



PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL – GUATEMALAN PROJECT

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1. NOTES ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

IMPUNITY

Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) register the candidature of Efraín Ríos Montt

Guatemala, 19.05.2007 (EP, SV, PL).- The presidential, vice-presidential, and parliamentary candidatures of the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), the Patriot Party (PP) and the Grand National Alliance (GANNA), have been confirmed by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), after they completed the legal prerequisites. The Centre for Legal Action for Human Rights (CALDH) are to oppose the registration of Ríos Montt, who is accused of genocide. Eduardo de León, of the Rigoberta Menchú Foundation (FRMT), the organisation that initiated the legal action against the ex-general, declared that it is analysing whether it will challenge the registration, adding that the fact that he enjoys immunity does not mean that he is exempt from being held accountable in the eyes of the law.

Organisations challenge the candidature of Ríos Montt

Guatemala, 30.05.2007 (PL).- The presidential candidate for the party Encuentro por Guatemala (Assembly for Guatemala), Rigoberta Menchú, and five other human rights organisations have joined the appeal requested by representatives of Families of the Detained and Dissappeared of Guatemala (FAMDEGUA) and the Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR), that the Citizen's Register of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) revoke the enrolment of the Ríos Montt as candidate for member of parliament for the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG).

Accord for the creation of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) is not unconstitutional

Guatemala, 10.05.2007 (EP, PL, SV).- The Constitutional Court (CC) resolved on the 9th of May that there are no unconstitutional aspects of the accord signed by the government with the United Nations for the creation of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). The Congress of the Republic can therefore now debate its ratification. Guatemala, 01.06.2007 (CA).- During a press conference on the 31st of May, commemorating 22 years since the creation of Guatemala's Constitution, the National Commission on the Peace Accords (CNAP) assured that the CICIG is congruent with the Peace Accords and would contribute towards justice and the protection of the human rights.

Judge suspends inquiries related to the fire in the Spanish Embassy

Guatemala, 19.05.2007 (SV).- The senior criminal judge, Eduardo Cojulún, has suspended the judicial inquiries requested by the National Audience of Spain in the case related to the 1980 fire in the Spanish embassy which killed campesinos and Spanish citizens.

International community and social organisations demonstrate solidarity after the Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG) receive threats

Guatemala, 29.05.2007 (AC, LH).- Representatives of international cooperation entities and social organisations expressed their solidarity with the FAFG after it received threats and intimidations which started on the 25th of May of this year.

LAND

Congress passes Law of Legalisation of Occupied Lands

Guatemala, 16.05.2007 (SV, PL).- The Congress has approved a law for the legalisation of land occupied before 31 December 2003. The members of congress established that the lands inhabited by persons of few resources sold by the state and the municipalities would be exempt from IVA sales tax. They also stated that the process of legalisation will take three years, the law coming into force on the 31st of September 2007. According to a survey by the Vice-Ministry of Housing, part of the Ministry of Communications, Infrastructure and Housing, some 17,000 families in all parts of Guatemala stand to benefit, of which 12,000 occupy state lands and some 5,000 occupy municipal lands. It is estimated that the inhabitants of at least seven settlements located in Zone 7 of the capital will not benefit, because these occupations were more recent.

CODECA make formal complaint after the murder of a youth in an occupied estate in San Marcos

Guatemala, 07.05.2007 (FD).- On Saturday the 5th of May the Committee of Campesino Development (CODECA) made a formal complaint to the authorities regarding the violent removal by security forces of 50 families that had occupied the San Antonio de las Pilas estate in Tecun Uman, Malacatan, San Marcos since 2005. Antonio Monzon, 17 years old, was killed during the course of the eviction, in which one other person was injured and another arrested.

Eviction of families occupying an estate in El Peten

Guatemala, 23.05.2007 (FD).- Worried about the rise in the price of the staple crop maize, and the lack of land upon which to cultivate it, 109 Q'eqchi families living in conditions of extreme poverty in the departments of Alta Verapaz and El Peten, decided to occupy the lands of the Chahimal estate in Sayaxche, El Peten on the 23rd of April 2007. On the 22nd of May they were forcibly evicted by some 450 police and military personnel. Afterwards, the campesinos complained to the press of intimidation, pointing to the presence of armed civilians responsible for grave human rights violations and the 'disappearances' of community leaders. The families of Nueva Comunidad Chahimal are now seeking "solidarity and accompaniment in their struggle for the right to land and maize".

GLOBALISATION

Community consultation on mining in San Marcos is valid but not binding according to the Constitutional Court

Guatemala, 09.05.2007 (PL).- Almost two years after communities in Sipacapa, San Marcos, rejected mining activity in the area, the Constitutional Court (CC) has declared unconstitutional Article 27 of the Rules on Community Consultations in Good Faith of Sipacapa Town Council, which had signalled that the process of community consultation would be binding. In the community consultation held on 18 June 2005, the local population had declared their opposition to the reconnaissance, exploration and open-cast extraction of minerals. In its judgement, the CC said that the result of the consultation was not in question however mechanisms of consultation must be created and regulated through the Congress of the Republic. The CC also ruled that the Government must analyse mining activity in the area and create mechanisms for delivering fair compensation to the communities opposed to it.

OTHER NEWS

Ten years after the peace accords the outcome is disappointing

Brussels, 3.05.2007 (DPA, PL, AFP, La Hora). On 2-3 May, the European Parliament hosted Balance and Perspectives of International Cooperation in Guatemala, a conference attended by euro-parliamentarians and, among others, the European Commission, the Guatemalan government's Secretary of Peace, Norma Quixt'an, and Secretary of Agriculture, Mariel Aguilar, and the Director of the Guatemalan Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, Anders Kompass. The organisers, CIDSE, CIFCA and Grupo Sur, concluded that "although the Peace Accords were adopted as commitments of the state, the majority of them remain unfulfilled." The Conference appealed to the European Union to "continue denouncing human rights violations and crimes against humanity, and urging the government of Guatemala to ensure that these violations do not continue in impunity" and to "fulfil the required commitments so that the compensation of the victims of the armed conflict can become a reality".

45 leaders of political parties have died violently, according to statistics

Guatemala, 29.05.2007 (LH).- With the assassination of a mayoral candidate for the party of Rigoberta Menchú, presidential candidate and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1992, there have now been 45 deaths of political leaders preceding and during the electoral process, which will end with the general elections on 9 September. According to Diego García, President of the Observation Mission of the Organisation of American States (OEA), "The perceptible violence and insecurity is greater than that registered during the 2003 electoral campaign, during which 1,013 complaints were received of threats against political organisations and civic committees."

Sources: Prensa Libre (PL), Siglo Veintiuno (SV), El Periódico (EP), La Hora (LH), Inforpress Centroamericana (IC), La Semana en Guatemala (SG), Informe Semanal Sobre Derechos Humanos (ISDH), Informador Rural (IR), Agencia Cerigua (AC), Incidencia Democrática (ID), Guatesemana (GS), Informe Semanal de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (CDHG)..

2. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: IN GUATEMALA

Team: Mary Scott (United Kingdom), Maripaz Gallardo (Spain), Owen Campbell (Canada), Enrique Riestra Rozas (Spain), Virginie Barber (France), Jacques van Luytelaar (Netherlands), Vanessa Marcos (Portugal), Nadia Graber (Switzerland), Emma Marshall (United Kingdom) and Daniel Carey (United Kingdom)

2.1 MEETINGS WITH AUTHORITIES AND MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITIES AND 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 express confidentially our concerns about critical situations of which we have first hand knowledge through our work in the field. During the month of May meetings were held with the following authorities:

Guatemalan Authorities:

- Marta Altolaquirre, Viceminister of Exterior Relations, Guatemala City
- Edgar Alfredo Rodriguez, President of the Human Rights Commission of the Congress of the Republic, Guatemala City
- Elias Javier Prera Ventura, Governor of Baja Verapaz, Salama
- Alex Mahler Perez, Mayor, El Rodeo, San Marcos
- Héctor Vásquez Bolvito, National Civil Police Substation Chief, PNC, Santa Cruz, Alta Verapaz
- Oliverio Reyes, Administrative Director of the Mayor's Office, Cobán, Alta Verapaz
- López Muñoz, National Civil Police Substation Sub-Chief, PNC, Salama, Baja Verapaz

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 the month of May meetings were held with the following organisations:

Civil Society Organisations:

- Vitalino Similox, Ecumenical Forum for Peace and Reconciliation (FEPAZ), Guatemala City
- David Morales, Trade Union Federation of Food, Agriculture and Similar Workers (FESTRAS), Guatemala City
- Angélica Macario, Runujel Junam Ethnic Community Council (CERJ), Guatemala City
- Felipe Gómez, OXLAJUJ AJPOP, Guatemala City
- Lisseth Perez, Centre of Popular Investigation and Education (CIEP), Guatemala City
- Aniceto Montiel, National Coordinator of Campesino Organisations (CNOC), Guatemala City
- Lorenzo Pérez Mendoza, National Council of Displaced Guatemalans (CONDEG), Guatemala City
- Miguel Ángel Albizures, Families of the Detained and Disappeared of Guatemala (FAMDEGUA), Guatemala City
- María Nieves, Gerardi Movement, Guatemala City

International Organisations:

- Coordinating Body for International Accompaniment in Guatemala (CAIG), Guatemala City
- Coordinating Committee on International Accompaniment in Guatemala (ACOGUATE), Guatemala City
- Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Defenders Accompaniment Commission of the Forum of International Non-Governmental organisations (FONGI), Guatemala City
- Ruth Reichstein, German Journalist

2.3 ACCOMPANIMENTS

In relation to the **Centre for Human Rights Legal Action, CALDH**, we started accompanying **José Roberto Morales Sic** in February, who is Co-ordinator for CALDH's Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Programme. In May we accompanied him during various activities inside and outside of the capital, and in his daily movements.

Background: Since 1994 CALDH has had its headquarters in the capital, where they receive reports of Human Rights violations and also direct investigations into the cases. The institution provides counselling, accompaniment and training to organisations, groups and communities. One of their 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 the 2nd of February. Two armed men kidnapped him in

his car and threatened to kill him. Later they abandoned him and the CALDH vehicle was also recovered with all his belongings present (including personal documents, cheques and a laptop which belonged to the organisation).

Since the 13th of 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. During May 2007 we have continued to accompany UVOC in various activities in Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz and have increased our presence in Santa Cruz, Alta Verapaz. Surveillance of the leader of the organisation and its members has continued.

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 to provide support in the process of legalisation of the communities' titles to land. The UVOC also offers training for communities affiliated to the 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. The offices and personnel of the UVOC continue to be under surveillance from unknown persons. The situation in some communities affiliated to the 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 casualties of one dead and 39 injured on the side 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 2006 we accompanied Eloyda and ASALI after a tense situation arose between some groups of campesinos that had occupied lands, the CGN and state actors who wished to remove them. During May 2007 we have continued to maintain regular contact and international presence with Eloyda and ASALI in El Estor.

Background: Eloyda Mejia 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, the threats against her worsened, which she reported to the Public Prosecutor's Office (MP) and the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH). In February 2006 Eloyda Mejia's restaurant wall was graffitied with "Yes to CGN" (Guatemalan Nickel Company)." Since the last months of 2006 Eloyda Mejia 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 against her in order to force her to abandon her work against the mining company CGN in El Estor.

We visit the **Madre Selva Collective's** office regularly 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 in some of their journeys to the regions where they carry out their work, with a presence in their office in the capital. In May 2007 we maintained contact with members of the collective.

Background: Madre Selva is an environmental organisation which holds regular workshops on the negative impact of mega-projects and 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 the collective reports about. 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 Italian author of the study, since its publication, has received a series of threats. This situation has provoked an international reaction from various human rights organizations in support of the organisation and the author, whom eventually left the country.

We continue to accompany the **National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala (CONAVIGUA)** with regular visits to, and presence in, their office, as well as during their exhumations and inhumations of clandestine cemeteries in rural areas. We continue with frequent visits to their office due to the increased surveillance that became apparent in December 2006. In addition, this month we accompanied members of CONAVIGUA to an exhumation in Chinique, Quiché.

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 their perpetrators, and the women from CONAVIGUA receive threats and intimidation to stop them from continuing this work. The organisation has continued carrying out exhumations and inhumations during this year.

We accompany the **Movement of Campesino Workers (MTC)**, an entity of the Social Pastoral Office of the Diocese of San Marcos, which consists of associations of campesino communities working to defend their labour rights. In particular, we accompany **Julio Archila**, founder of the MTC. In the month of May 2007 we continued accompanying Julio and his son in their signing before a judge, required while they await a hearing in the case now scheduled for June. We remain in contact with MTC's 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 that are 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 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, 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 continues. For the moment Julio's legal position remains unresolved until the judge has decided on the proceedings.

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, a witness to the assassination of a sex worker. In the month of May we maintained weekly visits to the office and we accompanied Zulma during medical clinic visits.

Background: On 17th December 2005, the transgender worker Paulina was killed, being 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. 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 **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 "femicide". In May we accompanied the Women's Sector with regular visits and attended to the inauguration of their new office in the capital.

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 an intimidation and asked for police protection.

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 the month of November of 2006 we brought to a close the activation of our Support Network, activated in order to show our preoccupation with the security of **Roly Escobar**, Coordinator General, who received a death threat on the 10th of September 2006. In May 2007 we continued to accompany CONAPAMG with regular visits to the office, also accompanying Roly Escobar during some of his activities. This month saw the passing of the law of land legalisation demanded by CONAPAMG for many years.

Background: We have accompanied CONAPAMG since July 2004 when their office was broken into and robbed of lists, invoices, floppy discs and money. 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 the 18th August 2006, Carmen Sagastume, another member of the organisation, was brutally murdered. After this act, the morning of the 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.

Carlos Guárquez, General Co-ordinator of the **Guatemalan Association of Indigenous Mayors and Authorities (AGAAI)**, and adviser to the indigenous municipality of Sololá. We maintain contact by telephone calls and visits to the office. Since a break-in in the office of AGAAI on 20th March we have provided accompaniment through regular visits to his office. During the month of May we continued with our frequent visits to AGAAI's office and accompanied Carlos Guarquez to the community consultation in San Antonio Huista, Huehuetenango.

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, 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. More recently on 20th March 2007, the office of AGAAI was violently broken into by persons unknown who took important documentation and containers. The association denounced this grave incident as a clear act of intimidation against workers and members of AGAAI for their work in supporting and accompanying the Alcaldes and indigenous authorities that struggle for the protection of the land. They have reported the act to the office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH).

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 his vehicle on the 7th of May 2007. On the 17th of May 2007 the same person received a phone call to his 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 the 16th of May 2007 we have intensively accompanied the person who suffered this grave incident, and occasionally other members of this organisation, in their activities, visits to the Public Prosecutor and in their meetings and appointments relating to the investigation of the case.

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 inter-cultural processes, including from a gender perspective, within the framework of the promotion, defense 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 the 7th of May 2007 a worker was the victim of a temporary kidnapping during which he suffered verbal, physical and sexual aggression. The PCS vehicle in which he was traveling and which was carrying 'International Mission' signage, was stolen. On the 17th of May 2007 the same worker received a telephone threat in his home in which a male voice stated: "Son of a whore, 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."

2.4. FOLLOW UPS

During this month we are following the case of **Erwin Orrego**, activist of the **National Front in Defense of Public Services and National Resources (FNL)** and the **Guatemalan National Front of Market and Informal Economy Vendors (FENVEMEGUA)**, a trade union that brings together workers from the informal sector and that asserts their rights with the authorities of the Municipality of Guatemala City.

Background: On the 27th July 2006, Erwin Estuardo Orrego Borrayo, active member of FENVEMEGUA, was kidnapped by a group of armed men dressed in black identifying themselves as police. During the course of his kidnapping, he was victim of psychological and physical torture for two hours before being released. At the request of the Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (UPDH) of the National Human Rights Movement (MNDH), we accompany Mr. Orrego and the members of the MNDH throughout the proceedings following his kidnapping. Mr. Orrego had also been kidnapped and tortured in August 2003, and since then has been the victim of threats and surveillance on repeated occasions.

2.5. OBSERVATIONS

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

We were present as international observers during the Workers' Day march on 1 May, during the demonstration in support of the Housing Law on 8, 9 and 10 May, and we were also present during the ecumenical vigil in front of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala on 14 May, in which CONAPMG and other representatives of settlements asked for the legalization of lands occupied since the end of 2003.

On 29 May we were present at the act of solidarity, organized by the United Nations Development Program (PNUD) in support of the Forensic Anthropological Foundation of Guatemala (FAFG), which had received serious threats. The act of solidarity was held in the offices of FAFG, where there was a massive presence of organizations, both national and international.

3. ACTIVITIES OF PBI GUATEMALA: OUTSIDE OF GUATEMALA

The Regional Representatives, the project's co-ordinating Office in Madrid, and other Project committee members, as well as PBI national groups, have been strengthening public relations with numerous NGOs, agencies and national governments, parliaments etc. These meetings develop and strengthen the project's "Support Network", an indispensable tool in PBI's international presence in Guatemala.

On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of May Kerstin Reemtsma, the project's European Representative, Tara Ward, Representative for Canada and Montse Garcia, Project Coordinator, participated in the international conference "10 years of the Peace Accords in Guatemala: Balances and Perspectives of the International Community" which took place in Brussels and was organised by the European networks CIFCA, CIDSE y Grupo Sur.

On 22 May Montse Garcia, Project Coordinator, met with environmental campaigners Carlos Albacete and Piedad Espinosa from the organisation Tropic Verde (Green Tropic), who work in the defense of the Maya Biosphere Reserve, amongst others. Both suffered a grave attempt on their life on 10 January 2007 and have been in voluntary exile from the country ever since, for their own security.

On 31 May in Madrid, Montse García, Project Coordinator, together with Mónica Costa, International Relations Manager for Amnesty International Spain met with Elena Valenciano in her capacity as Secretary for International Relations for the Socialist Workers Party of Spain (PSOE).

4. 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.



COINDE
Consejo de Instituciones de Desarrollo

CONCODIG - Consejo Nacional de las
Comunidades para el desarrollo integral de Guatemala

COMUNICADO URGENTE FAMILIAS DE NUEVO AL REFUGIO

El 29 de Diciembre del 2006 se cumplieron 10 años de la Paz firme y duradera, en el que se acordaron una serie de compromisos con la finalidad de alcanzar la paz y el desarrollo de las comunidades del país. Los acuerdos a lo largo de esta década han sufrido una serie de atrasos e incumplimientos, principalmente de parte de los diferentes gobiernos de turno. Las comunidades más pobres del país continúan abandonadas, y de estas las poblaciones indígenas son las que mantienen altas deficiencias en atención a aspectos de salud, educación, vivienda y desnutrición severa. La pobreza se ha incrementado y los niveles de violencia continúan en una espiral ascendente.

En muchas de las comunidades los grupos paramilitares, denominados PAC (patrullas de autodefensa civil) que asolaron miles de comunidades y que son responsables de cientos de masacres, no se disolvieron al firmar la paz, continúan accionando de forma armada con total impunidad, al amparo de los entes de seguridad. Un caso de estos es el que actualmente viven las/los pobladores de la Aldea Los Cimientos, municipio de San Bartolomé

Jocotenango, ubicada a 67 kms de la cabecera del Quiché. En la cual 100 familias conforman alrededor de 400 personas, son presionadas por un grupo no disuelto de las PAC.

Este problema esta vigente desde hace más de 10 años, y consiste en que los líderes paramilitares de las PAC obligan a los pobladores mayores de 14 años a patrullar, y el que no lo realiza lo hacen pagar Q50.00 por turno no realizado y si no cancela esta cantidad, los castigan por tres días, debiendo cumplir trabajos forzados en terrenos de los líderes de las PAC y pagar en especie (aves de corral, productos comestibles, etc). El dinero y los productos que recogen se los reparten entre los 17 líderes.

Este grupo armado de patrulleros actúa con total impunidad, las/los pobladores han reportado casos de violación a mujeres adultas y niñas. Esta grave problemática ya se ha denunciado a la procuraduría de Derechos humanos, al Ministerio público, a la Policía Nacional civil de Quiché, desde hace tres años, tanto en la cabecera departamental de Quiché, como en la Ciudad de Guatemala. El caso ya lo conoce el juzgado de primera instancia penal de narcoactividad y delitos contra el ambiente del departamento del Quiché, quien dictaminó la orden no. 222-07 – of. 2: MP. 242 -2007 en la cual ordena el allanamiento, registro e inspección de las residencias de estos integrantes de este grupo paramilitar. A la fecha no se ha cumplido con esta orden, pues los agentes fueron recibidos con disparos de arma de fuego, cuando cumplían con la resolución del juez.

Esto ha obligado a que las familias se refugien nuevamente en las montañas, a ocultarse en la ciudad capital y otros municipios de la república para protegerse de estos grupos que no fueron desarmados.

Ante lo anterior las familias y organizaciones sociales que les acompañamos demandamos de forma urgente lo siguiente:

1. la urgente captura y respectivo proceso judicial de las personas involucradas en este grupo armado.
2. al gobierno que garantice la seguridad plena de las familias que hoy se encuentran nuevamente refugiadas.
3. que se brinde seguridad específica a los dirigentes de estas familias
4. que se investiguen las violaciones de que han sido victimas las mujeres y se procese judicialmente a los culpables.
5. que se instale en la aldea Los Cimientos oficinas que velen por el respeto y cumplimiento pleno de los derechos humanos.
6. Que se atienda de inmediato la emergencia, con alimentos, albergue, ropa y medicamentos a las familias que hoy se encuentran en la ciudad capital.

Al pueblo de Guatemala

- Su solidaridad hacia la niñez, ancianas /os. mujeres y hombres que en estos momentos sufren nuevamente del refugio forzado por condiciones de violencia.
- Se manifieste a favor de nuestras necesidades y exijan la resolución inmediata de esta grave problemática.
- Exijan al gobierno el desmantelamiento y captura inmediata de todos estos grupos armados (PAC) que causan zozobra en nuestras comunidades.
- Demande el resarcimiento económico, moral y social a nuestras familias.
- Reivindique el pleno cumplimiento de los Acuerdos de Paz, como agenda política de largo plazo.

Guatemala, Mayo 15/2007

Comunicado de prensa

En la resolución de conflictos agrarios tiene que prevalecer el bien común

Plataforma Agraria manifiesta que no hay avances significativos en las negociaciones con el gobierno para solucionar varios conflictos, agudizados tras la tormenta Stan. El gobierno mantiene una actitud burocrática y sigue ignorando los problemas que afrontan cientos de familias damnificadas, que -tras 19 meses- carecen de un lugar digno donde vivir y de oportunidades de subsistencia.

Exige al gobierno de la GANA que agilice las negociaciones y resuelva inmediatamente tres conflictos en San Marcos (Luis Malacatán, Santa Clarita Los Limones, ECA La Esperanza); dos en Quetzaltenango (Llanos de la Cruz y María de Lourdes); uno en Escuintla (San Rafael Sumatán); dos en Quiché (Satz y La Perla).

Desde que este gobierno asumió el poder del Estado, en lugar de encontrar soluciones ágiles para las familias pobres en el campo, a través de las mesas de diálogo, el gobierno utiliza el desalojo como mecanismo de control

y protección de la propiedad privada, en detrimento de los derechos económicos, sociales y culturales. Tal es el caso de la comunidad San Antonio Las Pilas, Tecún Umán, San Marcos, que fue desalojada.

Plataforma Agraria insta a la Secretaría de Asuntos Agrarios la solución inmediata de los casos enunciados, los cuales se refieren a acceso a tierras, y busque otros mecanismos ágiles y no caer en el juego de los terratenientes que pretenden vender sus fincas a precios sobrevalorados. Considera que es necesario establecer criterios generales de política pública ya consignados en la Constitución de la República (Art. 1; 40) y Convenios Internacionales que permitan una resolución de la conflictividad agraria. Garantizar derechos es una obligación del Estado, por tanto, las instituciones gubernamentales tienen responsabilidad en atender los problemas agrarios sin pretexto alguno.

Guatemala, 10 de mayo de 2007
Plataforma Agraria
2232-5651 / 2232-4947

PBI GUATEMALA DOES NOT NECESSARILY IDENTIFY WITH THE OPINIONS AND CONTENT OF THE ARTICLES AND COMMUNIQUE REPRODUCED.

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