed our perspective to several national plans of European governments on business and human rights, taking advantage of the presence of active PBI groups in these countries.

Likewise, in collaboration with the Human Rights and Democracy Network, a network of more than 40 international human rights organizations of which we are a part of, we provided inputs for policy proposals of multilateral organisms like the EU, as well as reports for European Parliament members. We also participated in the organization of joint activities.

Participation in the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

In November the fifth UN Forum on Business and Human Rights took place in Geneva. For the Forum we organized a parallel event entitled, "How many more killings

and threats? Solutions to protect human rights defenders working on extractives in Latin America.” The event was organized with other PBI entities, Business and Human Rights Resource Center, Frontline Defenders, Global Witness, International Platform against Impunity and International Service for Human Rights. During the event we made visible possible protection strategies from different perspectives, highlighting best practices and we identified pending challenges. Two defenders, an international NGO representative, a representative of the Swiss government and a representative of a Brazilian hydroelectric company participated in the event.

The two defenders who participated on the panel were Laura Zúñiga and Omar Jerónimo. Honduran Laura Zúñiga is member of the Civic Council of Community and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) and daughter of one of COPINH’s founders, Berta Cáceres murdered in March 2016 for her opposition to a hydroelectric project. Laura gave an introduction speech denouncing that her mother’s murder was the last step in a long series of threats, intimidations and defamations denounced by the organization and that should have served to prevent this and other murders. Omar Jerónimo, Coordinator of the Campesino Central Coordinator New Day’ Ch’ortí’ (CCCND), organization accompanied by PBI in Guatemala, spoke before the auditorium of more than 100 people (government representatives, businesses, NGOs and other defenders) about the threats that he and his organization face due to the demands they are making. They are demanding respect for their rights in the context of plans to build a hydroelectric in the region where they live. He also spoke

of the need to solve who are the actors behind the threats and requested support from governments towards defenders.

“The compliance to regulations and legislation in countries is essential. None-the-less, Latin American countries have very weak institutions and political incapacity to make decisions as they are thinking more about business interests than about people. Because of this, companies’ home countries should have the capacity to apply legislation on the businesses – regardless of where they carry out their operations. They should use legal instruments and make sure justice is done and that those who harm defenders pay for their crimes. In this way, these countries can help strengthen the institutionalism in third countries where their companies operate”. (words of Omar Jerónimo during his intervention at the V UN Forum on Business and Human Rights).

All of the convening organizations gave the event a positive evaluation. We think the format and moderation allowed to make known the risks that defenders encounter in the context of investment as well as facilitate direct answers to the public’s questions. Ultimately this space opened a dialogue between different actors who are immersed in these types of conflicts.

Since 2016 we are part of **ProtectDefenders.eu** along with other organizations active in the field of human rights. **ProtectDefenders.eu** is a mechanism established by the European Union to protect defenders who are in difficult situations all over the world. We have coordinated advocacy initiatives with several members and collaborated in multiple spaces that have allowed us to increase the reach of our work.

Public Forum: 20 Years since the signing on the Peace Accords – the situation of human rights defenders held on October 5, 2016 in Guatemala City

On December 29, 1996 the government of Guatemala and Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG) signed the long and lasting peace in Guatemala City. These Peace Accords ended a 36 year long armed conflict that left 200,000 dead, 45,000 disappeared and more than one and a half million people displaced as refugees both within Guatemala and in other countries. The signing of peace opened the path to create social, economic and political bases to address the causes of the war.

At PBI we asked how the situation of civil society in general and the situation of human rights defenders has changed in the 20 years since the signing of the Peace Accords. We consider defenders to be the main actors of change as their work is focused on different struggles that push a transition from a repressive country to one with democratic rule of law. A civil society free to act and demand fulfillment of fundamental and universal rights is a key indicator to measure compliance of the Peace Accords.

Because of this we proposed a discussion to share reflections on the advances and challenges in the defense of human rights, social struggles and the construction of social peace in present day Guatemala. All this from the perspective of those who were part of the negotiations and activists who started working on human rights after the signing of the Peace Accords and in recent years. We invited: Rosalina Tuyuc, co-founder of National Coordinator of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA); Marcos Ramírez, member of Population in Resistance Communities (CPR) and



Civil Society Assembly participant; Yuri Melini, founder of CALAS and Andrea Ixchú, social communication activist. Anabella Sibrián, representative of the International Platform against Impunity in Guatemala moderated the forum.

During the course of the conversation, the lack of political will on behalf of the State to push for democratic transformations that favor the citizen participation, as well as structural reforms is noted.

“All we have achieved to date, we have gained by fighting for it. Struggles in the streets, social pressure (protests) in front of municipalities, in front of Congress, in front of courts and also in front of the National Palace... everything that has been gained has been won by us – the survivors” (Rosalina Tuyuc).

La situación de las PERSONAS DEFENSORAS de Derechos Humanos



It was also evident that inequality and social exclusion which affect indigenous communities and peoples continue to characterize the country's socio-economic situation.

"For us to speak of peace is to have all essential needs covered in order to live or survive. But if we look at the conditions that exist in Guatemala, Are living conditions satisfactory for communities? For the population these are not satisfactory and for this reason we believe that there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve the hope of peace. (Marcos Ramírez).

"20 years ago indigenous peoples were subject to discrimination, racism and exclusion and this has not changed. It is necessary to create a culture of tolerance, respect and fight against inequality and

social exclusion. It can't be that in this country a few have so much and many have nothing" (Yuri Melini).

Looking toward the future, forum participants stated a need to re-found the State and write a new Constitution with active participation from peoples who have been excluded from participating and in the design of the government model.

"Peace is a permanent, daily construction that all of us should be involved in. What we have today has been built on thousands of cadavers and the blood of many people. This is something that we must not forget." (Andrea Ixchú).

A written transcript and video of this public forum can be found on PBI Guatemala's website.



STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY

In our work aimed to strengthen the capacity of self-protection in defenders and local organizations in 2016 we facilitated a workshop on IT security. This was done in response to request from several people we accompany who expressed the need to strengthen their skills and knowledge on this topic. To carry out the workshop we relied on two local organizations who are experts on the subject: Security in Democracy Association (SEDEM) and ACCESO Foundation. The workshop was particularly timely because

according to ACCESO Foundation IT security incidents are increasing for Central American defenders.

Due to the generalized use of portable electronic devices (especially smart phones) the workshop focused its attention on risks that managing information through these tools entails as well as putting into practice protective measures and reduction of vulnerability. Participants positively evaluated the practical nature of the workshop which focused on the



"We highly value these spaces because in our communities we don't have the opportunity for this kind of sharing and the possibility to meet other organizations that work on human rights issues." (Opinion of workshop participant from Petén).

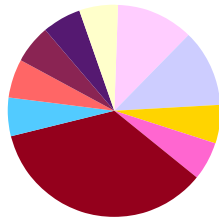
protection of the electronic devices of those present, increasing their capacity to install and manage security programs on their own devices. Also the methodology allows participants to share their knowledge with other members of their organizations, communities or other contacts.

Another important element of the workshop especially for those who came from departments far from Guatemala City was the sharing of best practices on the use of a few IT security measures.

19 people (12 women and 7 men) participated in the workshop. Participants represented 13 organizations and social movements from seven departments in Guatemala. We highlight the high participation of women defenders as a tendency that repeats itself in other security workshops that PBI has facilitated. We think that this increase in participation is one of the results of the meetings for women defenders that we have facilitated since 2010. These workshops are encouraging more and more women to learn about the existence of these opportunities for learning and protection and to participate in them.

VOLUNTEERING IN GUATEMALA

In 2016 a total of 17 accompaniers from 10 different nationalities formed part of the ground team (4 men and 13 women). All of whom previously participated in the PBI Guatemala project's training and selection process.



Switzerland 2 Germany 2 UK 1 Italy 1
 Spain 6 Mexico 1 Canada 1 Chile 1
 France 1 Czech Republic 1



We usually have two training sessions a year, which form part of a long selection process, however in 2016 we only needed to host one training session to reach the number of accompaniers needed for the project.

The PBI Guatemala Training Team is in charge of the selection and training of new volunteers for the project. In 2016, the Training Team was comprised of 7 people, 6 volunteers and one paid staff member. All seven of these people are former members of the ground team from different times which enriches the work because they all draw on their personal experiences product of their important professional background.

“Being on the Training Team is a way to stay involved with PBI Guatemala and the experience that was so special when I was a team member. It is a learning process that begins from the time one wants to join a project that works on human rights issues. From the beginning you know the experience will never have an end – because this struggle, sense of solidarity, memories of the team, collective, consensus, defenders.... will be with you forever.

This process lights a flame - I carry it with me every day and it continues to feed on other experiences and knowledge. This flame tries to grow through training and sharing with other people who are interested in PBI. This sharing is carried out during a long, intense process yet motivating where we get to know future volunteers through their applications, talks and self-learning notebooks and a face-to-face training session. In the training sessions we cover



13 people participated

9 entries



August 2016
October 2016
January 2017
March 2017
May 2017



the current context in Guatemala, conduct role plays, participatory sessions that combine coexistence and team work. This is just the beginning for many as they form part of the PBI Guatemala ground team.

I remember the Training Team when I was a candidate for the team during my week of training, it was a kind of accompaniment starting this process, a space to share concerns with people who had already been part of the team, be able to express doubts, fears and hopes – it was important. Now that I am part of the Training Team, I can accompany other people in this process just like others accompanied me, this is the way we continue our commitment to fight for human rights and a way to be with those who defend those rights.

Each of us who form part of the Training Team share our learnings to be able to keep the PBI experience alive and we are conscience that we do this alongside everyone who forms part of the PBI family.”

Erika, volunteer of the EEFF since September 2015

PBI IN NUMBERS

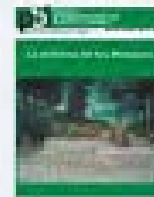
Presence on the ground

Accompaniment to social organizations and institutions	303
Meetings with local organizations and social entities accompanied by PBI	60
Meetings with other Guatemalan organizations	47
Observation of events organized by Guatemalan civil society	14

Advocacy and interlocution

Meetings with Guatemalan authorities at the state, provincial and local levels	87
Meetings with the diplomatic corps and international agencies in Guatemala, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)	38
Meetings with Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Organizations in Europe	35
Speaking tours of Human Rights Defenders in Europe	3

Publications



1 Popular bulletins

12 Monthly Information Pack



3 Semiannual bulletins

2 Special bulletins

1 Alert

Strengthening local capacities

In total we organized **4** workshops*, for at least **121** participants of 53 organizations

- **1** IT Security Workshop
- **2** Healing Workshops for Women Human Rights Defenders
- **1** Workshop of criminalization against social protest





MEMBERS OF PBI GUATEMALA IN 2016:

Volunteer team in Guatemala:

Tamara Castro Pousa (Spain), Irene Izquieta García (Spain), Pedro Cárdenas Casillas (Mexico), Melisande Seguin (Canada), Marco Baumgartner (Switzerland/Germany), Eulália Padró Giral (Spain), Paulina Martínez Larráin (Chile), Manon Fenoy (France), Elba Estrada Gutiérrez (Spain), Corsin Blumenthal (Switzerland), Brigitte Fischer-Bruehl (Germany), Alicia Gutiérrez Esturillo (Spain), Roberto Meloni (Italy), Katerina Rosochova (Czech Republic), Stephanie Brause (Germany), Cristina Ortega González (Spain) and Catriona Rainsford (United Kingdom).

Project committee:

Montserrat García (USA), Maike Holderer (Guatemala), Anabella Estol (Argentina), Danilo Guerrero Díaz (Australia), Samuel Jones (United Kingdom), Kerstin Reemtsma (Belgium), Amaya de Miguel (Spain), Cristina Barbeito (Spain).

Training team:

Maike Holderer (Guatemala), María Cayena Abello (Colombia), Erika Martínez García (Guatemala), Sanne de Swart (Australia), Kristel Best Urday (Peru), Felix Weiss (Germany), Katharina Ochsendorf (Germany).

Project staff:

Amaya de Miguel (coordinator), Kerstin Reemtsma (representative to the European Union), Mayte Quesada (administrator), Jacques van Lujtelaar (financial supervisor), Paola Sarti (fund-raiser), Silvia Weber (field support), Maike Holderer (responsible of training).

Project consultants:

Evangelina Scarfe (Guatemala), Fermín Rodrigo (Spain).

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

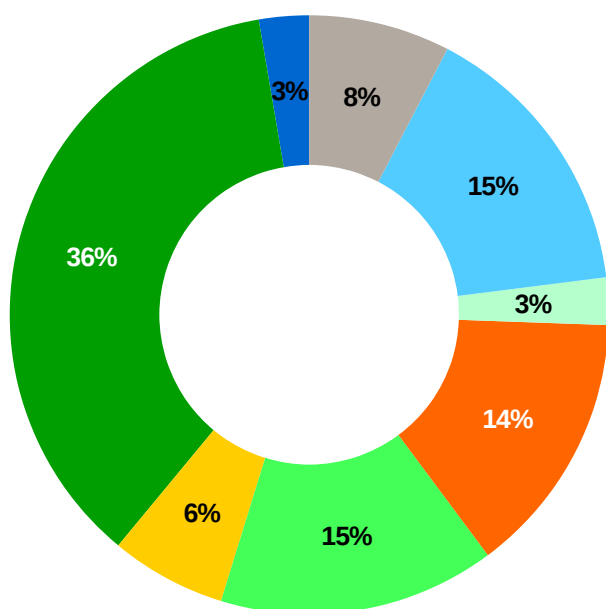
INCOME PBI GUATEMALA		2016 EUR
INCOME DONATIONS		289.817
European Union	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	18.827
Germany	Brot für die Welt	16.300
Germany	Misereor (213-600-1002 ZG)	8.600
Germany	ifa-Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (zivik Funding Programme)	71.130
Germany	Ziviler Friedensdienst (civil peace service)	35.560
Belgium	Oxfam Solidarité	4.300
Canadá	Unifor Social Justice Fund CA 7560	5.422
Spanish State	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)	10.750
Spanish State	Ajuntament de Castelló de la Plana - Associació Solidaritat Perifèries del Món	4.986
Spanish State	Generalitat Valenciana - Associació Solidaritat Perifèries del Món	4.118
Spanish State	Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo	5.000
United States of America	The Overbrook Foundation	4.610
Ireland	Trocaire, GUA 140111/ GUA140204	31.500
Italy	Chiesa Evangelica Valdese Unione delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi	4.000
Mexico	Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung	6.400
United Kingdom	Open Society Foundations	13.657
Switzerland	Berti Wicke Stiftung, Fédération vaudoise de coopération - Lausanne, Fédération vaudoise de coopération - Renens, Gesamtkirchgemeinde Stadt Bem und Umgebung (GKG Bem), Jenö Stähelin Stiftung, Service de la solidarité internationale (SSI) Genève CHF 48.279	44.657
Incomes already counted in 2015 / Donations receivable at the end of 2015		-4.942
Italy	Chiesa Evangelica Valdese Unione delle Chiese metodiste e valdesi Service de la solidarité internationale (SSI)	-2.000
Switzerland	Genève CHF -3.150	-2.942
Incomes received in 2016 still to be executed in 2017		-6.819
Spanish State	Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo	-540
Ireland	Trocaire, GUA 140111/ GUA140204	-3.417
United Kingdom	Open Society Foundation	-2.862
Income from activities already implemented in 2016 are still receivable at year end		29.713
European Union	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	1.503
Germany	Misereor (213-600-1002 ZG)	10.100
Germany	Ziviler Friedensdienst (civil peace service)	15.000
Spanish State	Generalitat Valenciana - Associació Solidaritat Perifèries del Món	2.882
Mexico	Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung	1.600
Switzerland	PBI Switzerland private donation CHF 140	131
Incomes received in 2015 that were still to be executed in 2016		30.612
Spanish State	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)	23.975
Ireland	Trocaire, GUA 140111/ GUA140204	6.637
Other incomes		3.659
Private donors		2.913
Income from Own Activities		650
interests		97
TOTAL INCOME		343.543

At the end of 2016 we reached a surplus of 2% of the budget that will be used to create a reserve fund that will allow the project to cover six months of operational expenses in 2017. Such reserves form part of good practices in the management of nonprofit entities and they are established by financial norms of the PBI International office. Once reserves surpass six months of operational expenses they are reduced

by using them to cover operational expenses of the current year. The 2016 surplus was generated due to the efforts to increase income in the year with the goal of attaining financial stability for the project in the medium-term.

We thank all of our donors for their financial support which allowed us to carry out all of the planned activities in 2016.

What we spend in?



- Formation, training and orientation of volunteers
- Physical, informative and political support in Guatemala
- Workshops/training for human rights defenders in Guatemala
- Publications, 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 2016

Euros

Formation, training and orientation of volunteers	8.985	2,70%
Physical, informative and political support in Guatemala	122.128	36,30%
Workshops/training for human rights defenders in Guatemala	21.033	6,25%
Publications, alerts, image and visibility outside of Guatemala	50.216	14,93%
Coordination - strategy, monitoring and evaluation	48.063	14,29%
Audit	8.582	2,55%
Fund-raising, administration, finance	51.700	15,37%
Support to the work of PBI International	25.648	7,63%

Total EXPENSES

336.207 Euros

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCOME AND EXPENSES

7.336 Euros

All of the expenditures and income presented in this report are in Euros and are being audited by an external audit conducted by Guatemalan accounting firm Subuyuj Consultores – Contadores Públicos y Auditores.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AHPN	Historical Archive of the National Police
AMISMAXAJ	Association of Indigenous Women of Santa María Xalapán
AVECHAV	Neighborhood Association of Chicoyogüito
BDH	Human Rights Law Firm
CALAS	Centre for Legal, Environmental and Social Action in Guatemala
CCC	Council of Cunén Communities
CCCND	Campesino Central Coordinator New Day' Ch'orti'
CONAVIGUA	National Coordinator of Guatemalan Widows
COPINH	Civic Council of Community and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras
CPK	Council of K'iche' Peoples
CPR	Communities of Population in Resistance
CREOMPAZ	Regional Command of Training Operations for the Maintenance of Peace
CSJ	Supreme Court of Justice
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mines
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDH	Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman
PNC	National Civil Police
SEDEM	Security in Democracy Association
UE	European Union
URNG	Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union
UVOC	Union of Campesino Organizations of Verapaz



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.

PBI OFFICE IN GUATEMALA
3a. Avenida "A", 3-51 zona 1
Guatemala City
Tel. +502 2220 1032
equipo@pbi-guatemala.org

BI INTERNATIONAL OFFICE
Development House 56-64 Leonard St.
London EC2A 4LT, UK
www.peacebrigades.org

GUATEMALA PROJECT
COORDINATION OFFICE
Avda. Entrevías, 76, 4o B
28053 Madrid, Spanish State
coordinacion@pbi-guatemala.org



making space for peace
GUATEMALA PROJECT

www.pbi-guatemala.org

 [pbiguatemala](https://www.facebook.com/pbiguatemala)