

# Peace Brigades International

# in Mexico

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**pbi**  
making space for peace

## Notes on the Current Situation

### ***The UN Committee against Torture Severely Questions the Mexican Government***

This past November, the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) presented the fourth report on Mexico's fulfillment of the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment. The recommendations the Committee issued include many of the concerns expressed by Mexican human rights NGOs. The report points out the recommendation to assure that both federal and state legislation typify torture as a crime in accordance with national standards. The Penal Code in the state of Guerrero does not consider torture a crime. The report also emphasizes the need for an official to be the one to prove that a victim was tortured, so that the proof does not fall on the victim, as is currently the case. The CAT finds it extremely concerning that confessions obtained by means of physical or psychological violence carry the same weight in court as if they were obtained by other means or from other pieces of evidence. Because of this, the CAT recommends that Mexico guarantee that declarations obtained by torture are not admitted as evidence.

The CAT also recommends that trials for human rights violations perpetrated by military personnel against civilians should always be carried out in civil tribunals. It also recommends that reports of torture be investigated as torture instead of using other lighter penalties. Given all the complaints from civil organizations about the correct application of the Istanbul Protocol, the report recommends that a medical exam independent of the investigator's offices be guaranteed in all cases, and that this should be admitted as evidence in trial. At the same time, it recommends that the State finalize the penal reform to assure that all crimes against humanity, among them torture, are banished. It also recommends that Mexico take all the necessary measures to avoid using any form of detention that could propiate the practice of torture, and should investigate reports of arbitrary detentions. Regarding cases of torture involving women, the Committee made reference to the cases of harassment and sexual abuse in San Salvador Atenco. It recommends that an effective, prompt and impartial investigation of these cases be carried out so that those responsible for the violations are prosecuted and punished, so that the victims obtain fair and effective compensation, and lastly, so that transparent

criteria are established in order that the office of Special Prosecutor for Crimes related to Violence Against Women (FEVIM) can assume the cases that correspond to it and investigate these crimes against women.

According to the CAT's request, Mexico has until November 2007 to demonstrate what has been done to investigate the occurrences in Atenco, punish those responsible and provide compensation to the victims<sup>1</sup>.

### ***The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Opens a Coordinating Committee in Guerrero***

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) established the Coordinating Committee of the Space for Analysis and Participation on Human Rights in the State of Guerrero, on November 23, 2006 in the city of Chilpancingo. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for organizing and coordinating the work being conducted in the Space for Analysis and Participation regarding human rights in the state of Guerrero, which will result in the publication of a Diagnostic on the human rights situation in Guerrero, and the implementation of a State Human Rights Program.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights points out that the Coordinating Committee is made up of a plural and inclusive group of people, which includes state officials who have a direct impact on the respect for and protection of human rights, as well as public human rights organizations, civil society organizations and academics<sup>2</sup>.

### ***The Situation in Oaxaca***

Following the disturbing events of November 25 in which the confrontation between the Federal Preventative Police (PFP) and the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO) resulted in 140 people injured and 100 people detained, several Mexican as well as international organizations have expressed serious concerns regarding the human rights violations perpetrated by members of the PFP.

The Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Limeddh) published a list of abuses committed by the PFP, such as arbitrary detentions, torture, excessive use of force,

intimidation, use of tear gas and high-caliber weapons, and sexual abuse. Many organizations, including the United Nations (UN), Organization of the American States, and the European Parliament have manifested their concern to the Government and have demanded that the human rights violations cease. The Limeddh points out that the United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) has analyzed the situation in Mexico and has insisted that the Mexican government quickly and impartially investigate the events in Oaxaca in which, according to the CAT, "there have been many reports of torture, violence, and sexual aggression against women during the police operatives."<sup>3</sup>

In a communiqué dated November 27, the CAT expressed concern for the 43 women detained on November 25. According to the communiqué, "since the entrance of the PFP in Oaxaca City on October 29, reports on human rights violations have been continually increasing. Many of the victims of the repetitive and systemic police abuses are women, who are easier to harass and inflict violence on."<sup>4</sup> Because of this, the organization requests that the necessary measures be taken to guarantee the physical and psychological safety of the detainees. Voices of the Brave in Oaxaca, prepared by various Oaxacan social organizations, collects testimonies of many women who have been repressed. After talking to sixteen women who were detained, the organization corroborated that there was also sexual abuse – including the threat of rape – by police during the transfer from the prison in Oaxaca to Nayarit<sup>5</sup>.

Most of those who were detained during the events on November 25 are incarcerated in Nayarit. According to the Limeddh, the detainees, three of whom are underage, were incommunicado for one week after their detainment and their attorneys were unable to reach them.

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1 Amnesty International and others, "The UN Committee against Torture severely questions the Mexican Government," November 30, 2006

2 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mexico of the United Nations, November 23, 2006

3 La Jornada, December 4, 2006

4 Limeddh, communiqué, November 27, 2006

5 La Jornada, December 10, 2006

## PBI begins a new accompaniment in the Montaña region of Guerrero

Since November of this year, PBI Mexico has expanded its work area in Guerrero. PBI already has experience accompanying organizations in the regions of Costa Chica, the Costa Grande, and the Center of Guerrero, and is now beginning a new accompaniment in the Montaña region.

The Montaña region of Guerrero is located in the eastern part of the state, near the border with Oaxaca. The majority of the population in the Montaña is indigenous. It is one of the most marginalized and poorest regions in Mexico, with a literacy rate below 30 percent<sup>1</sup>. The Tlachinollan Human Rights Center in Tlapa de Comonfort has worked for 12 years in this region to promote and defend the rights of the population, and to report the diverse abuses of power by authorities. One of the cases the Center is working on is that of Sócrates Tolentino González Genaro, an 18 year-old from Ahuixotitla, in the municipality of Zapotitlán Tablas. "The indigenous Tlapanec [Me'Phaa] community, of which Lucía Genaro is a member, is one of the most marginalized indigenous communities in the state of Guerrero. Abuses of power, arbitrary policing and judicial practices are common in these areas, leaving the most vulnerable exposed to human rights violations."<sup>2</sup> According to Tlachinollan, "Sócrates Tolentino González Genaro's case is an example of the reality of the people that live in the municipality, where chance, carried to the extreme, led to his extrajudicial execution."<sup>3</sup>

In January 2004, Sócrates was detained in Zapotitlán Tablas by agents of the municipal preventative police who took him to the local prison. The next day, the authorities told his mother, Lucía Genaro Linares, that her son had committed suicide in prison. Following instructions given to her by the Municipal Official (Síndico Municipal) Jesús Vázquez Pérez, the mother signed several official documents after Mr. Vázquez Pérez told her that the authorities would pay the funeral costs for her son. However, two days later Erica, the eldest of the five daughters, discovered that her mother had involuntarily waived the family's right to an autopsy, and had declared that her son had been planning to commit suicide. In the face of the attempted cover up, the family, with the help of Tlachinollan, was able to have Sócrates' cadaver exhumed. On March 10, 2004, a forensic exam concluded that the young man had been brutally beaten and had died as a result of the lesions he had suffered. Lucía Genaro then presented a complaint against several municipal authorities in the Public Ministry in Tlapa, Guerrero. The authorities listed include the Municipal President,



Lucía Genaro with Alejandra González of Tlachinollan and a PBI Volunteer. Photo: PBI

the Municipal Official, and three municipal police officers from Zapotitlán Tablas.<sup>4</sup>

One month later, the Public Ministry of Tlapa issued arrest warrants for four agents of the municipal police and on July 14, 2006 two ex-agents of the municipal police were detained in relation to Sócrates' death.<sup>5</sup> According to Amnesty International, since the complaint was filed in 2004, Lucía Genaro and other family members have reported intimidation on several occasions. Since the detentions last July, the harassment has worsened and the risk for Lucía Genaro and her family members has increased. On July 17, 2006, three unidentified men showed up at Lucía Genaro's home when she was not there. According to reports, they left a message with neighbors in which they informed her about the detentions and they told her that she should go the next day to a specific location in Tlapa, otherwise something might happen to her. According to additional reports, on July 23, three unidentified men reportedly went to Lucía Genaro's house asking for her but left when she was not there.<sup>6</sup>

Amnesty International issued an urgent action on July 31, 2006 and the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Guerrero (Coddehum) expressed concern for the safety of Lucía and her five daughters. The Coddehum considered that Lucía Genaro's fear of being harassed or intimidated was legitimate and as a result requested that Nicolás Villar Paulino, Municipal President of the town of Zapotitlán Tablas, Guerrero,

Eduardo Murueta Urrutia, State Prosecutor, and Margarito Ávila Serrano, judge from the first instance of the penal branch of the judicial district in Morelos, offer precautionary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Lucía Genaro Linares and the members of her family.<sup>7</sup>

The high level of harassment and the above-mentioned facts imply a serious risk for Lucía Genaro Linares and her family and the lawyers and staff members of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center. Because of this, PBI Mexico is currently accompanying the staff of Tlachinollan during their visits to the municipality of Zapotitlán Tablas, to the community of Ahuixotitla and during their trips throughout the state of Guerrero, to assure their physical safety and their ability to continue their work with this case.

- 1 From the Heart of the Land: resist to live. XII Tlachinollan activity report
- 2 Further Information at Urgent Action n.179/04, Amnesty International Index AMR 41/039/2006, July 31, 2006
- 3 <http://www.tlachinollan.org/casos/socrates%20y%20nancif%20oilan.pdf>
- 4 Urgent Action n. 179/04, Amnesty International Index: AMR 41/020/2004, May 21, 2004.
- 5 Further Information Urgent Action n.179/04, Amnesty International Index AMR 41/039/2006, July 31, 2006
- 6 Further Information Urgent Action n.179/04, Amnesty International Index AMR 41/039/2006, July 31, 2006
- 7 Official document 1088/2006 relating to recommendation 50/2004, 25 de julio del 2006



## Militarization in Ayutla's Indigenous Communities

During October and November 2006, the newspaper *El Sur* reported several complaints related to the actions of the Mexican army in the indigenous Me'Phaa communities of Ayutla de los Libres. On November 13, *El Sur* reported that the commissary (indigenous authority) of Barranca de Guadalupe (in the Me'Phaa region of Ayutla), together with Alejandro Ramos Gallegos, a lawyer from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, stated that in October troops from the 48th army battalion entered the community. The soldiers interrogated children about the presence of armed and masked guerrilla groups, destroyed crops and terrorized the people in the communities. On November 19, it was reported that the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM) denounced aggressions by soldiers towards members of the organization in the community of Barranca de Guadalupe and El Progreso. Soldiers were reportedly looking for the indigenous leaders of the organization whose names they had on a list. In addition, they interrogated people about guerrilla groups and they sent armed civilians to beat up those participating in the organization. The president of the OPIM, Cuauhtémoc Ramírez, reported that the soldiers used a high technology instrument to locate the home of the directors of the organization, Otilia and Andrea Eugenio Manuel, in Barranca de Guadalupe.<sup>1</sup>

PBI has been accompanying the OPIM since February 2005, and the staff of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center in the Ayutla office since December 2003. Due to the situation described above, PBI has intensified its presence in Ayutla. On November 7 and 8, PBI accompanied Otilia Eugenio Manuel, Andrea Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez, along with the staff of Tlachinollan, on a visit to the Me'Phaa communities in Barranca de Guadalupe and El Progreso. The members of the OPIM and Tlachinollan documented the events that had been taking place in the communities by holding meetings and collecting testimonies.

Due to these events, PBI interviewed one of Tlachinollan's lawyers, Alejandro Ramos Gallegos, on the political situation in the region and about Tlachinollan's work:

**What are the most important cases that Tlachinollan's Ayutla office is involved in currently?**

First and foremost, we are working on the death threat received by Otilia Eugenio Manuel, leader of the OPIM. Next, we are working to get a federal appeal for Gabino Eugenio Manuel, also part of the OPIM, who has an arrest warrant issued



*Alejandro Ramos Gallegos and Andrea Eugenio Manuel collecting testimonies in Barranca de Guadalupe. Photo: PBI*

against him. We are also involved in cases caused by the militarization of the region. These are the cases that concern us the most right now because they have resulted in serious human rights violations due to the fear, damage, and atrocities caused by members of the army in indigenous communities. We have been able to prove that these acts occur systematically and that Ayutla is the region most affected by militarization.

**What is your evaluation of the human rights situation in the communities of Ayutla?**

It is of great concern. Since the massacre in El Charco, Ayutla has been one of the places most affected by systemic human rights violations in indigenous communities. We believe that Ayutla is passing through a very difficult period, and that non-violent social organizations that struggle for peace and improved conditions for the indigenous communities are the most affected by these human rights violations.

**How does Tlachinollan plan to follow the cases of human rights violations that have been documented during the visits to the communities?**

We are going to file complaints with the National Human Rights Commission. We already filed a legal complaint with the Federal Public Ministry in Acapulco regarding the indigenous Na Savi commissary from Coapinola who was illegally interrogated by soldiers. Initially we were told the complaint would be sent to the military judiciary.

We believe this case is going to have a similar effect as the cases of Ines and Valentina (indigenous Me'Phaa women who were allegedly raped by soldiers of the Mexican army). Impunity is a problem among members of the Mexican army since the military judiciary lacks the impartiality to conduct a fair investigation of human rights violations. We have been able to take Ines and Valentina's case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and we hope that it will be resolved in two or three months.

**How do you interpret the problem of militarization in Ayutla?**

In the Charco massacre, farmers were assassinated in a community where guerrillas were present. Since then, the militarization in Ayutla has been very intense. However, from 1998 until today, no registered presence of members of the guerrilla movement in the communities has been registered. Another pretext for militarization is drug trafficking, even though statistically it is well known that drug cultivation in Ayutla is almost nonexistent. From my point of view, the military presence is in reality a way to break up the social organizations that are doing important work in the communities. The Me'Phaa and Na Savi organizations have an important presence and have done very effective work: they have carried out cultivation projects, they are involved in the exercise of political functions in the municipality, they are in the

Social Development Committee, in the Municipal Planning Committee, they are constantly demanding that the town show proof of how money is spent, and they demand that resources are evenly distributed in the communities.

The organizations also inform people about their rights. In the communities where the organization is present, they have even chased members of the army out in order to defend their territories. The soldiers go up into the communities and steal products such as corn, squash, and beans, and intimidate people, interrogate them, scare the children with their weapons, and scare the women they have raped. Two women have reported being raped but we know there are many more who have not spoken out because they are ashamed. Speaking out about rape is shameful to the women in these communities and could cause problems with their spouses. The organization has also done a lot of important work in organizing the women. For example, Obtilia and Andrea were able to prohibit alcohol from being sold in their community. Because of all this, I think the only explanation for the military presence is to fragment organizations that have done important work to defend human rights in a non-violent manner.

**What is your evaluation of the presence of PBI volunteers during your work documenting these cases in the Me'Phaa communities?**

Very good, it is the best tool we have. Here in Ayutla we are in a very vulnerable situation given the power the state has to threaten, intimidate, or harm a human rights defender, such as Obtilia. PBI's presence makes us stronger because we know that we are not alone. I imagine that the presence of PBI is somewhat confusing to authorities because they do not quite know why foreigners come to this region, foreigners who can find out what is really going on in this region. PBI is one of the few tools we have to keep walking forward in a struggle that is very risky and complicated. Ayutla is a region that is very marginalized, and PBI's presence strengthens us, especially when PBI accompanies us to the communities. The fact that you have gone to these communities has given us more confidence to keep striving forward without fearing that something could happen to us.

## Five Years Since the Death of Digna Ochoa y Plácido



*Jesús Ochoa y Plácido during the fifth anniversary of the death of his sister Digna. Foto: Ochoa Family*

October 19, 2006 marked the five-year anniversary of the death of Digna Ochoa y Plácido, lawyer and human rights defender who was found dead in her office on October 19, 2001. The Federal District Attorney General's Office (PGJDF) declared Digna Ochoa's death a suicide. However, Digna Ochoa's family continues to insist that her death was a homicide and a result of her work as a human rights defender. Digna's brother, Jesús Ochoa y Plácido, is fighting to get the Public Ministry to consider the conclusions from the reports by the family's investigators and reopen the case, and reevaluate whether or not Digna's death was a suicide or homicide. PBI interviewed Jesús Ochoa to talk about the anniversary of Digna Ochoa's death and about the recent news regarding her case. Jesús shared the following information:

"Digna Ochoa was a tiny woman with a big heart who tirelessly fought to defend human rights in Mexico. On October 20, 2006, we held an event to commemorate the fifth anniversary of Digna Ochoa y Plácido's death in the gardens of the Restaurant 'La Ostra del Golfo,' where a memorial plaque was inaugurated. This plaque will be placed (...) at the entrance of Misantla, Veracruz. Civil authorities, as well as [state and national] human rights organizations participated in the event. (...) I presented a report on the current status of the case at this event.

"Digna had a "stubborn dedication to the defense of human rights and she was very brave

in confronting the State in tribunals for human rights violations, persecutions, assassinations, repression, disappearances, torture and harassment toward popular leaders, and other members of the population who have been unfortunate enough to fall unjustly into the hands of those responsible for justice.

"Since April 8, 2003, the law firm of José Antonio Becerril González, along with three other lawyers, have been working on the case. We are working to show that Digna Ochoa's death was a homicide and not a suicide, as the authorities of the Federal District insist. On April 21, 2006 we turned in forensic, criminal, and chemical conclusions along with conclusions on the exhumation to the Coordination of Agents of the Public Ministry in the District Attorney General's Office. With this information, we want to prove the opposite of what the authorities have concluded in their investigations. Contrary to what the Federal District Attorney General concluded, the weapon was proven positive for homicide (...).

"We are convinced that in our country many crimes are left unpunished. In the five years that we have conducted investigative activities, we have contacted at least three people who name the same person as the one who is materially and intellectually responsible for the assassination of my sister. We want it to be made clear that we will continue to demand justice until the authorities recognize that Digna's death was indeed a homicide."

## Tita Radilla Talks to PBI About AFADEM's Activities

On October 23, 2006, Tita Radilla, vice-president of AFADEM, together with other Mexican human rights organizations, such as the Mexican Commission for Human Rights, the "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" Human Rights Center (ProDH), the Diego Lucero Foundation, the Organization of Children Born in the Storm and the 68 Committee participated in a hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The purpose of this meeting was to present a report which included an evaluation of President Fox's six year term, focusing on "matters that dominate the past, such as the massacres in 1968 and 1971, and to request that the Femospa continues its work."<sup>1</sup> This report states that the investigations of forced disappearances have been deficient and that the Femospa (Special Prosecutor for Past Social and Political Movements) has not publicly recognized the policy of systemic repression, has not advanced the cases of hundreds of disappeared people, has not been able to legally sanction those responsible, and finally, it has not considered the right of family members to the integral reparation of damages<sup>2</sup>. The report makes reference to the fact that "the Femospa talks about 600 complaints that have been presented, of which not one case has been resolved. (...) All of these cases continue in impunity, including the 1968 and 1971 massacres, and the cases of forced disappearances during the Dirty War in Guerrero. Not one person has been identified, not one person has been found, and none of those responsible have been condemned. Although arrest warrants were issued, many were not carried out, and although some were carried out, those who were responsible were never charged."<sup>3</sup>

Following the hearing in the IACHR, the organizations met with Political Officer Michael Bosshart in the Office of Mexican Affairs of the U.S. State Department, where they expressed their concerns and once again questioned the actions of the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive powers, stating "There have not been real investigations in these cases. Mass grave sites where we know there are remains of our disappeared family members have not been exhumed. The current laws are not adequate enough to bring these



Tita Radilla. Photo: PBI

cases to trial, and even though the Mexican State has signed many international human rights conventions, they can not be applied here in our country."<sup>4</sup>

The case of Tita's father's (Rosendo Radilla) is one of the hundreds of cases of forced disappearances in Guerrero during the Dirty War that is still waiting to be resolved, still waiting for sentences, and still waiting for "justice to be served." After a lengthy process in which the Femospa documented the case, it was admitted in October 2005 to the IACHR and is now in the final stage, the "crucial stage in which the IACHR will give its ruling, its sentence, and the penalty to the Mexican State for the forced disappearance of my father."<sup>5</sup> According to Tita Radilla, the sentence will be clear and although the IACHR will try to make an amicable settlement between Tita and the Mexican Government, her goal is to take the case to the Inter-American Court. Tita considers this to be the only way for "justice to be served" not only for her father, but also for all the other cases of disappearances that are in a similar condition. In AFADEM, many people believe that just by going to the IACHR, justice will be served "since here at the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial levels, justice is not allowed and those responsible for the disappearances are protected.

Because of this, we believe that only international bodies of justice can provide the same in our country."<sup>6</sup> Tita Radilla explains that "according to the IACHR, Rosendo Radilla's case is one that is very well documented and very strong due to a lot of information having been submitted. There is a document that states that Rosendo Radilla was being watched 11 years before his disappearance. There are many documents that prove that he, as well as many others, were disappeared at the same time."<sup>7</sup>

AFADEM is also currently working with other family members to recover the remains of two bodies that were exhumed in June 2005 in Guayabillo, Tecpan de Galeana, Guerrero. The remains are those of Lino Rosas and Esteban Mesino, two rural teachers who died, together with Lucio Cabañas, on December 2, 1974. These family members have lost confidence that justice will be served in the disappearance and execution of their family members, but they hope to recover the bodies. These are the first two bodies ever to be exhumed. However, there are additional locations identified by family members and the Femospa where the remains of others who have been disappeared are likely to exist. According to AFADEM, the government has not wanted to follow up on family member's requests for exhumations. They hope the new president, Felipe Calderón, follows up on these cases and that the family members can find their disappeared relatives.

1 Interview with Tita Radilla, PBI, November 24, 2006

2 Idem 1

3 Idem 1

4 Idem 1

5 Idem 1

6 Idem 1

7 Idem 1



## Update on PBI Mexico's Activities

### Accompaniments:

- Emiliana and Francisco Cerezo Contreras, members of the Cerezo Committee, in Mexico City and during their visits to see their brothers in prison.
- Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, Andrea Eugenio Manuel, and Cuauhtemoc Ramirez Rodriguez, members of The Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM) in the municipality of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, and throughout the state of Guerrero.
- Staff of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center in Tlapa de Comonfort, Guerrero and throughout the State of Guerrero during their work for the case of Sócrates Tolentino González Genaro.
- Staff of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center in Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, and throughout the state of Guerrero.
- Tita Radilla Martínez, vice-president of the Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses (AFADEM) in Atoyac de Alvarez, Guerrero, throughout the state of Guerrero and in Mexico City.
- Celsa Valdovinos Rios and Felipe Arreaga, members of the Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán (OMESP), in the municipality of Petatlán, Guerrero and throughout the state of Guerrero.
- Short Term Accompaniment: Oaxaca Human Rights Network (RODH), Oaxaca City, Oaxaca.

## Public Relations

### Interviews with Mexican Authorities

**Federal Level:** Rodrigo Espeleta, Director of Investigation and Attention to Cases in the Unit for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights of the Department of the Interior (SEGOB); Lourdes Gutiérrez, Assistant Director of Attention to Cases in the Unit for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights of the Department of the Interior (SEGOB); José Ignacio Martín del Campo Covarrubias, Department of Foreign Affairs; Hugo Flores Zúñiga, National Institute of Immigration;

**House of Representatives:** Gerardo Buganza Salmerón, President of the Commission of Foreign Affairs; Marcos Matías Alonso, President of the Commission of Indigenous Affairs; Jimena Gómez Pazos, Technical Secretary of the Commission of Public Security; Víctor Aguirre Alcaide, Coordinator of Federal Representatives for Guerrero; Cuauhtémoc Sandoval Ramírez and Odilón Romero Gutiérrez, Federal Representatives for Guerrero.

**Senate:** Senator Lazaro Mazón Alonso, Senator of Guerrero

**State Level, Federal District:** Fernando Castillo Díaz, Executive Director of Human Rights of the Department of Public Security; Ulises Lara López, General Director of Government

**Guerrero:** Julio Ortega Meza, General Coordinator Liaison of Politics and Institutions; General José Heriberto Salinas Altés, Department of Public Security and Citizen Protection; Nelson Bello Solís, Under Secretary for Judicial Affairs of the Department of the Interior; Jesús Aleman del

Carmen, Deputy Attorney General for Regional Control and Penal Procedure; Hipólito Lugo Cortés, General Representative of the State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights (CODDEHUM); Rossana Mora Patiño, President of the Human Rights Commission in Congress; Ignacio Luna Geronimo, Representative for District XIV of Congress; Fernando Donoso Pérez, Representative for District XXVI of Congress; Ricardo Guillen, National Institute for Immigration.

#### **Municipal Level.**

**Ayutla de los Libres:** Dr. Homero Lorenzo Ríos, Municipal President; Sidrionio Bibiano Ayodoro, Municipal Official (Síndico Municipal); Santos Lozano Reyes, Director of Public Security

**Petatlán:** José Pineda Jaimes, Director of Public Security

**Tlapa de Comonfort:** Martín Benítez Flores, Municipal President; Leonidas López Valencia, Judge and Commander of the Preventative Police; Silvano Mendoza Rosendo, Representative of the Department of the Interior; Leobardo Gómez Encarnación, Regional Representative of the State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights (CODDEHUM); Joaquín Juárez Solano, Regional and Specialized Prosecutor for Attention to Indigenous Peoples; Proceso Ramírez Balena, Regional Commander of the Ministerial Investigative Police.

**Zapotitlán-Tablas:** Nicolás Villar Paulino, Municipal President; Irinea Villalbares, Security Council.

### Interviews with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), International NGOs and Academics

**Federal and International:** Diakonia; Fund for Nonviolence, Appleton Foundation; Services and Assessment for Peace (SERA\*PAZ); Fray Francisco de Victoria Human Rights Center; Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM); Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Limedd); Armando Bartra, Maya Institute.

**State Level:** Collective against Torture and Impunity (CCTI); Residents of the neighborhood "Colonia Leonardo Rodríguez Alcaine"; Tlachinollan Human Rights Center.

### Embassies and UN:

Meeting with the Political Counselors of the European Union during the Finnish Presidency concerning the situation of human rights defenders in Mexico; Meetings with representatives from the following embassies: France, Canada and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

### Presence in Forums:

Celebration of the Anniversary of the Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City "Round Table Presentation and Discussion with peace organizations in Mexico"; International Seminar, "Dialogue between Government and Civil Society to create a human rights agenda," A program of Cooperation on human rights of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission in Mexico City; Commemoration of the 32nd anniversary of the death of Lucio Cabañas Barrientos, in Atoyac de Álvarez.

### Obtilia Eugenio Manuel Participates in a PBI Anniversary Event

The Spanish State country group organized several days of activities entitled "25 years of International Accompaniment for Human Rights Protection" to celebrate Peace Brigades International's 25th anniversary. The event took place in Santander, Spain on December 11, 13 and 15, 2006.

The December 11 event included a presentation of the Spanish translation of the book "Unarmed Bodyguards" ("*En buena compañía*" in Spanish), written by Luís Enrique Eguren and Liam Mahony. During the afternoon, the book's author, Luís Enrique Eguren, facilitated the seminar, "Resistance Processes and International Accompaniment," which focused on sharing experiences, questions, and knowledge about protection of the populace, both in the context of armed conflict and in a post-conflict situation.

During the second part of the event on December 13 and 15, human rights defenders who receive accompaniment from Peace Brigades International in Guatemala, Colombia and Mexico participated in a dialogue where they spoke about their work, the human rights situation in their respective countries and their personal experiences receiving accompaniment from PBI.

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, leader of the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM) from Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, participated in the event, representing Mexico. PBI has been accompanying her since February 2005.

Obtilia Eugenio spoke about the OPIM's work in defense of the rights of the indigenous people in the region. She participated both in the seminar by Luís E. Eguren and in the dialogue with human rights defenders from other countries. The event participants had the opportunity to listen and ask questions about human rights situations that are little known internationally.



Obtilia Eugenio Manuel in Santander University, Spain. Photo: PBI-Spain

### 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.

*PBI team in Guerrero: Riccardo Carraro (Italy), Miranda Zagone (Italy), Jamie Wick (United States), Anne May (United States), Pili Romera (Spain), Marjolein van de Water (Netherlands), Alexander Blessing (Germany).*

**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.

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