

Peace Brigades International

in México

Bulletin for the PBI Mexico Project

No. XVII - March 2006



Photo: PBI

Notes on the
Current Situation

Cerezo Committee:
The Latest Prison Transfers

'La Parota',
Hydroelectric Dam Project

The Martin Barrios Case

Interview with
Federico Menor Patiño
of the human rights committee
"Sembrador de la Esperanza"

Anniversary:
Organization of Women
Ecologists of the Sierra
de Petatlán (OMESP)

Anniversary:
International Service
for Peace (SIPAZ)

"Human Rights
Defenders in Mexico"
Workshop-Seminar

Update on
PBI Mexico's Activities

pbi
abriendo espacios para la paz

Notes on the Current Situation

Recommendation on torture

On November 22, 2005, the President of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), José Luis Soberanes, presented the general recommendation number 10 on torture and affirmed that it is a practice that persists in Mexico and that federal, state and municipal police entities use it, as well as prison system officials and agents from the Public Ministry, "under the direction or with the tolerance of public officials". He maintained that there "exists a high rate of impunity" with the use of torture and called on the government to act with more earnestness in its responsibility to investigate, pursue and punish the perpetrators of these acts with the full weight of the law.¹

The National Network of Civil Organizations, "Todos los Derechos para Todos," and the Mexican section of Amnesty International considered that "although it comes late," the CNDH, upon announcing this recommendation, is "placing emphasis on this grave problem that persists in Mexico."²

Mexico's Dirty War

On January 11, 2006, with a divided vote of three against two, the first hall of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN) determined not to exercise its authority to challenge the National Attorney General Office's complaint, to follow the decision of a federal judge to issue arrest warrants against former president Luis Echeverría and other officials from his cabinet for the crime of genocide, committed on October 2, 1968. With this decision, the Court has de facto closed the possibility of pursuing cases relating to the events of June 10, 1971, October 2, 1968 and those related to the Dirty War of the 1970's that are currently in legal proceedings. These cases concern crimes against humanity and have been declared invalid since more than 30 years have passed since they were committed.³

Members of the National Network of Civil Organizations "Todos los Derechos Para Todos", from the Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez Center and the Association of Family Members of the Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Violations (Afadem),

declared the decision by the SCJN a "step backwards" in the attainment of justice. They highlighted that the massacre on October 2, 1968 "is a crime against humanity which should be investigated and sanctioned in accordance with international instruments on human rights."⁴

Latin American Water Tribunal

For the first time the Latin American Water Tribunal held a public hearing in Mexico from March 13 to 20, to try 13 cases in Latin America, six of which are in Mexico, which have resulted in environmental damage and negatively impacted residents. The six cases in Mexico include the hydroelectric dam project 'La Parota'; the petroleum spill in the river and beach of Coatzacoalcos, Veracruz, which has affected 15,000 residents of Nanchital and for which Pemex is being sued; the contamination of the Zihuatanejo bay, attributed to organic dumping and the tourism industry; industrial contamination of the Atoyac River due to dumping by the textile industry; the Cutzamala water transfer system in the state of Mexico, denounced by the Mazahua Movement; and the deterioration of the Lerma-Chapala-Santiago basins.⁵

Guerrero: Fourth in Assaults on Human Rights Defenders

The Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez Human Rights Center (Centro Pro) in its 2005 annual report places Guerrero in fourth place with regards to assaults on human rights defenders. It highlights the cases of the ambushing of the ecologist campesino Albertano Peñaloza Dominguez and the attacks on the campesinos opposing the hydroelectric dam project La Parota. Additionally, the Centro Pro reports four registered assassinations; two of them against militants of the Campesino Organization of the Sierra del Sur (OCSS) and two others as products of the unrestrained violence surrounding the construction project of the hydroelectric dam La

Parota, which "have to do with the climate of political and social conflict pervasive in the state". The Centro Pro concludes that "such events give evidence that in Guerrero human rights defenders are vulnerable to assaults of all kinds, whether they are working in defense of the forests, for the rights of others, or in the defense of their own lives."⁶

United Nations Recommendations for Guerrero

On November 25, 2005, the coordinator for Human Rights Projects for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (UN), Jane Werngreen Rosales, traveled to Guerrero to evaluate the state's progress in implementing the recommendation issued by the Special Rapporteur, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, on December 2003, concerning the situation of human rights and the fundamental liberties of indigenous people. Stavenhagen had recommended that federal and state governments place "urgent" attention to preventing and resolving social conflicts.⁷

On February 2, 2006, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination urged Mexico to investigate and punish those guilty of the forced sterilization of indigenous people, such as in the case of 14 indigenous men of the Me'Phaa community El Camalote in the municipality of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, who were sterilized between 1998 and 2001. The claim was formulated by José Francisco Cali Tzay, rapporteur for the case of Mexico and one of the 12 Committee experts who monitors compliance with the United Nations international convention in matters related to racial, ethnic and religious discrimination.⁸

1 La Jornada, November 23, 2005

2 La Jornada, November 23, 2005

3 La Jornada, January 12, 2006

4 La Jornada, January 13, 2006

5 La Jornada, February 22, 2006

6 El Sur, December 28, 2005

7 El Sur, November 26, 2005

8 El Sur, February 21, 2006

Cerezo Committee: The Latest Prison Transfers

August 2006 will mark the fifth anniversary of the arrest and imprisonment of the three Cerezo brothers, Héctor, Antonio and Alejandro, and of the Nahuatl indigenous man Pablo Alvarado Flores. Shortly after their detentions in August 2001, the Cerezo Committee (Comité Cerezo) was founded by Emiliana and Francisco Cerezo to secure the release of their brothers and defend the human rights of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. The Committee has expanded to other parts of Mexico and internationally with chapters in the Mexican states of Puebla, Michoacán, Oaxaca and Veracruz, and with a chapter in Canada. The Committee's efforts resulted in the release of Alejandro Cerezo in March 2005 when a judge granted an appeal. This year Pablo Alvarado Flores will be released after serving his five-year sentence. PBI has accompanied the Committee since February 2002 in a variety of activities including on visits to their brothers in federal prison.



Emiliana Cerezo with a PBI volunteer at the entrance to 'La Palma' federal prison, Foto: PBI

On January 16, 2005 Héctor and Antonio were transferred from the Federal Center for Social Readaptation 'La Palma' (CEFERESO, its Spanish initials) in the state of Mexico to other prisons. Héctor to the 'Puente Grande' prison in Jalisco, and Antonio to the "Matamoros" prison in Tamaulipas. In response, the Committee filed several complaints with the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) claiming the lack of legal basis for the transfers. The lengthy distances between Mexico City and the CEFERESOs in Matamoros and Jalisco prevented the committee from regularly visiting the prisons. More than a year after Héctor and Antonio's transfers, the Cerezo Committee learned that both had been transferred back to La Palma; Antonio on January 26 and Hector on February 13.

On January 28 Alejandro Cerezo and another committee member went to "La Palma" to visit Antonio. They were told by a prison social worker that only immediate relatives, such as parents, brothers, sisters and children of inmates were allowed visitation rights. Alejandro was denied entry despite the fact that he is the brother and therefore an immediate relative

of an inmate. When family members asked the social worker why they were not officially informed of the most recent transfers, she responded, "Maybe the inmate didn't want his family members to find out". She added that Antonio could spend 15 days or more in Control, Observation and Classification (COC).¹

On February 16, 2006 Emiliana was able to visit Hector after his transfer to La Palma. Emiliana stated that, "once (Héctor) arrived to "La Palma", the officials in blue uniforms hit him three times in the chest with closed fists. Those in black hit him three times with an open hand in the temple and jaw region, that is, the temple, ear and jaw. He was then locked up in the COC".²

In response to this information, the Committee filed another complaint with the CNDH, which carried out an investigation and notified the Committee that the Cerezo brothers told them they "were treated well" in the prison.³ The Committee recently learned that both Héctor and Antonio have left the COC and are in jail cells. With the brothers once again nearby, the committee intends to find a way for them to continue with their studies in the Department of Philosophy and Literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, where

they are enrolled, and to ensure that they receive the necessary materials.

The Committee is still concerned about Antonio and Héctor's physical and psychological wellbeing. They have requested evidence as to why Héctor and Antonio must be kept in a maximum-security prison instead of a state penitentiary where they would be closer to their family. The Committee has also pushed for a Federal Amnesty Law for all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

Reflecting on the transfers of Héctor and Antonio and what they have achieved this year, the committee states that "we could see this transfer as a victory, since they are now much closer to their family, only 200 kilometers compared to the distant 1,600 kilometers to Matamoros. However, once again, if this information is confirmed, it is still an illegal transfer. We recognize that we have struggled for almost five years for them to be transferred to a prison in the Federal District".⁴

1 La Jornada, January 30, 2006

2-4 Cerezo Committee, January 26, 2006

La Parota - hydroelectric dam

During the 4th World Water Forum, which took place in Mexico City in March 2006, the Council of Ejidos¹ and Communities Opposed to the Parota Dam (CECOP) brought claims before the Latin American Water Tribunal (TLA) concerning the construction of the La Parota hydroelectric dam in the state of Guerrero. Their case is based on human rights violations against local residents, who would be displaced on a massive scale with the proposed construction of the dam. The TLA decided to recommend the project's cancellation to the Mexican authorities.

Plans to build the dam date back 30 years but were renewed in 2003. Damming the Papagayo River and its tributaries would result in the "flooding of 14,000 hectares of cultivatable land; home to 24 towns in which approximately 25,000 people live."² The Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) has had a presence in the Parota area for several years. Felipe Flores, who founded the organization opposing the dam, tells of his experience: "We met for the first time on June 21, 2003. That was when we started identifying each other in the way that we questioned the engineer (Pérez Aguirre). And we began to realize there were people opposing the project. The organization opposing the dam was formed when the head of the CFE project, Carlos Pérez Aguirre, began holding informational meetings. The assembly on June 21st was in Cacahuatpec, and the communal farmers opposing the project saw that there were other people opposed to it. It was then that the movement began, which later organized itself and took the name the Council of Ejidos and Communities Opposed to the Parota Dam."³

All of the assemblies for the Parota dam have taken place with grave irregularities, including the payment for votes in favor of the project. Despite a precautionary measure emitted by the Agrarian Court establishing that additional assemblies cannot be held until a definitive judgment is handed down regarding a challenge to the validity of the first assembly, both state and federal governments have continued calling for assemblies with the goal of imposing the project.⁴



Jane Werngreen, UN representative, with Marco Antonio Suástegui and other members of Cecop, Foto: PBI

The dam's opponents have repeatedly reported that the assemblies have been "a method of imposing the dam to the detriment of the campesinos ... they are not a true mechanism for information exchange in which the people are able to make decisions concerning the project in a free and informed manner."

Likewise, rights to consultation and participation in the decision-making process are being violated since state and federal authorities have implemented a strategy that consists of:

- a) The fraudulent offer of work, services and community projects, as well as the buying of votes, which has divided families and communities, pitting them against each other and in so doing unravelling the social fabric;
- b) The lack of information to and consultation with those who will be affected by the dam, thereby violating their fundamental rights;
- c) Calling and holding communal assemblies violating agricultural laws and the rule of law;
- d) The disproportionate use of police forces watching over these assemblies;
- e) Treating those opposing the project as criminals by issuing arrest warrants and charging opposition leaders for alleged

crimes which have never been proven; f) Death threats received by some of the project's opponents.⁵

On January 20, 2006, it was announced that the 41st Circuit of the Agricultural Unitary Tribunal, based in Acapulco, declared the community assembly held in the municipality of San Marcos null and void. During this meeting, riot police forcefully obstructed the entry of opponents to the CFE project. In the following press conference, the legal consultant for the "Tlachinollan" Human Rights Center de la Montaña, Mario Patrón Sánchez, stated that with the Agricultural Unitary Tribunal's resolution, the presence of CFE in the communal lands of Cacahuatpec had no legal justification. He stated that opponents to the project had sought legal and institutional channels for opposing the dam's construction, and that the resolution of the Tribunal "is proof that an institution of the state itself is in agreement with the project's opponents."⁶

1 An ejido is a cooperative farming community

2 La Reforma newspaper, January 23, 2006

3 El Sur, December 3, 2005

4 December 2005, www.tlachinollan.org

5 La Reforma, 23 January, 2006

6 December 2005, www.tlachinollan.com

7 El Sur, 21 January, 2006

The Martín Barrios Case

A number of civil organizations have emerged in the municipality of Tehuacan, Puebla in an effort to deal with the deplorable working conditions that exist in the textile maquilas in the area, in addition to the difficulty workers are experiencing in exercising their rights to unionize.¹

In February 2005, Martín Barrios Hernández, President of the Human and Labor Rights Commission of the Tehuacan Valley (CDHLVT), denounced businessman Kamel

Nacif's abuse and exploitation of workers in the maquilas. Barrios Hernández labeled Nacif a "harmful person" due to Nacif's connections with pedophile cases. In December 2005, Martín Barrios denounced the firing of 165 workers from a local maquila. On December 29, 2005, the businessman Lucio Gil Zárate accused Martín Barrios of blackmail and Barrios was jailed in the Puebla city jail.²

He was freed on January 12, 2006 after Gil Zárate pardoned him for the offense.³

According to Amnesty International, the imprisonment of Martín Barrios appears to have been an attempt to prevent him from carrying out his legitimate work in the defense of human rights. On February 12, 2006 Martín Barrios was warned that his life was in danger.⁴

On February 21, 2006 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested that precautionary measures be taken to guarantee his safety.⁵

Interview with Federico Menor Patiño – Sembrador de la Esperanza

Acapulco, Guerrero. This city's image as a vacation paradise is known the world over. But Acapulco does not just consist of beautiful beaches, exotic restaurants and fashionable nightclubs. In suburban and rural areas, much of the population exists in extreme poverty and social marginalization. This is due in part to unemployment, low salaries and continuously rising prices for basic goods.⁶

Emiliano Zapata is one of these marginalized communities. It is the headquarters of the human rights committee Sembrador de la Esperanza A.C. (Spanish for 'Sowing Hope'), formed in 1997. It is important to note that Guerrero is one of the leading states in human rights violations in Mexico. When the committee formed, residents of Acapulco were neither promoting nor defending their rights, mainly because they did not know what their rights were.⁷

The Committee's focus of action centers on Acapulco, especially in the outskirts and rural areas where the population consists largely of indigenous people who emigrated from the mountains to the city in search of a better life. The organization also works in the city of Azoyú, where the population principally consists of indigenous people who live in poverty and suffer high illiteracy rates. In addition, many human rights violations are committed against them.⁸

PBI has collaborated with Sembrador de la Esperanza for several years and continues to follow the situation. We interviewed Federico Menor Patiño during one of our meetings.



Federico Menor Patiño, President of the Committee.
Photo: PBI

1. The committee defends human rights. What activities is it engaged in?

Our activities include the promotion, publicizing, defense, and education of individual and social human rights of indigenous peoples, marginalized sectors of society, vulnerable and incarcerated people, and gender rights. We do this through different legal procedures, seminars, classes and workshops.

2. How would you evaluate the human rights situation in Guerrero?

For some time now in Guerrero, we have had the Dirty War as a precedent and that's an obvious example of how the State has tried to silence the people. It is evident that human rights violations continue although the authorities try to maintain an appearance of public peace, of social peace.

3. What are the most serious problems the organization is facing?

In the first place, there is the problem of human resources. Members of Sembrador de la Esperanza are volunteers. This means that we receive no payment for our work and that each of us has our normal job in addition to what we do for the Committee. For this reason we cannot dedicate all our time to the Committee, which is a shame! Our work often involves activities that discredit the authorities, which can mean sometimes that people are cautious about associating with us or people do not continue with us. I consider this to be another serious problem the Committee is facing.

4. What would you like to say to the national and international community?

We believe that the people's true voice is heard through civil associations and NGOs (non-governmental organizations). NGOs bring international attention to cases that would otherwise be unknown and wherein perpetrators go unpunished. The work NGOs carry out is highly credible, and we invite citizens and society in general to denounce human rights violations. We ask them to support victims of human rights violations. In general, we want a culture of human rights to take root.

1 Urgent Action, Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Center for Human Rights (Acción Urgente, Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez), February 16, 2006

2 La Jornada, January 10, 2006

3 La Jornada, January 13, 2006

4 Urgent Action (Acción Urgente), Amnesty International, AMR, 41/010/2006, February 15, 2006

5 La Jornada, February 23, 2006

6-8 2004 Report by the Human Rights Commission, Sembrador de la Esperanza AC

Anniversary: The Organization of Women Ecologists

The Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán (OMESP) celebrated its 4th anniversary on March 5, 2006, in the community of Zapotillal, municipality of Petatlán, Guerrero. The organization's president, Celsa Valdovinos Riós, accompanied by PBI since August 2005, opened the festivities by commenting on the last four years: "It's been a struggle with ourselves, because we've had to work hard to learn how important it is to organize." ¹ Today the organization has more than 60 active members and has made great strides in the areas of reforestation and the creation of various community projects.

A representative from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, which led the defense of Felipe Arreaga--spouse of Celsa Valdovinos who was incarcerated for 10 months for a crime he did not commit--said that she is happy because of the advances which the women have made



Anniversary of the Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán (OMESP), Foto: PBI

in this part of the region "in spite of the threats, fear and repression." ²

1 y 2 El Sur, March 3, 2006

Anniversary: International Service for Peace (SIPAZ)

SIPAZ is an international observation program which was established in 1995 to support the pursuit of peaceful resolutions to the conflict in Chiapas after the 1994 armed uprising by the Zapatista National Liberation Army. The work of SIPAZ is currently focused on four areas:

- International presence and accompaniment in Chiapas and Mexico.
- Raising awareness of the causes, consequences and responses to the conflicts in Mexico through lobby work and the sharing of information.

- The promotion of a culture of peace through education and interfaith dialogue.
- Networking and the exchange of information and experiences.

Their 10 year anniversary celebration took place on March 4, 2006, in San Cristóbal de las Casas and provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the international presence in Mexico today. Participants included the Fray Bartolomé de las

Casas Human Rights Center, Peace Watch, Peace House, Witness for Peace, "Las Abejas", SWEFOR, Tlachinollan, PBI Guatemala and PBI Mexico, among others. After hearing presentations from all of the invited organizations, the participants worked in small groups. This allowed them to share experiences, discuss what they've learned and identify goals and challenges for the future.

"Human Rights Defenders in Mexico"

A workshop and seminar for human rights defenders took place in Mexico City on March 25 - 26. The event was spearheaded by the International Secretariat of Amnesty International in collaboration with the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, the Mexican section of the Latin America and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM), the Association for the Integral Development of Victims of Rape (ADIVAC) and the Interdisciplinary Group on Gender, Sexuality, Youth and Human Rights (Artemisa). The workshop's objective was to promote

dialogue between human rights organizations and women's organizations in Mexico. The event provided opportunities for different organizations to exchange experiences and work to create a future platform to give continuity to this dialogue. Organizations throughout the country participated and more than 50 women attended. The seminar included panel discussions, presentations and work groups. Among the issues addressed in the workshop were 'the common aspects of at-risk situations in the work of women's

rights defenders; measures and mechanisms for confronting them.' Two volunteers from the PBI Mexico team gave a presentation on security issues organizations at the structural level face. Several participants from the state of Guerrero attended, including Celsa Valdovinos of OMESSP, who shared her experiences concerning the implied risks of her work as an activist, Erica Serrano Farias of the Network of Organizations and Environmentalists of Zihuatanejo (ROGAZ), and Evangelina Lopez Hilaria of Community Radio 'Nomndaa'.

Update on PBI Mexico's Activities

Accompaniments

- Emiliana and Francisco Cerezo Contreras, members of the Cerezo Committee, in Mexico City and on their trips to visit their brothers in prison.
- The Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlan (OMESP), in the municipality of Petatlan, Guerrero and on their visits throughout Guerrero.
- The Organization of the Indigenous People Me'Phaa (OPIM) in the municipality of Ayutla de los Libres and on their trips throughout the state of Guerrero.
- The Center for Human Rights de la Montaña "Tlachinollan," members of the office in Ayutla de los Libres and on their trips throughout the state of Guerrero.
- Tita Radilla Martinez, vice-president of Afadem (Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses) in Atoyac de Alvarez and on her trips throughout the state of Guerrero.
- "Jose Maria Morelos y Pavon" Regional Human Rights Center, in Chilapa de Alvarez, Guerrero.

Public Relations

Interviews with Mexican Authorities:

Federal Level: Pablo Muñoz y Rojas, Under Secretary of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Secretary of Government; Ricardo Sepulveda Iguiniz, Director General for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights of the Secretary of Government; Andrés Calero Aguilar, Third General Examiner of the National Human Rights Commission; Hugo Flores of the National Institute of Migration.

State Level, in Federal District: Graciela Rojas Cruz and Rosa Elena Bernal Diaz of the Government; *In Guerrero:* Armando Chavarría Barrera, Government Secretary General; Ruben Aguirre Ponce, Coordination Liaison to Social Organizations; Gregorio Ventura Huerta, Legal Advisor of the Department of Public Security; Jorge Rodriguez Ponce, Government Representative of the Montaña, Jesus Serrato Ramirez, Government Representative of Costa Grande; Gustavo Martinez Galeana, Government Sub-representative of Costa Grande; Deputy Rossana Mora Patiño, President of the State Congress Human Rights Commission; Eduardo Murueta Urrutia, State Attorney General of Justice; Lilia Taquilla Lopez, Regional Coordinator of Costa Grande for the State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights (Coddehum); Jose Luna Alarcon, Regional Coordinator of the Montaña for Coddehum.

Municipal Level, in Atoyac: Leobardo Radilla, Syndicate Attorney, Manuel Salvador Gudiño Herrera, Director of the Office of Public Security. *In Ayutla:*

Homero Lorenzo Rios, Municipal President; Sidrionio Bibiano Ayodoro, Syndicate Attorney; Lorenzo Calixto Carvajal, Director of Public Security. *In Tlapa:* Captain Pedro Manzano Vega, Director of Public Security; Alfredo Camacho Millan, Commander of the Ministerial Police.

Interviews with International and Mexican Non-governmental Organizations (NGO) and Experts

International and Federal Level: Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses (Afadem); Amnesty International – Mexico Section; Greenpeace; Service, Development and Peace (SEDEPAC); International Secretariat Amnesty International; Cerezo Brothers Committee; National Network of Civil Organizations of Human Rights 'Todos los Derechos para Todos,'; Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights; Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Limedd); Mexican Action Network Against Free Trade (RMALC); Space for Cultural, Social and Economic Rights (Espacio DESC).

State Level: Guerrero Network on Human Rights; Center for Human Rights de la Montaña Tlachinollan; José Maria Morelos y Pavón; Regional Human Rights Center; El Sur de Acapulco newspaper; Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI); Campesino Organization of the Sierra del Sur

(OCSS); SOS Bahia; Sembrador de la Esperanza Human Rights Committee.

Embassies and the United Nations

Amerigo Incalcaterra, Head of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Representatives from the embassies of: Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Great Britain. Tour of embassies to the state of Guerrero, with 15 representatives from the European Commission and the following embassies: Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland.

Forums

Federal Level: Photographic Exhibit "A Look at Human Rights: A Pending Subject," organized by the Swiss Embassy in "ProVictima" (CNDH); "Female Human Rights Defenders" Seminar-Workshop, organized by Amnesty International.

State Level: Forum on the Law to Prevent and Sanction the Forced Disappearance of Persons in the State of Guerrero in the Museum of Culture, Chilpancingo; Commemoration of the 31st Anniversary of the Fall in Combat of Lucio Cabañas Barrientos (LCB) in Atoyac de Alvarez; "Defending Our Territory" Forum organized by the Center for Human Rights de la Montaña Tlachinollan in Tlapa de Comonfort.

Other States: 10th Anniversary of International Service for Peace (SIPAZ) in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

Guiding Principles

Nonviolence

PBI is committed to giving the highest consideration to human life and its defense and respects every individual's basic human rights, democratic values and freedoms. PBI is convinced that enduring peace and lasting solutions for conflicts between and within nations cannot be achieved by violent means and therefore it rejects violence of any kind and from any source. PBI only works with individuals and organizations that support human rights, non-violent social change and peaceful development of civil society.

Non-interference

In all of its actions, PBI respects the constitution and laws of the country where it maintains international accompaniment teams. The principle of non-interference means that PBI refrains from making judgmental responses or denunciations and voices its concerns only to those responsible without being accusative. On the other hand, PBI teams and their members do not become involved in the work of the groups or the individuals whom they assist or accompany. At no time does PBI intend to replace the local initiatives that promote the respect for human rights, but rather supports these initiatives through the presence of international accompaniment volunteers.

Non-Partisanship

As an international third-party entity, PBI acts in an independent and non-partisan manner, and is independent of political and religious agendas. Non-partisanship implies that PBI treats all parties in a conflict with an open mind, without taking sides, and reports as objectively and impartially as possible.

Peace Brigades International

PBI is a non-governmental organization that, upon request, maintains international accompaniment teams in conflict areas. The organization's objective is the protection of the political space for individuals and organizations that promote human rights and which, in turn, are under threat of persecution and repression as a consequence of their work. International accompaniment is in this way a conflict transformation tool, through which third parties can contribute in creating the conditions necessary to resolve a conflict peacefully. At no time does PBI attempt to replace Mexican initiatives that promote the respect for human rights, but rather limits itself to supporting such initiatives with the presence of international accompaniment volunteers. To achieve this goal, PBI teams work in-country accompanying those people or organizations under

threat, making periodic visits to conflict zones, distributing information on the conflict's development and maintaining a dialogue with civil and military authorities in an effort to raise international awareness.

The Information Bulletin for the PBI Mexico Project

is a quarterly publication produced by the team in Mexico. PBI maintains the highest level of objectivity possible thanks to the use of a wide variety of public sources (newspapers, magazines, public reports from civil organizations, etc.), and the citation of all sources used in its articles. The bulletin is distributed both within Mexico and internationally. If you would like to receive the PBI Mexico Project's Information Bulletin, please contact the Project Office in San Francisco or the PBI Team in Mexico.



PBI team in Guerrero: Jamie Wick (United States), Alexander Blessing (Germany), Mercedes Cuenca (Spain), Anne May (United States), Brigit Duerr (Switzerland), Hermine Diebolt (France), Marjolein Van der Water (Netherlands). Photo: PBI

PBI Mexico International Office

One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 402
San Francisco, CA 94102
Tel: +1-415-986 9020

E-mail: pbimexico@peacebrigades.org
www.peacebrigades.org/mexico-e.html

PBI – Mexico Team

Calle Lerdo 9
Colonia San Mateo
Chilpancingo, Gro. - CP 39022
Tel/Fax: +52-(747)-47-119-62

E-mail: pbigro@peacebrigades.org