



PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL – GUATEMALAN PROJECT

MONTHLY INFORMATION PACKAGE - GUATEMALA

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1. NOTES ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

IMPUNITY

Executive declares State of prevention in response to truck transport stoppage

Guatemala 08.05.08 (SV, PL, EP, AD, ND, CA) - On the night of May 7, President Álvaro Colom announced the Executive decision to use public force to end the truck transport stoppage, declaring a 15-day State of Prevention which went into effect immediately in all national territory. The presidential argument is rooted in that, with the stoppage, the drivers have threatened the public order by paralyzing circulation of transport, an action which, according to his own words, "I will not tolerate, and I will exercise the powers given to me by the Political Constitution of the Republic in order to preserve the tranquility of Guatemalan homes. I will not permit illegal acts in demanding supposed rights; illegality puts an end to rights and demands the application of law."

The Governmental Decree Number 1-2008, from the presidency of the Republic, published Friday, the 9th in the Official Journal but in effect as of Wednesday the 7th, limits some guarantees established in the Constitution; orders the intervention of public services in charge of particular businesses; limits the right to strike or to stop public services; limits the right to public demonstrations that affect public services, unless given prior authority; limits the right to bear arms; and prohibits the parking of vehicles in places, zones, or hours that affect the functioning of public services.

Forty eight drivers were detained on Thursday the 8th in the early morning in different roads leading to the capital after the president declared the state of prevention.

PDH critical of State of Prevention

Guatemala 09.05.2008 (PL, SV, CA). – The Human Rights Ombudsman, Sergio Morales, characterized as hasty the State of Prevention declared by President Álvaro Colom, and asserted that the measure is undemocratic. According to Morales, the government should seek dialogue with the drivers who, with a stoppage, are protesting restrictions to passage of large vehicles in Guatemala City imposed by municipality.

Government will not extend the State of Prevention

Guatemala, 20.05.2008 (SV).- The State of Prevention decreed by the Executive to end the work stoppage undertaken by the truck transport sector, which expired May 22, was not extended, and if the conditions which prompted it resurface, the government will reevaluate.

162 women recorded dead in less than 4 months

Guatemala 05.05.08 (EP) – According to the Survivors Foundation, from January to-date 162 assassinations of women have been recorded. March was the most violent month, with 46 deaths; with fewer acts recorded the following April. Firearms were the most common weapon, being used in 117 assassinations of women. Use of knives and strangulation were also recorded. Nevertheless, only three cases of assassination of women appear currently in

the towers of newspapers. Among those this year only one sentence has been passed down in one case: that of Jaime Peneda del Cid, accused of parricide for killing his wife, daughter and injuring three others. In more than half of the cases, the perpetrators, after torturing the women, commit sexual abuse. Nonetheless, the details of the women's murders are scarce in the records of the Public Ministry and National Police. These archives do not specify their profession, ethnic origin or disabilities, according to the summary of the book, "For Being a Woman", presented last year by the Institute of Comparative Criminal Sciences Studies.

Law against Femicide published

Guatemala 07.05.08 (CA) The Law against Femicide and other forms of Violence against Women, Decree 22-2008, was published on Wednesday, May 7, in the Official Journal, following its approval by the Congress of the Republic on April 9 and its acceptance by President Álvaro Colom on May 2.

Organisations request PDH intervention on issue of adoptions

Guatemala 07.05.08 (PL, LH). – The announcement that adoption processes will be suspended for one month is not sufficient for the organisations working in defense of children which asked that the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH) investigate where and how since 2007 there are nearly 3 thousand minors with open case files. The National Adoption Commission (CNA) offered to verify the cases and to identify all of the mothers who decided to give their children up for adoption, along with the infants, in order to prove that the statistics which appear in the files are accurate. For this, it asked for support from various institutions, given that it lacks sufficient human resources. The Movement for the Rights of Children, Adolescents and Youth insists that all of the cases must be reviewed, and not only those which are suspicious, and that one month will not be sufficient for clarifying all of the processes. "Behind every file there is a life; the Government and Public Ministry cannot elude their responsibility," concluded Héctor Dionisio, one of the representatives of the Movement.

Union member assassinated in Izabal

Guatemala, 14.05.2008 (AC).- Sergio García, 28 years old, who acted as recording secretary for the brotherhood of the Health Workers Union in the department of Izabal, was assassinated by two assassins, denounced the National Front for Struggle (FNL).

Judge who attended the Spanish National Hearing on genocide denounced death threats

Guatemala, 21.05.2008 (PL).- Judge Eduardo Cojulum denounced death threats that he received five days after the hearings ended. Cojulum reported that the intimidations were received by telephone and advised him to stop his legal actions because if he didn't, he would suffer the consequences. Cojulum said that he would send his report of the matter to the Spanish tribunal, and for his part he analysed ordering the Public Ministry to initiate criminal prosecution against the military and civil patrol who the survivors mentioned in their reports as responsible for the massacres. The Association of Judges and Magistrates and the Rigoberta Menchú Foundation requested that security be reinforced for Cojulum and asked that the Public Ministry (MP) investigate the origin of the threats. At the end of May, the judge for the National Spanish Hearing, Santiago Pedraz, received the second group of witnesses and began to listen to the testimonies of anthropologists who are experts on the genocide committed in Guatemala against Maya communities.

LAND

Government begins second phase of Registry of Farmland Information

Guatemala, 20.05.2008 (LH).- The president of the Government, Álvaro Colom, participated on May 20 in the inauguration of the second step in the Registry of Farmland Information (Registro de Información Catastral – RIC). The project aims to clarify the legal situation of public and private properties in eight departments in the country. The second phase will be carried out in Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, Izabal, Escuintla, Santa Rosa, Sacatepéquez, Quiché and San Marcos. The financing was obtained through a loan from the World Bank which exceeds 62.3 million dollars. The leader indicated that the violence and agrarian conflict in the departments without farmland information is increasing excessively.

Combined forces evict occupants of Sierra del Lacandón, Petén

Guatemala, 21.05.2008 (PL).- On May 20, more than 500 agents of the National Civilian Police, army, members of the National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP), and the Public Ministry evicted families that had occupied the area known as Pollo Solo in the Sierra del Lacandón, Petén. According to Claudia Mariela López Díaz, director of CONAP in Petén, experts from said institution are carrying out a series of evaluations in order to determine the damage done in that area. She added that this is one of the first actions authorized by judges in areas of the Maya Biosphere Reserve where to-date more than 27 have been recorded as well as others in Izabal and las Verapaces.

Totonicapán inhabitants denounce deforestation before National Forest Institute

Guatemala, 22.05.2008 (CA).- Despite the government-imposed State of Alert, a group of Totonicapán and Quiché inhabitants held a demonstration on 22 May in front of the National Forest Institute buildings, to protest against clear-cut logging in the Baquix community, Totonicapán, and in Chicamán, Quiché. Totonicapán is one of the few places in Guatemala where the majority of the mountains and springs belong to the inhabitants, who use the land according to Mayan ancestral traditions.

GLOBALISATION

High cost of living protest on International Labour Day

Guatemala, 02.05.2008 (CA, PL, ND, EP, AD, CA, SV).- Thousands of *campesinos*, elderly people, disabled people and other workers turned out for marches on Labour Day, proposing that the Government fix maximum prices on essential products and raise salaries for all workers. The demonstrators also demanded a reduction of violence and of the murders of women. Among the cities where the marches took place were the department capitals of Quetzaltenango, Sololá, Huehuetenango, Totonicapán, Retalhuleu, Chimaltenango, Jalapa, El Progreso, Chiquimula, Zacapa, Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz.

San Marcos communities march and rally to reject mining activities

Comitancillo, 15.05.2008 (PL).- Some four thousand members of San Marcos communities held a march and rally on 14 May, in rejection of mining activities in the region. The march passed through various municipal streets, ending in the football fields, where the demonstrators announced their opposition to the extensions of mining exploration and exploitation licences, which the last government authorised and which the present leader confirmed with Resolution 049-2008. This measure allows the company Montana Exploradora, through the Marlin Project, to develop mining exploration work, in an area that was rejected by the communities. "They cannot take advantage of a suffering and impoverished community like Comitancillo", said Community leader Olga López. She added that they would not allow the company to deceive the people of the communities, as did the mining company in San Miguel Ixtahuacán.

OTHERS

Guatemalans among more than 300 workers arrested in Iowa, USA

Guatemala, 13.05.2008 (PL).- Agents detained 300 Hispanic workers, mainly Mexicans and Guatemalans, in a raid in an Agriprocessors Inc. plant in Postville, confirmed an immigration spokesperson. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents entered the premises in search of evidence of identity theft, stolen social security numbers, and people living in the country illegally, said Tim Counts, ICE spokesperson.

Fuentes: Prensa Libre (PL), Siglo Veintiuno (SV), La Hora (LH), El Periódico (EP), Tele Noticiario: Tele Diario (TD), Nuestro Diario (ND), Agencia Cerigua (AC), Diario de Centro América (CA), Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala (CERIGUA), Noti Siete (N7), Al Día (AD)

2. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: IN GUATEMALA

Equipo: María José Urgel Riquelme (Estado Español), Marion Sornay (Francia), Maren Enders (Alemania), Johanna van Strien (Holanda), Valentina Gori (Italia), Wiebke Schramm (Alemania), Jacqueline Benfield (Reino Unido), Maria Giovanna Tejido Vasquez (Estado Español), Carolina Tessier (Canadá), Silvia Weber (Alemania)

2.1 MEETINGS WITH AUTHORITIES AND MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

Meetings with authorities and members of the diplomatic corps in Guatemala are essential components of PBI's work, enabling us to make known our objectives and our way of working. Through these meetings, when necessary, we can also confidentially express our concerns about critical situations of which we have first hand knowledge through our work in the field. During February meetings were held with the following authorities:

Diplomatic Corps:

- Fabien Moury, First Secretary of the French Embassy
- Rein Koelstra, Responsible for Human Rights, Dutch Embassy
- Annemarie de Ruiter, Dutch Embassy

- Pio Luigi Teodorani Fabbri, Italian Ambassador

Guatemalan Authorities

- Police Inspector Elias Remus Romeo, Station 11 of the National Civil Police, Guatemala City
- Ruth de Valle, President of the Presidential Commission for Human Rights, COPREDEH, Guatemala City

2.2 MEETINGS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The PBI Guatemala Project team holds regular meetings with civil society organisations. This enables us to monitor the situation of human rights defenders and to exchange information on the work being carried out, as well as to gather information which helps us to develop our analysis of the internal political situation. During February meetings were held with the following organisations:

Civil Society Organisations:

- Claudia Paz, Executive Director, Guatemalan Institute for Comparative Studies in Penal Sciences, Guatemala City, ICCPG,
- Miguel Ángel Albizures, Coordinator, Guatemalan Association of Families of Detained-Disappeared Persons, FAMDEGUA, Guatemala City
- Carlos Paz, Executive Secretary, National Coordinator of Campesino Organisations, CNOC, Guatemala City
- Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit, Guatemala City

International Organisations and Agencies:

- International Accompaniment in Guatemala Coordination, CAIG, Guatemala City
- Human Rights Commission of the International Organisations Forum, FONGI, Guatemala City

2.3 ACCOMPANIMENTS

We started accompanying **José Roberto Morales Sic**, Co-ordinator of the Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Programme of the **Centre for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)**, in February 2007. In May we continued accompanying him in his movements between his house and office and to meetings around town.

Background: Since 1994 CALDH has had its headquarters in the capital, where it receives reports of Human Rights violations and directs investigations into the cases. The institution provides counselling, accompaniment and training to organisations, groups and communities. One of its main areas of work is promoting justice in genocide cases, and other crimes committed during the internal armed conflict. We have accompanied CALDH on various occasions between 2004 and 2006. In February 2007, members of the legal team received direct threats. José Roberto Morales Sic was the victim of a kidnapping on 2nd February. Two armed men kidnapped him in his car and threatened to kill him. He was later released and the CALDH vehicle recovered with all his belongings present (including personal documents, cheques and a laptop which belonged to the organisation).

Since 13th May 2005 we have accompanied **Carlos Morales**, leader of the **Union of Campesino Organisations for the Verapaces (UVOC)**, as well as other members of the organisation. In May we have remained in contact with the leaders of UVOC in their visits to the capital. We remain concerned about the security of the members of the members of the organization as they continue receiving threats and noticing surveillance.

Background: UVOC is a campesino organisation in the Verapaces (the departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz) and works principally on access to land for campesinos and providing support in the process of legalisation of the communities' titles to land. UVOC also offers training for communities affiliated with UVOC and supports development projects within those communities. Carlos Morales, leader of the UVOC, has been a victim of death threats, acts of intimidation, and persecution by unknown individuals. Due to a serious increase of personal death threats at the end of April 2005, which led to a genuine fear for his life, Carlos Morales was forced into hiding in Guatemala City for a month, which was made possible with the support of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH). Following this, he requested 24 hour accompaniment

from Peace Brigades. In January 2006, Carlos Morales was victim of surveillance on the block where he lives with his family. UVOC's offices and personnel of continue to be under surveillance from unknown persons. The situation in some communities affiliated with UVOC continues to be delicate: in February and April 2006, the campesino families that live in the Mocca Estate were violently evicted, leaving several people with gunshot wounds. In July 2006 there was a confrontation between two groups of campesinos leaving one dead and 39 injured of the evicted campesinos.

We have been accompanying the **Association of Friends of Lake Izabal (ASALI)** and **Eloyda Mejía**, the organisation's Legal Representative, since 21st February 2004, when the threats against her worsened. We accompany Eloyda and other members of the association in the Department of Izabal during their activities and meetings with communities concerned about mining activities in the area. In the months of January and February 2007 we accompanied Eloyda and ASALI after a tense situation arose between groups of campesinos that had occupied lands, the CGN and state actors who wished to remove them. We have continued to accompany Eloyda Mejía in her activities this month.

Background: Eloisa Mejía has suffered a number of threats as a result of her work to protect Lake Izabal, in the department of Izabal, east Guatemala, and because of her work informing local residents of the possible damaging effects of the re-opening of the Guatemalan Nickel Company (subsidiary of Skye Resources Inc., Canada) mining operation in the area. On 21st February 2004, during a conference on the future of the lake in El Estor, Izabal, she received yet more serious threats, which she reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH). In February 2006 Eloyda Mejía's restaurant wall was graffitied with the words "Yes to CGN" (Guatemalan Nickel Company)." Since late 2006 Eloyda Mejía has had to deal with a legal process accusing her of usurping lands. This legal action is seen by her as a form of persecution and intimidation intended to force her to abandon her work against the mining company CGN in El Estor. In October 2007, Eloyda Mejía received a threatening letter that mentioned her and other active members of civil society organizations in Izabal as 'personas non gratas' in the town of El Estor and as enemies of the town and the State. The letter mentioned that "the rule of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth would be applied".

We continue to accompany the **National Coordinator of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA)** with regular visits to, and presence in, its office as well as during exhumations and inhumations of clandestine cemeteries in rural areas. We continue with these frequent visits due to increased surveillance, which has been apparent since December 2006. We continue with our weekly visits to the office.

Background: CONAVIGUA continues to facilitate the process of exhumations and inhumations in various departments throughout Guatemala, mostly in Quiché, Chimaltenango, and the Verapaces, as part of their efforts for the recuperation of the collective memory of Guatemala's recent history. This process provokes tense situations in these small rural communities between victims and perpetrators, and the women of CONAVIGUA receive threats and intimidation to stop them from continuing this work.

We accompany the **Movement of Campesino Workers (MTC)**, an entity of the Social Pastoral Office of the Diocese of San Marcos. MTC is made up of associations of campesino communities working to defend their labour rights. In particular, we accompany its founder, **Julio Archila**. We have visited twice during May, and have maintained regular communication with Julio Archila. We also went to the inauguration of a training centre in El Quetzal, San Marcos.

Background: Since the beginning of November 2005, Julio Archila, founding member of the MTC, has suffered various forms of intimidation and threats directed against him and his family. His security problems appear to be related to the support the MTC offers to campesinos engaged in protest on the Las Delicias estate, San Marcos. On 4th November 2005, police arrested Julio, accusing him of stealing coffee. He was brought before a judge and freed, as no proof of the accusation was found. Since then there have been other acts of intimidation and threats made against Julio Archila and members of his family, as well as other campesino leaders involved in labour conflicts between campesinos and estate owners. Recently, an arrest warrant was issued against Julio Archila and his son Antonio for having transported coffee from the Las Delicias estate in October 2005. The arrest warrants were substituted for other measures while the investigation continued. In June 2007, the judge of the Court of First Instance absolved Julio of all the charges due to a lack of evidence. Nevertheless, the following month the Appeals Court in Quetzaltenango authorised more time for the further investigation of the case. On 15th November 2007 the Las Delicias campesinos came to an agreement with the estate's owners, who agreed to pay them 500,000 quetzals. The owners also agreed to drop the charges against Julio Archilla and his son. There was a moment in which the negotiations had appeared to breakdown, but finally in January 2008 the campesinos were able to

buy a new estate and they are now in the process of constructing their new community. At the time of writing, the promise to drop charges against Julio Archilla and his son had not yet been fulfilled.

The **Organisation to Support an Integrated Sexuality to Confront AIDS (OASIS)** is an organisation which works with HIV/AIDS education and prevention, as well as promoting and protecting the rights of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people. In particular, we accompany **Zulma**, member of OASIS and witness to the assassination of a sex worker. During April we kept in contact with Zulma and accompanied her in journeys around the city. In addition we have paid weekly visits to the organisation's office.

Background: On 17th December 2005, Paulina, a transgender worker was killed, the seventh murder of a transgender worker that year. Zulma was present when the crime was committed, and was seriously injured during the incident. She is a witness to the murder of Paulina, accusing members of the National Civil Police (PNC) of the killing. OASIS reported the case to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) in order to obtain justice for the killing, and has been awarded precautionary security measures for Zulma and the organisation by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (CIDH). However, members of the organisation continue to be subjected to harassment and threats, and Jorge López, Executive Director of OASIS, reported that he was pursued by a police car during the night of 22nd January 2006. Given the few advances made in the case in the Guatemalan courts, OASIS wishes to bring it to the attention of the CIDH with the support of the Centre for Justice and International Law (CEJIL).

The **National Coordinating Body for Inhabitants of Marginalised Areas, CONAPAMG**, works on the issues of housing access, social infrastructure, and the legalisation of occupied land. In November 2006 we brought to a close the activation of our Support Network, activated because of our concern about the security of **Roly Escobar**, CONAPAMG's Coordinator General, after he received a death threat on 10th September 2006.

Background: We have accompanied CONAPAMG since July 2004 when its office was broken into and lists, invoices, floppy discs and money stolen. Many of the communities affiliated with CONAPAMG have either been evicted or are awaiting eviction. The security situation of CONAPAMG continues to be vulnerable. Miguel Zapeta González, resident of the community Esquipulas in Zone 21 of the capital and member of the organisation, was murdered in March 2005. On 18th August 2006, Carmen Sagastume, another member of the organisation, was brutally murdered. Following this, on the morning of 10th September, General Coordinator Roly Escobar Ochoa was informed that armed individuals in the community Carmen del Monte were threatening to kill him, supposedly because of his denunciation of the murder of Carmen Sagastume. During the following weeks he and his family found themselves under heavy surveillance.

We received a request for accompaniment from **Project Counselling Services (PCS)** on behalf of a Guatemalan worker of the organisation who suffered a kidnapping, sexual aggression and the theft of a vehicle on 7th May 2007. On 17th May 2007 the same person received a phone call to their house threatening all the members of the organisation. These facts were reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH). Since 16th May 2007 we have intensively accompanied the person who suffered this grave incident. During the month of May we continued the accompaniment, accompanying the worker of the organisation in journeys between his house and office. We were observers at the presentation of a new study about migration in Guatemala and Central America, produced by PCS

Background: Project Counselling Services (PCS) is an international organisation supported by a partnership of agencies in Europe and Canada. Its mission is to strengthen the capacities of refugees and populations affected by displacements and other forms of exclusion to participate in autonomous, democratic and intercultural processes, including from a gender perspective, within the framework of the promotion, defence and exercise of human rights. In Guatemala, PCS has been involved with the struggle against impunity relating to human rights violations committed during the armed conflict and in post-conflict Guatemala, with special emphasis on sexual violence. On Monday, 7th May 2007 a worker was the victim of a temporary kidnapping during which they suffered verbal, physical and sexual aggression. The PCS vehicle in which they were travelling and which was carrying 'International Mission' signage was stolen. On 17th May 2007 the same worker received a telephone threat in their home in which a male voice stated: "(Expletive), that wasn't enough... We told you not to do anything. You didn't get it. We are going to break your ass and those of the lesbians and whores in your office. We know who you are and what you do. Don't mess around, leave things as they are."

We accompany the **Commission of Peaceful Resistance of San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta (CRP)**. We received a petition for accompaniment from Jose Manuel Morales, Vice President of the organisation, after a meeting of 15 September during which a founder member of the Commission was detained and questioned by police who accused

the organisation of carrying out illegal actions. The organisation later denounced the events to the Human Rights Programme of the Diocese of San Marcos (PDDHS) and the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH). Those in attendance at the meeting of 15 September expressed their concerns regarding the construction of a hydro-electric project planned by the Mayor of the municipality of San Rafael de la Cuesta, San Marcos. Since then, members have suffered various threats and intimidations, which led the Commission to request accompaniment from PBI for their meetings. Since December 2007 we have accompanied members of the CRP in their activities. We continue in contact with José Manuel Morales, visiting him once during the month of May

Background: 15 days before the general elections of 9 September 2007 the Mayor of San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta (and current Mayor elect) declared his intention to seek the construction of a hydro-electric project during the first months of 2008, during a public audience with mayoral candidates. This hydro electric project would be based on a previous project that never reached the construction stage and before the public meeting was not known by the local inhabitants. On 15 September the Campesino Association for Integral Development of San Rafael (ADICSR) organised a meeting with the local population in order to inform them regarding the construction plans for the hydro-electric project. The same meeting also realised the formation of the CRP in order to investigate and inform regarding the proposed project. Police officials entered the meeting and removed a man without explanation, in order to question him regarding the meeting and accusing those in attendance of planning illegal actions. Since this date, the members of CRP have regularly suffered threats and intimidations of various kinds.

2.4 FOLLOW UP OF PRIOR ACCOMPANIMENTS

The **Guatemalan Association of Indigenous Mayors and Authorities (AGAAI)**. Following a break-in in the office of AGAAI on 20th March 2007 we provided accompaniment in the city and during the association's activities outside of the capital. We maintained contact with AGAAI during May

Background: Carlos Guarquez has suffered from various forms of threats, accusations, and intimidations because of his work rejecting the Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) and mining activities. On 25th March 2005, in the village of El Tablón, Sololá, his vehicle was doused in petrol and set on fire by unknown individuals. Death threats specifically naming Carlos Guarquez, Dominga Vásquez, the then Indigenous Mayoreess of Sololá, and her husband, Alfonso Guarquez, were found scattered around the vehicle. Part of the threat stated: "For your stupid meddling in society, tomorrow will be the day of your disappearance from this world." As a result of this threat we decided to activate our Support Network within Guatemala. More recently on 20th March 2007, the office of AGAAI was broken into by persons unknown who took important documentation and containers. The association denounced this incident as a clear act of intimidation against workers and members of AGAAI for their work in supporting and accompanying the mayors and indigenous authorities struggling for the protection of the land. They reported the act to the office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH).

PBI has accompanied the **Madre Selva Collective** since June 2004 with regular visits to its office and has had frequent contact with its members during their work in different departments throughout the country. During this month we continued to be in contact with Madre Selva, with visits to the office. We also observed a vigil in front of the National Forest Institute (INAB) offices. The event was organised to denounce the felling of 271 hectares of forest in the Totonicapán region.

Background: Madre Selva is an environmental organisation which holds regular workshops on the negative impact of mega-projects, in particular those involving open-pit mining and the installation of hydroelectric power plants. Members of the organisation regularly receive threats because of their work, above all in areas where conflicts exist over the issues that appear in the Collective's reports. Since December 2006 the organisation has been subject to defamation campaigns linked to the publication of an environmental study concerning the mining pollution found in the waters of the River Tzalá in San Marcos. The study's Italian author received a series of threats after its publication. This situation provoked an international reaction from various human rights organizations in support of the organisation and the author, who eventually left the country.

The **Women's Sector** is an umbrella organisation for women's associations that works for women's economic development, in the struggle against violence against women, and denounces impunity and the murder of women. We continue to visit its office regularly. At the end of May we attended a forum organised by the Women's Sector, whose objective was to debate the institutionalisation of public policies in favour of women.

Background: In less than 10 days, between the end of May and the beginning of June 2006, the headquarters of the Women's Sector were broken into twice. The first time the intruders stole telephones and money and smeared blood on the walls; the second time they destroyed furniture, searched through files and left a bloody piece of glass on one of the desks. The Sector reported these acts as clear intimidation and asked for police protection.

2.5 OBSERVATIONS

PBI Guatemala provides international observation at public events where Guatemalan social organisations require international attention and interest or when it is judged necessary to be able to communicate what we witness to the international community.

In the capital on 1 May, we observed the International Labour Day march. Many of the organisations that we accompany participated, such as the UVOC, the Women's Sector, and the Centre for Legal Action in Human Rights (CALDH).

This month, we have provided international observation in several national courts that are hearing the statements of the witnesses in the genocide case. Specifically, they are receiving the statements of the witnesses to massacres carried out in the communities of Plan de Sánchez and Río Negro. Judge Cojulum heard the testimonies of those attending the Spanish National Audience in the open genocide case against five ex soldiers and two civilians.

We demonstrated international presence during a hunger strike against illegal adoptions and theft of children, organised by the Survivors Foundation.

We observed a hearing brought by the Mutual Support Group (GAM) before the Supreme Court of Justice, regarding a case of illegal detention and subsequent forced disappearance. GAM asked that the court give the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH) legal mandate to investigate the case. During the hearing, the wife of the disappeared man, Jorge Hiram Muralles Garcia, said that her husband was captured by members of the Technical Investigation Department of the National Police on 3 January 1984, and had not been seen since. The judges granted the PDH the legal mandate required to investigate the case.

We attended an event to mark solidarity with members of the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation (FAFG), who received death threats due to their work investigating atrocities committed during the armed conflict. The event was attended by national and international organisations, the diplomatic corps and international agencies.

3. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: OUTSIDE GUATEMALA

The Regional Representatives, the Coordination Office of the project in Madrid and other members of the Project Committee, as well as PBI national groups, carry out public relations campaigns with numerous NGOs, national governments and agencies, parliamentarians, etc. These meetings work to develop and strengthen the "Support Network" of the project, a tool that is indispensable for the functioning of PBI's international presence in Guatemala.

Kerstin Reemtsma, the project's European Representative, on 22 May attended a meeting of the Guatemala Working Group of CIFCA (Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico), in Brussels.

4. PUBLICATIONS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

In this section we publish several communiqués written by human rights organisations in which they express their concerns regarding the current state of affairs in Guatemala. PBI Guatemala does not necessarily identify with the opinions and content of the articles and communiqués reproduced.



Denuncia 5 – 2008

Por este medio notificamos el asesinato de un sindicalista.

1. Información sobre la víctima:

Sergio Miguel García, Secretario de Organización y Actas de la Filial de Enfermedades Transmitidas por Vectores de Puerto Barrios, Izabal del Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Salud de Guatemala.

Contactos: Sonia Negreros López, Secretaria Vocal, Filial Departamental del Hospital de Izabal de SNTSG Teléfonos 40095765

Naturaleza del Trabajo:

Las filiales departamentales en Izabal tienen bastante independencia entre sí. La demanda permanente del Sindicato es por la mejora de los servicios de salud pública. La Filial de Enfermedades Transmitidas por Vectores (prevención paludismo, malaria, fiebre dengue) es una dependencia del Área de Salud Departamental. Desde el año pasado, la filial se enfrenta a una situación irregular porque el coordinador, quien era un miembro del sindicato, fue asesinado y al ser sustituido por el Sr. García nuevamente enfrenta la muerte.

2. Naturaleza u Origen de la Supuesta Violación:

✓ El día 13 de mayo de 2008, a eso de las ocho horas cuando el Sr. Sergio Miguel García se dirigía en moto a su trabajo fue abatido a tiros por hombres desconocidos en la 11 calle y 10 avenida en Puerto Barrios, Izabal (frente al Colegio Montessori). Una bala le penetró en el pecho y otra en la cabeza.

3. Posible Razón de la Violación:

- Aún se desconoce la razón por la que puede haberse ocasionado la muerte, sin embargo, ocurre cuatro meses y medio después de la muerte del anterior coordinador y se sospecha que en este puesto los sindicalistas están encontrando algo (corrupción probablemente) que les pone en riesgo.

- **Otros antecedentes:** El 20 de diciembre del 2007, el Sr. Higinio Aguirre, Coordinador de Enfermedades Transmitidas por Vectores fue asesinado en horas de la mañana dirigiéndose a su trabajo. Su muerte nunca fue investigada.

4. Responsables de la Supuesta Violación:

Al momento los responsables son desconocidos.

5. Medidas Tomadas a favor de la Víctima:

La denuncia fue interpuesta ante el Ministerio Público y el Procurador de Derechos Humanos pidió protección a otros miembros del sindicato por temor a su seguridad. La Unidad de Derechos Humanos del DINC está investigando.

6. Medidas sugeridas:

Se solicitan acciones urgentes de denuncia de la situación orientada a la investigación de los hechos y a la protección de las actividades sindicales en el país.

Esta denuncia está siendo verificada por Erenia Vanegas y sistematizada por Claudia Samayoa de la Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos. Cualquier información adicional puede obtenerse en csamayoa@gmail.com y en udfegua@yahoo.com.

Guatemala, 13 de mayo del 2008

Continúan las amenazas de muerte hacia Fredy Peccerelli, su familia y los miembros de la Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG)

Después de la amenaza recibida el lunes, 19 de mayo de 2008, **Fredy Peccerelli**, Director Ejecutivo de la Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG), y **Omar Bertoni Girón**, Director del Laboratorio de Antropología Forense de la FAFG y casado con **Bianka Peccerelli**, hermana de Fredy Peccerelli, recibieron un correo electrónico en la tarde del **jueves, 22 de mayo de 2008**, con el siguiente mensaje:

“Saludos malditos, que bien se mira Bianca de rosado manejando una Jeep en la Avenida Petapa, les estara llegando el primer paquete con sus partes, esperamos se hayan despedido, su seguridad a la mierda la volamos. Ya no hemos visto a tu familia el próximo es Yani. Se ahuevaron malditos esta ves nos respeteran. Mueran revolucionarios, retiren las denuncias. FAFG DE LUTO hasta que acabemos con todos.”

Esa misma tarde, Bianka Peccerelli tenía puesta una blusa rosada y estaba manejando un Jeep Cherokee. En el correo previo se había amenazado que la iban a violar, matar y enviarla en pedazos a la FAFG. Gianni Peccerelli es el hermano de Fredy Peccerelli. La amenaza fue enviada de la misma dirección electrónica como la previa, de yax.pedro@yahoo.com, registrado bajo el nombre de Pedro Yax.

PBI GUATEMALA NO SE IDENTIFICA NECESARIAMENTE CON LAS OPINIONES Y CONTENIDO DE LOS ARTÍCULOS Y COMUNICADOS REPRODUCIDOS

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