



PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL – GUATEMALA PROJECT

Monthly Information Package – Guatemala

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1. COYUNTURA

IMPUNITY

UNE Member of Parliament and two political party leaders murdered

Member of Parliament Mario Ronaldo Pivalar Montenegro, of the National Unity for Hope (UNE) party, was killed on the morning of the 6th of April in front of the party's offices in Guatemala City. The UNE Assistant Secretary and parliamentarian Eduardo Meyer described it as an "abominable fact" and demanded of the government a prompt investigation of the crime. For the UNE, this crime "sends a political message to our adversaries in the face of the next election". In this context of political violence there were also two other murders of political leaders this week: on the 9th of April the Patriot Party's Youth Secretary in the Department of Izabal, Cristian Humberto Gómez Sánchez, was killed. Around the same date Eleazar Tebalán, Coordinator of the Meeting for Guatemala party, Department of Quetzaltenango, was also murdered.

Concern regarding the social movements of CICIACS

The Guatemalan government presented its proposal for the Commission for the Investigation of Illegal Entities and Clandestine Security Apparatus in Guatemala (CICIACS) in the headquarters of the United Nations. This proposal will allow the Commission to investigate, firstly, emblematic cases that affect human rights defenders and, secondly, those cases where there are indicators suggesting that organised crime has been involved. The pro justice and human rights movements observe with worry the handling of these proposals, as they consider them as diverting from their original purpose of investigating illegal bodies and hidden apparatus that act on the margins of institutional order. The United Nations showed signs of concern for the risk that investigating persons involved in illegal activities might implicate. It also asked for guarantees for those that work for CICIACS in Guatemala.

13 million quetzales handed over to victims and institutions as part of compensation process

Rosalina Tuyuc, Coordinator of the National Victims Compensation Programme (PNR), informed that during April, 8 million quetzales were handed over to the families of victims and 5 million to the institutions that have taken part in the process, such as the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG) and the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala (ODHAG). In regards to the exhumations, the PNR has approximately 6 thousand files being studied for the exhumation of bodies of the conflict's victims of the. For this process, the wishes of the survivors to find their relatives in the clandestine

cemeteries; the authorisation of the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) or the local judge to exhume the bodies; and the FAFG, which considers itself to be prepared to carry out about 100 exhumations in four or five departments, are taken into account.

LAND

Social organisations rally for a national Mayan and popular uprising

Social organisations, unions, and indigenous people rallied for a "national Mayan and popular uprising", with actions to be taken gradually to pressure the government for not responding to their demands. The aim is to carry out a plan that visualises a fighting front as it is believed that these means are the only way that the government will pay them any attention. The President Óscar Berger stated that if any action takes place outside of the law, corresponding measures will be taken. Juan Tiney of the Coordinating Body of Indigenous and Campesino Organisations (CONIC) called for the indigenous people working for the government to give up their jobs stating, "we ask you to leave your jobs. It's time show whose side you are on, that of the people or that of the businessmen".

Land, tortilla, and work

On the 20th of April the campaign "Land, tortilla and trabajo" was launched by 11 campesino and social organisations. Daniel Pascual of the Campesino Unity Comité (CUC) said that it is necessary to guarantee the entire country access to land and security regarding food, especially in rural areas. In turn, there should be an agrarian reform that promotes the equal distribution of land, to which the Minister for Agriculture, Álvaro Aguilar, responded that this was impossible as the Constitution of the Republic guarantees private property.

GLOBALISATION

The CC validates environmental consultations against mining and hydroelectricity

On the 4th of April the Court of Constitutionality (CC) endorsed the popular consultations carried out in Río Hondo, Zacapa, and Sipakapa, San Marcos, in which the local population voted against the installation of a hydroelectric power station and a mine. The CC established during the counteraction brought forward by the company Montana against the consultation result in Sipakapa, San Marcos, that the result is valid. Montana had solicited a halt, using the argument that the referendum was illegal as it drew to a conclusion out of time. However, the CC denied this argument on the basis of Agreement 169 of the International Labour Organisation relating to indigenous communities in independent countries. 15 days after the CC's resolution, the people of Sipakapa showed their concern for not having received official notification.

Government authorises nickel exploitation in El Estor

Although the environmental impact study has not yet been completed, the Ministry for Energy and Mines has authorised a license for exploitation to the Guatemala Nickel Company (CGN, previously Exmibal), El Estor, Izabal. The license was handed over to the CGN on the 20th of April, after having fulfilled the conditions set in December 2004. The decision gives the company permission to initiate the mining project Fénix, a project that will see the exploitation of nickel for a period of 25 years with the option to extend for the same amount of time.

OTHER

After Hurricane Stan 68,000 people have not been relocated

Six months after hurricane Stan passed, thousands of Guatemalans are still living in the 2,828 temporary hostels installed by the government and international organisations. Hundreds of families have taken family members in or continue in the zones where the mud devastated everything else. 39 communities that are not included in the relocation live in high mudslide risk zones. The housing demand and the dredging of rivers are the main tasks before the winter arrives.

Sources: Prensa Libre, Siglo Veintiuno, El Periódico, Inforpress Centroamericana, La Semana en Guatemala, Informe Semanal Sobre Derechos Humanos, Informador Rural.

2. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: WITHIN GUATEMALA

Team: Estefanía Sarmiento (Colombia), Didier Califice (Belgium), Ulrike Beck (Germany), Tawia Abbam (United Kingdom), Chus García (Spain), Michael Beattie (Australia), Silke Gatermann (Sweden/Germany) and Katia Aeby (Switzerland).

2.1 MEETINGS WITH GUATEMALAN AUTHORITIES AND MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

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

Guatemala Authorities:

- Edgar Amilcar Orellana Orellana, Police Chief, Police Station 11, National Civil Police (PNC) Guatemala City
- Álvaro Orozco Velásquez, Nacional Civil Police Sub-station San Pablo, San Marcos
- Eric Pánfilo Cardona Requena, National Civil Police Sub-station El Tumbador, San Marcos
- Benigno López Fuentes, Vice Police Chief, National Civil Police (PNC), San Marcos
- Gustavo Adolfo Sandoval Bonilla, National Civil Police Sub-station El Rodeo, San Marcos
- Alex Mahler Pérez, Mayor, El Rodeo, San Marcos
- Booz Lorenzo Perez, Assistant Director of the Department of Migration
- Gustavo Ac Macz, Supply Departmental Representative of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office, Salamá, Baja Verapaz
- Luis Francisco González Estrada, Police Chief, Police Station 51, National Civil Police (PNC) Cobán, Alta Verapaz
- Héctor Valdemar Barrera, **Auxiliar** de la PDH en Chiquimula, Chiquimula
- Boris España Cáceres, Governor, Department of Chiquimula
- Herberth Carranza, Secretary to the Governor of Chiquimula
- Luis Aldana Marroquín, Police Chief, Department of Chiquimula
- Rolando Aquino Guerra, Mayor, Chiquimula, Chiquimula
- Marcelino Yoc López, Police Chief, Huehuetenango, Department of Huehuetenango
- Sabino Ramos, Chief of the National Civil Police Sub-station Sacapulas, Quiché

Diplomatic Corps:

- Susie Kitchens , First Secretary, Embassy of the United Kingdom
- Monika Gruber-Lang, Ambassador, Embassy of Austria

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.

Civil Society Organisations:

- Security in Democracy (SEDEM)
- Eduardo de León, Rigoberta Menchú Foundation Tum (FRMT)
- Ana Gladis Ollas, National Human Rights Movement (MNDH)
- Association Ixquik Women of Peten
- Pablo Sigüenza, Coordinating Body of NGOs and Cooperatives Coordinación (CONGCOOP)
- Hermano Santiago Otero, Episcopal Conference of Guatemala

- Roberto Cum Jun, Parish Priest Salamá, Baja Verapaz

Internacional Organisations:

- Robert Perillo, US Leap
- Coordinating Body for International Accompaniment in Guatemala (CAIG)
- Forum of International Non-Governmental Organizations (FONGI)
- Amnesty International
- Domingo Matías, Rights Action

2.3 ACCOMPANIMENTS

Since the 13th May 2005, we have accompanied **Carlos Morales**, leader of the **Union of Campesino Organisations for the Verapaces (UVOC)**, and other members of the organisation. Throughout the last month, we accompanied them during their activities in Alta and Baja Verapaz, and in Guatemala City.

Background: Carlos Morales, leader of the UVOC, has been 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 by the support of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH). Following this, he requested 24 hour accompaniment from Peace Brigades. UVOC is a campesino organisation from the Verapaces (the departments of Alta and Baja Verapaz) and works principally on access to land for campesinos and to provide support in the process of legalisation of the communities' titles to land. UVOC also offers training for communities affiliated to UVOC and supports development projects within those communities.

We continue being in permanent contact with the **National Coordination of Residents of Marginal Areas in Guatemala (CONAPAMG)**, carrying out regular visits to its office, as well as accompanying the organisation to meetings in the capital.

Background: CONAPAMG works on the question of access to housing and services and the legalisation of illegally occupied land. We have accompanied CONAPAMG since 4th July 2004, when their office was broken into and inventories, bills, computer discs and money were stolen. CONAPAMG's community leaders suffer from threats on a regular basis. In March of 2005 Miguel Zapeta González, resident and leader of the community "Esquipulas" in zone 21 of Guatemala City, was murdered. Many of the communities that CONAPAMG supports are evicted frequently, and for others there are many more evictions pending. PBI meets with Guatemalan authorities in the local zones where there are CONAPAMG communities that are negotiating either accessor purchase of the land that they occupy.

We have been accompanying the **Association of Friends of Lake Izabal (ASALI)** and **Eloyda Mejía**, Legal Representative of the organisation, since 21st February 2004, when the threats against her worsened. This month we maintained regular contact with members of the association.

Background: Eloyda Mejia has suffered a number of threats as a result of her work to protect Lake Izabal, in the province of Izabal, East Guatemala, and due to her work to inform 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, the threats against her worsened, which she reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH).

We carry out regular visits to the offices of the **Madre Selva Collective** and have frequent contact with their members during their work in different departments throughout the country. PBI has been accompanying members of Madre Selva since June 2004.

Background: Madre Selva is an environmental organisation which holds regular workshops on the negative impact of mega-projects and in particular those involving open cast mining and the installation of hydroelectric power plants. Members of the organisation regularly receive threats because of their work.

We continue to accompany the **National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala (CONAVIGUA)** periodically through visits to and presence in their office, as well as during their exhumations and inhumations of clandestine cemeteries in rural areas. During the month of April, we accompanied members of CONAVIGUA during an exhumation in Buena Vista, Quiché.

Background: CONAVIGUA continues to facilitate the process of exhumations and inhumations in various departments throughout Guatemala, largely in Quiché, Chimaltenango and the Verapaces as part of their efforts to recuperate the collective memory of Guatemala's recent history. This process provokes tense situations in these small rural communities between victims and their perpetrators, and the women from CONAVIGUA receive threats so as not to go ahead with this work. The organisation continues carrying out exhumations and inhumations during this year

We accompany Carlos Guarquez, General Coordinator of the **Guatemalan Association of Indigenous Mayors and Authorities (AGAAI)** and the **Mayan Foundation (FUNDAMAYA)**, and adviser to the indigenous municipality of Sololá since January of 2005. We stay in regular contact with him through visits to his office and through telephone calls. This month we accompanied Carlos during his activities in Huehuetenango.

Background: Mr Guarquez has suffered from various forms of threats, accusations, and intimidations because of his work rejecting the Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) and mining exploitation. On 25th March 2005, in the village of El Tablón, Sololá, the vehicle used by Carlos Humberto Guarquez, of AGAAI and FUNDAMAYA, was doused in petrol and set on fire by unknown individuals. Death threats specifically naming Carlos Guarquez, the then Indigenous Mayoress of Sololá, Dominga Vásquez, 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.

We accompany the **Movement of Peasant Workers (MTC)**, an entity of the Social Pastoral Office of the Diocese of San Marcos, which consists of associations of peasant communities defending their human rights. This month we accompanied the MTC in its activities in San Marcos and we continue to have weekly contact with the technical support team.

Background: Since the beginning of November 2005, Julio Archila, a member of the MTC, has suffered various forms of intimidation and threats directed against him and his family. Apparently his security problems are related to the support the MTC gives to the campesinos who are engaged in protest on the farm Las Delicias, San Marcos. On 4th November 2005, police arrested Julio, accusing him of stealing coffee. He was brought before the judge and, on not finding any proof of the accusations, he was freed. Since then there have been other acts of intimidation and threats made against Julio Archila and members of his family.

The **Organisation to Support an Integrated Sexuality to Confront AIDS (OASIS)**, 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, maintaining a virtually daily presence in the office of the organisation and keeping in permanent contact.

Background: On 17th December 2005, the transgender worker Paulina was killed, making it the seventh murder of a transgender worker that year. Zulma, who was present when the crime was committed, was seriously injured during the incident. She is a witness to the murder of Paulina, accusing members of the National Civil Police (PNC) as perpetrators. 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 being subjected to harassment and threats, and during the night of 22nd January, Jorge López, Executive Director of OASIS, reported that he had been pursued by a police car.

The **Centre for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH)**. In April 2006 we accompanied members of CALDH during their activities in the Department of Chiquimula where they were presenting an exhibition about Anne Frank.

Background: On the 2nd of April 2006, community leader and CALDH observer Meregilda Súchite of Opola, Chiquimula, was killed. The accused murderer has not been captured and the husband of the deceased, also witness of the crime, and their children, have received threats. In the past PBI has accompanied members of the organisation that are victims of harassment.

2.4. OBSERVATIONS

PBI Guatemala provides international observations in public events where Guatemalan social organizations require international attention and interest. These observations also take place when it is judged necessary in order to be able to communicate what we witness outside of the country.

On the 20th of April 2006, we observed a march in the capital organised by the Coordinating Body of Indigenous and Campesino Organisations (CONIC) in which different campesino organisations and unions participated. Workers from the both the formal and informal sectors were involved to demand that there be put in place a national land reform policy, the betterment of the education system as well as heightened justice and security.

On the 28th of April 2006, we observed a protest in front of the World Bank offices in Guatemala City, coinciding with the visit of the Bank's director, Paul Wolfowitz, and in protest against the support the World Bank gives to the country's mining projects. The protest was organized by Madre Selva, with the participation of the Campesino Unity Committee (CUC) and the Association of Friends of Lake Izabal (ASALI).

2.5 FOLLOW-UPS

PBI provides follow-up to accompanied organisations that, at a given moment, do not require as much international presence for their protection. At the same time, the workers of these organisations remain in a delicate situation and, because of this, PBI considers it necessary to maintain the focus of an international audience on them.

We continue to maintain contact with members of the **Community of El Maguey**, affiliated with the **Campesino Unity Committee (CUC)** through frequent contact and occasional visits.

Background: After a violent eviction of the community by the army in April 2003 a Governmental Decree withdrawing the community's right to the land was issued. This Decree was appealed before the Constitutional Court which, in May 2004, decided in favour of the community. In February this year they were awarded the land title, however, the community is still waiting for the installation of electricity, the construction of a school and the paving of the road leading up to the entrance of the community and within the property.

José Armando Palacios, member of the **Union of Workers of the company "Association of the Coffee Industry", and other related Industries (SITINCA)** which PBI has accompanied, has had to leave the country due to receiving serious death threats. PBI continues to monitor the case.

Background: In January 2004, three workers of the company's internal security decided to join the trade union. Since then the company has allegedly carried out anti-union activities, focused on José Armando Palacios, who was one of the three workers. On the 16th April, unknown armed individuals broke into the house of José Armando Palacios and threatened the lives of his wife and their two children. They asked for Mr. Palacios, whom they wanted "to kill for being in the union." On the 6th May, Mr. Palacios was dismissed without any explanation.

We continue to maintain contact with the **Sololá Indigenous Municipality and Dominga Vásquez**. On 1st January 2006 Dominga finished her duties as Indigenous Mayoress of Sololá but she continues as a leader of her community. We continue to maintain contact with her, monitoring the Municipality and the new Indigenous Mayor.

3. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: OUTSIDE OF GUATEMALA

The Project Coordination Office in Madrid, the Regional Representatives and other members of the Project Committee, as well as national PBI groups, carry out public relations campaigns with numerous NGOs, national agencies and governments, parliamentarians, etc. These meetings help in the development and strengthening of the project's "Support Network", an essential tool for the workings of the international presence of PBI in Guatemala.

By means of a European tour organized by various sections of PBI and with the support of the PBI Guatemala Project, human rights defenders accompanied by PBI – Carlos Morales from the UVOC and Eloyda Mejía from ASALI – were able to participate in various meetings, talks, and presentations in various cities in Germany, Spain, and Portugal. We would like to make mention of some of these meetings and events that the Project also participated in:

In Hamburg (Germany)

The 1st of April, a public talk on the same day as the celebrations of the Anniversary of Monsignor Oscar Romero, with the participation of the project's European Representative Kerstin Reemtsma.

In Spain

The 3rd and 4th of April (Barcelona)

Visit to the Solidarity Consumption Network. Meetings with the Catalan Cooperation and Development Agency, and with Mr. Francesc Freixas in the Barcelona Town Hall.

The 5th and 6th of April (Santander)

Meetings with the Mayor of Camargo, María Jesús Calva, the Worker Commission Union (CCOO), and the Director of the International Classroom Cooperation programme at the University of Cantabria.

The 7th and 8th of April (Madrid)

Meeting in the Foreign Policy Office with the Vice-Director General of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean; Carmen Díaz Orejas, the Human Rights Office Director; Fernando Fernández-Arias Minuesa; as well as with María del Pozo from Amnesty International; and Mayte Quesada and Montse García representing the PBI Guatemala Project.

Meeting with Amnesty International's Central American Working Group, including an interview for their magazine.

In Portugal

The 11th of April (Lisbon)

Meeting in the Foreign Policy Office of Lisbon with Mr. Joao Moura. Meeting in Amnesty International with Ms. Claudia Pedra and Daniel Oliveira.

The 12th of April

Meeting in the Portuguese Parliament with Mr Nuno Magallanes of the P.D. Centre Right Party, Portuguese Parliamentarian Helena Pinto of the Leftist Block, and Parliamentary Advisor Mr. Carlos Santos.

The 13th of April

Meeting with the Portuguese Parliamentarian Ms. Anabella Zenraro of the Portuguese Communist Party. Also, a meeting with the General Project Director of OIKOS, Ricardo Domingos, and with Mr. José Manuel Caetano, President of the Portuguese Environmental Organisation Platform.

4. PUBLICATIONS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (IN SPANISH)

In this section we publish several communiqués written by human rights organisations in which they express their preoccupations regarding the current state of affairs in Guatemala.

**CENTRO PARA LA ACCIÓN LEGAL EN DERECHOS HUMANOS (CALDH):
ASESINATO DE UNA LIDERESA COMUNITARIA DE OLOPA, CHIQUIMULA**

El domingo 2 de abril en la comunidad de Tuticopote Abajo, Olopa, Chiquimula, la señora Meregilda Súchite, de 49 años, fue asesinada con gran saña, cuando a eso de las 7 de la mañana se dirigía a misa a la Iglesia de la comunidad acompañada de su esposo Longino Díaz. La señora Súchite fue atacada con arma de fuego disparándole 6 balazos, y por si fuera poco, el agresor se ensañó dándole 4 machetazos, (uno en los ojos, uno en la boca y dos en los pulmones) ambos actos le quitaron la vida y dejaron en la orfandad a 8 niños/as. El presunto asesino es el señor César Pérez Gonzáles, quien hasta el momento no ha sido detenido y según información de vecinos se encuentra armado en su casa y amenazando con matar a alguien más de la familia Díaz Súchite. Se sabe que el señor Pérez González trabaja en la empresa de Servicios Integrales de Seguridad (SIS) que brinda su servicio en el Banrural de Esquipulas.

La señora Meregilda Súchite era una de las líderes de su comunidad a la cual servía como comadrona y a la vez, su esposo, es guía espiritual, ambos con una importante trayectoria de participación en diversos espacios de defensa y promoción de los derechos humanos. Ella además participaba activamente en la Red de Mujeres del Observatorio en Derechos Humanos promovido por CALDH en la región Ch'orti' y asistió a las Jornadas de Observancia realizadas el 28 de marzo en Olopa, recibiendo denuncias sobre conflictividad de la tierra en dicha área, por lo que este hecho no puede tomarse como aislado de las acciones por la defensa y vigencia a los derechos humanos que esta pareja realizaba en su comunidad.

La saña con la que fue asesinada la compañera demuestra claramente que además de darle muerte, se pretendía dar un mensaje de intimidación a cualquier persona que en la búsqueda de justicia quiera oír, ver y denunciar los hechos que acontecen en esa región.

Testigo presencial del hecho, fue su esposo el señor Longino Díaz quien hizo las declaraciones respectivas ante la Policía Nacional Civil de Olopa y el Juez de Paz de la localidad que conoció el caso y realizó su informe. Sin embargo ambos documentos fueron enviados al Ministerio Público de Esquipulas, el más cercano que tiene la comunidad, en donde hasta el momento no han recibido dicha denuncia, ya que fueron enviados a través de una empresa de correspondencia por lo que tardará aproximadamente dos días en llegar a su destino.

El señor Díaz, se dirigió el día 4 de abril al Ministerio Público para hacer su declaración encontrando cerradas las oficinas del MP. CALDH, se entrevistó con la Fiscal del MP en Esquipulas quien indicó que mientras no sean recibidos los informes de la PNC y del Juzgado de Olopa, no se iniciará la investigación respectiva y que además no se puede tomar la declaración del testigo sin el trámite anterior y que si la toman no va servir de nada, pese a que legalmente el MP tiene la obligación de recibir cualquier denuncia y permanecer abierto para el efecto.

La actuación de las autoridades de la región nos vuelve a demostrar la ineficiencia del sistema de justicia en Guatemala, contribuyendo a que la violencia se de en un ambiente de total impunidad.

Ante estos hechos exigimos al Ministerio Público proceda a la investigación del caso, promueva la orden de captura del acusado para evitar que éste vuelva a actuar contra la vida pues el peligro es latente para otros miembros de la familia Díaz Súchite que continúan siendo amenazados.

Nos solidarizamos con la familia, con el pueblo Ch'orti' y llamamos a las organizaciones a que se pronuncien para que cesen los hechos de violencia contra las mujeres y contra cualquier defensor o defensora de derechos humanos.

¡POR EL DERECHO A UN PAÍS JUSTO!
Guatemala, 05 de abril 2006

COMUNICADO DEL BLOQUE ANTIIMPERIALISTA SOBRE NUEVO DESALOJO EN LA MOCCA , 6 DE ABRIL DEL 2006

Hacemos saber a la opinión nacional e internacional

Que el día de hoy, jueves 6 de abril se llevó a cabo por segunda vez en este año un desalojo a las fincas Las Cabañas y San José Mocca en Senahú, Alta Verapaz, propiedades de los terratenientes alemanes Roberto y William Hempfpead Smith.

El motivo principal de la ocupación se debe al engaño al que fueron sometidos los campesinos por parte de los finqueros, ya que nunca les pagó prestaciones laborales, y engañándoles les hizo poner su huella digital (pues no saben leer ni escribir) en un finiquito laboral elaborado en castellano (los campesinos trabajadores en su mayoría

sólo hablan q'eqchi'). Les dijeron que les iban a entregar tierras como pasivo laboral, sin embargo esto ha sido un engaño pues nunca recibieron nada.

El pasado 1 de febrero del presente año, fueron desalojados violentamente por la policía y el ejército. Además el finquero pagó a otros campesinos para que quemaran las viviendas de los ocupantes y para que envenenaran el agua que utilizan. Esto ha causado varias enfermedades, sobre todo en la piel, a más de 100 niños. Una hora después que se fueran del lugar la policía y el ejército que los desalojó, los campesinos ocuparon nuevamente la finca, pues están dispuestos a seguir luchando lo que en derecho les pertenece históricamente y también por todas las generaciones de trabajo en esas fincas.

El día de hoy aproximadamente a las 6:00 am se hicieron presentes en la finca Las Cabañas 150 policías al mando del Comisario de Cobán Castellanos Soto, 85 soldados del ejército, personal de la Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos y la fiscal del Ministerio Público Berta Luz Flores. El ejército cercó la finca mientras la fiscal del MP negociaba el desalojo con las aproximadamente 300 familias campesinas que ocupaban las fincas. Los campesinos decidieron salir pacíficamente y se movilizaron hacia la carretera donde comenzaron a instalarse. Después que las personas hayan abandonado la Finca Las Cabañas, un grupo de 150 campesinos junto con seguridad privada de los finqueros comenzó a destruir lo que los campesinos ocupantes habían dejado. También se quedaron custodiando para que los campesinos no volvieran a entrar. Al lugar se hizo presente también un camión enviado por el finquero en el que ofreció llevar a los campesinos a otro lugar, ya que no quiere que se queden en la carretera. Sin embargo los campesinos se negaron en primer lugar porque se quedarán allí como medida de presión para que los finqueros paguen su deuda. Y también se quedaron porque no tienen otro lugar a donde ir, más de tres generaciones de ellos han trabajado y construido esa finca donde han vivido durante muchos años. Posteriormente la Fiscal del MP se movilizó hacia la finca San José Moca donde efectuaría la segunda orden de desalojo. Sin embargo se movilizó sin notificar al personal de la PDH quien tuvo que llegar por sus propios medios al casco urbano de la finca. En este lugar también negoció con aproximadamente 200 campesinos decidieron salir pacíficamente de la finca. Sin embargo en ese mismo momento llegaron al lugar aproximadamente 1,500 campesinos que dijeron que se quedarían en la finca para protegerla y le pidieron al finquero que les diera armas para proteger la propiedad. La fiscal del MP, avaló este movimiento y no ejerció su función como conciliadora en este caso, sino que claramente en contubernio con los finqueros se retiró del lugar para que los campesinos fueran armados. Es evidente que el finquero pagó para que tantos campesinos hombres se movilizaran para proteger sus "propiedades", y en complicidad con la fiscal del MP, la policía y el ejército, que se llevara a cabo un enfrentamiento entre campesinos. A partir de las 16:30 horas se retiraron del lugar la policía y el ejército, sin embargo se quedaron los campesinos organizados por el finquero y se teme que vayan a actuar violentamente en contra de los campesinos desalojados que se encuentran ahora a la orilla de la carretera. También es de nuestro conocimiento que se han girado 40 órdenes de captura hacia los campesinos ocupantes.

Por tanto exigimos en primer lugar que el Gobierno vele por la seguridad de los campesinos, pues con su ausencia están avalando cualquier acción violenta que realicen los finqueros.

También exigimos que la justicia se empiece a aplicar a favor de los campesinos que fueron engañados, pues hasta ahora solamente ha respondido a los intereses de los finqueros extranjeros.

"Nosotros los hombres y las mujeres estamos de pie, hicimos florecer estas tierras con el sueño de que nuestros hijos tuvieran un pedazo de tierra y una tortilla para el futuro, pero resultó que nuestra lucha fue en vano, pero ahora lucharemos con la ley en la mano y esperamos que los organismos internacionales nos vean y nos acompañen desde el lado humano de sus acciones.

Ni un paso atrás, adelante por un tortilla y un pedazo de tierra, nuestra lucha es justa y humana.

Basta de tanta burla de los alemanes que vinieron a matar a nuestra madre tierra, a hacerse ricos y tratarnos como animales.

Nuestro abuelos que murieron para hacer producir estas tierras, hoy claman justicia."

Asociación Campesina de desarrollo San José Mocca "AJK"

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