

# Peace Brigades International

# in Mexico

Bulletin for the PBI Mexico Project

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**pbi**  
making space for peace

## Notes on the Current Situation

### ***The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has admitted the cases of two indigenous Me'Phaa women reportedly raped by members of the Mexican military***

Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández Ortega, both indigenous Me'Phaa women, reported being raped in 2002 in rural communities in the municipality of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, by soldiers of the Mexican army. Both women, with counsel from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center and the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM), subsequently decided to report their cases to the IACHR in 2003 and 2004, respectively, since their cases were transferred from the civil justice system to the military justice system, which they consider to lack independence and impartiality. The Mexican government requested that the IACHR deny admission of these cases. However they were in fact admitted to the IACHR on October 21, 2006<sup>1</sup>.

On November 10, with the support of the OPIM and Tlachinollan, Valentina Rosendo Cantú presented her case to the IACHR. According to her claim Valentina was only 17 years old on February 16, 2002 when she was raped near her home in Barranca Bejuco, whilst washing clothes. A group of soldiers from the Mexican Army came up to her and began to ask her about the activities of several "masked men" (referring to armed groups). Valentina denied knowing anything about them and was subsequently submitted to illegal detention, rape, and torture by two soldiers while another six soldiers watched.<sup>2</sup> Once she reported this act, the civil justice system deemed that the petition was not within its jurisdiction and transferred it to the military justice system.

Inés Fernández Ortega presented her case to the IACHR on June 14, 2004. She stated that on March 22, 2002 she was at home in Barranca Tecoani when several soldiers entered her house to interrogate her about livestock they claimed had been stolen. Unable to answer them because she does not speak Spanish, the soldiers became angry and threatened her with their weapons and then raped her. Inés reported these events to the Public Ministry in Ayutla de los Libres, however the Public Ministry did not investigate this report. They destroyed the evidence, and later stated that they didn't have jurisdiction to hear the case. On March 27, 2002 the Military Attorney General's Office decided that the case was not appropriate in a civil jurisdiction and decided to investigate within the military jurisdiction<sup>3</sup>.

At the time, the Mexican Government argued that internal justice mechanisms had not been exhausted and as a result requested that the IACHR declare these cases inadmissible. Despite Mexico's request, on October 21, 2006 the IACHR admitted both women's cases, stating that the military justice system is not the appropriate entity to investigate and try soldiers who

are involved in crimes and human rights violations involving civilians.<sup>4</sup> According to Tlachinollan attorney Matilde Pérez Romero, the admission of both cases is "very favorable" because "the Inter-American Commission will be able to investigate and resolve an issue that has been an obstacle when it comes to fighting for justice where the army is involved, given that trials still remain in the hands of the very same soldiers that commit the crimes."<sup>5</sup>

### ***The conflict between community members of Carrizalillo and the Canadian mining company Luismin comes to a close***

On April 2, 2007, the entrance to the gold mine owned by the Canadian mining company Luismin, in Carrizalillo, Guerrero, was reopened following a sit-in, lasting 83 days, which blocked the entrance to the mine and caused the company a loss of 30 million dollars.<sup>6</sup> The sit-in began on January 8th when the Permanent Assembly of Landowners of Carrizalillo (Asamblea Permanente de Ejidatarios de Carrizalillo) declared that the company was not following through with its part of the initial agreement in which they promised public works that would benefit the community.<sup>7</sup> The community members also stated they had not received a fair price for their land.<sup>8</sup> The conflict ended on April 1st when both parties came to a new agreement.

The sit-in at Carrizalillo became a topic of concern for human rights organizations after the violent eviction of landowners on January 25th. On that day, the Municipal and State Preventative Police violently evicted approximately 70 landowners, among them women and children, and detained them in the community prison in Zumpango for four hours.<sup>9</sup> At the time, Amnesty International feared another eviction "could cause an escalation of the dispute."<sup>10</sup> Local human rights organizations confirmed that the state government used force to prevent the landowners from continuing with their campaign to fight for their rights. They demanded that state and federal political leaders "assume a policy that respects human rights and does not put economic policies first, policies that favor the implementation of private and foreign projects that are the cause of human rights violations committed against the local people."<sup>11</sup>

In the last three years, communities in five Latin American countries have initiated social movements to prevent the Canadian company Gold Corp Inc., the parent company of Luismin, from developing mining projects that have resulted in human rights violations and destruction to the environment. The blockage of Luismin in Guerrero led to Gold Corp's stock falling from 34 to 27 dollars in the Toronto Stock Exchange, resulting in the corporation's obligation to renegotiate an agreement with the landowners.<sup>12</sup>

The resolution of the conflict is of note since it gives hope to other social movements, such as those

opposed to the hydroelectric dam La Parota, because it shows that "people who defend their land rights can achieve their goals."<sup>14</sup>

### ***Mexico is ranked as the most dangerous Latin American country for reporting on crime and corruption***

According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Mexico is the most dangerous country in Latin America for journalists who cover crime and corruption.<sup>15</sup> According to the IFJ's 2006 annual report, Mexico was classified as the second most dangerous country for journalists in the world, following Iraq.

The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported that between October 1st and December 31, 2006, six journalists were assassinated in Mexico for motives that could be related to their journalistic activities. Another person remains disappeared. This organism reports the "extreme vulnerability" of journalists in Mexico and insists that Felipe Calderón's administration needs to assign maximum priority to this issue so that these crimes are not left in impunity.<sup>16</sup>

The future of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Journalists, which makes up part of the Federal Attorney General's Office, has been in question as of February 1, 2007 when its director resigned. Upon submitting his resignation, he stated that in the nine months in which the Office has been in existence, not one of the 108 cases has been resolved.<sup>17</sup> The entity continues to be in question since authorities have yet to agree on its structure and effectiveness.<sup>18</sup>

1 El Sur, February 5, 2007

2 <http://www.amnesty.org/ACTFORWOMEN/mex-080307-esl>

3 El Sur, February 5, 2007

4 <http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/2006sp/mexico>

5 El Sur, February 5, 2007

6 La Jornada, Guerrero, April 2, 2007

7 El Sur, January 26, 2007

8 [http://www.amnestyinternational.org/AU/64/07/Fear of intimidation / Fear of ill-treatment](http://www.amnestyinternational.org/AU/64/07/Fear%20of%20intimidation%20-%20Fear%20of%20ill-treatment)

9 El Sur, January 26, 2007

10 [http://www.amnestyinternational.org/AU/64/07/Fear of intimidation / Fear of ill-treatment](http://www.amnestyinternational.org/AU/64/07/Fear%20of%20intimidation%20-%20Fear%20of%20ill-treatment)

11 Press Bulletin, Tlachinollan Human Rights Center

<http://www.tlachinollan.org/notbp/notbp070126.htm>

12 El Sur, March 12, 2007

13 La Jornada, Guerrero, April 3, 2007

14 ibid

15 La Jornada, January 3, 2007

16 El Sur, January 30, 2007

17 La Jornada, February 1, 2007

18 La Jornada, February 9, de 2007

## Radio Voladora: Community Radio Under Threat

*In March 2007, two members of the PBI Mexico Team visited Amecameca, state of Mexico, to interview the staff of Radio Voladora.*

After the Popocatepetl volcano erupted in November 2000, Radio Voladora began broadcasting as a means of communication for the community of Amecameca. Due to the alarmist information the official media was diffusing about the event, the radio decided they needed to explain what was really happening in the region. Since then, the Radio has become a point of reference for broadcasting news that reflects the reality of life in Amecameca.

Oscar Reséndiz, a member of the radio's board of directors, explained that the radio is made up of local people who speak to the community about their problems, their vision and about their needs, stating that at the radio "we all participate, we all communicate, and we all listen." For Oscar, the community radio is the only tangible and visible way to see the democratization of people's opinions in Mexico; the radio gives information not put across in commercial media and permits access to a means of communication for "humble people who have important things to say." According to Oscar, this is "one of the only possibilities we have to see the effects of democracy in these communities."

Radio Voladora aims to attend to the most vulnerable sectors of the population. The poverty rates are unimaginable in the areas surrounding Amecameca and most of the residents work as subsistence farmers. An estimated 15% of the population of the municipality is illiterate and this number climbs to 30% in the surrounding communities. In its early years, there were some questions as to whether or not the radio belonged to the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), and people questioned the fact that most of the members of the radio had academic degrees. With time, they overcame these taboos and the local people now see the radio as an integral part of the community. Verónica Galicia, administrative director of the radio, states that the local population "now knows that if they want to say something, they can come, knock on the door and leave a message they want to send out."

Radio programming focuses on political analysis, social criticism, community announcements and diffusion of local traditions, popular music, sports, stories, literature, opinion, news and cultural analysis.

The radio was granted a legal permit to broadcast on May 9, 2005 and its programs are now available to some 90,000 residents of Amecameca and the surrounding communities. The community ranks Radio Voladora in second place in preference (with national radios included).

This past year, the radio has received several threats against the life and physical safety of its members. The first threat was received on August 30, 2006 in an email that mentioned the addresses of the radio members and alluded to the radio's coverage of Sub-commander Marcos' Other Campaign. Two weeks before receiving this first email, the radio office was broken into for the first time. After the robbery and a few days prior to receiving another death threat, a person showed up at the radio asking about the EZLN (Zapatista Army for National Liberation).

In September the radio received two more emails that contained death threats. On September 19, 2006, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted precautionary measures to the radio. Radio Voladora is one of the few cases granted precautionary measures by the IACHR in 2006. Even so, another email arrived in December which directly threatened radio director Daniel Iván García Manríquez and mentioned personal information about him, such as the location of his office, his home and his cell phone number.

Veronica states that ever since these threats, "our personal situation at the radio completely changed. We were very afraid, even when we had the door locked, and we wondered who could possibly hate us this much to send us these messages?". Due to the precautionary measures, the local police and the Federal Investigative Agency (AFI) began to do rounds at the radio, but instead of feeling like the government was conducting a proper investigation, the staff of Radio Voladora said that they felt like they were the ones

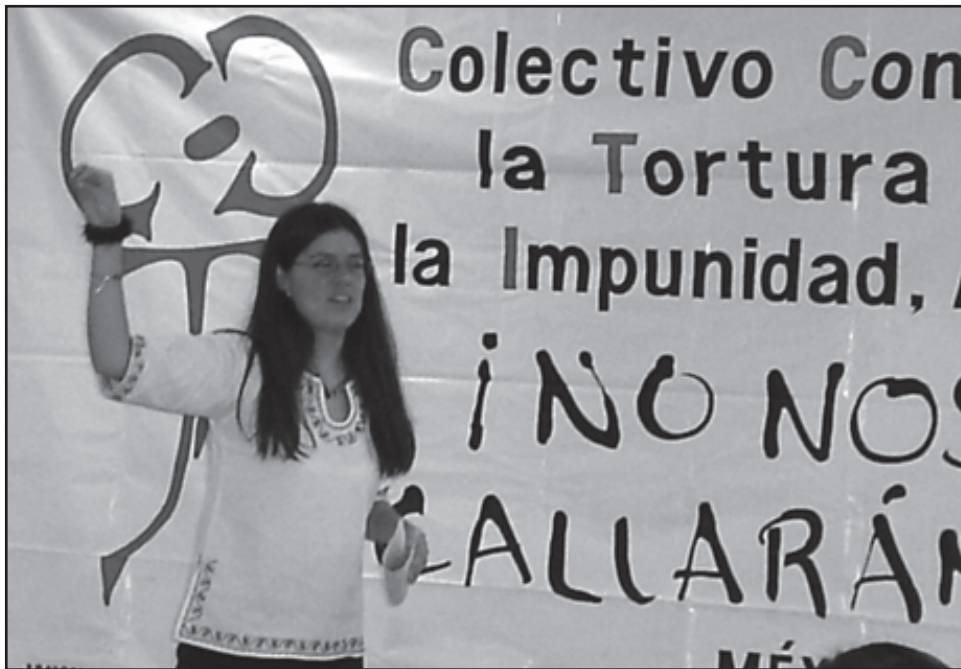


*Oscar Reséndiz Galván and Verónica Galicia Castro, members of Radio Voladora. Photo: PBI*

being investigated. The police came by to take pictures of everything and asked questions about the radio's work, questions members said only intimidated them more. According to the precautionary measures, the police were to carry out rounds at the radio every half-hour, but they stopped doing the rounds after one month.

Oscar admits that the radio's productivity has gone down in the past few months because they have had to follow up on the complaints and the police investigations. "For this reason, we have lost about six months of work in the radio." They can no longer walk on the street alone and they have had to change their daily routines. According to Oscar, the radio's broadcasting of information about the Other Campaign and the events in Oaxaca were what triggered the threats. Despite everything, Verónica states that the radio has maintained its goal of "not modifying any of the political content" and the programming has remained the same. Radio Voladora plans on implementing more ambitious cultural projects to offer "an opening of spaces for people of the community."

## The Collective against Torture and Impunity (CCTI) opens an office in Acapulco



A member of CCTI in a workshop organized by the group, Photo: CCTI

In January 2007, the Collective against Torture and Impunity (CCTI) opened a local office in Acapulco. CCTI has been active in Acapulco for two and a half years, but until now has worked without an official office. In June 2004, the Collective was constituted as a Civil Association with their main office in the Federal District of Mexico. Since then its technical team, made up of staff who work in medicine and legal affairs, has been able to provide different levels of support to victims of torture and to family members of detainees, survivors of repression, and communities whose social structure has been affected by militarization.

According to José Raymundo Díaz Taboada<sup>1</sup>, a doctor and member of the Acapulco office, CCTI was created after a previous experience in a vertically-organized organization that suffered from a lack of communication with the survivors of torture. In 2004, part of this technical team left to form another organization in which “work would be planned out in a different way so that survivors and family members could take part in the decisions. Since various survivors already belong to other social organizations, their participation in our assembly is very important. We wanted to create a structure that was as horizontal as possible.”

CCTI has a team of two doctors and various volunteers who offer support and carry out activities at different levels. These include

drafting public reports, carrying out legal complaints, urgent actions, legal support, offering investigations to support victims of torture, and taking part in marches for anniversaries of important events, such as the bicycle caravan on June 26, 2006 through Mexico City’s historic center to protest against the sexual torture of women during the police operative in Atenco.

The organization also provides medical and psychological attention to torture survivors, family members of prisoners, and communities affected by repression. This includes organising workshops for instance in Atenco so that the victims could talk about the violence that took place there last May.

“Training is another important aspect of our work,” states Raymundo. “Some communities ask us to conduct workshops on human rights and the definition of torture. Sometimes, the people who are affected by torture don’t even know how to define torture. In some areas the use of violence by soldiers and police is so common that people run the risk of seeing it as normal. Because of this, in specific cases of physical and psychological torture, we start by talking with the local population about what happened and its impact on the entire community.” During these sessions, community members respond to questions such as: What can be done in cases

of torture? How can it be documented and what kind of legal defense can be taken on?

In addition, when human rights violations have been detected and clarified, community leaders are called to collect testimonies and help to report the case to authorities. These human rights promoters form a support network and promote the struggle against torture and impunity. CCTI also provides advanced training in medicine, psychology and legal affairs so that these members understand their ethical and professional responsibilities.

“Another important activity is our work with political prisoners and their family members. We have been regularly visiting prisoners in Acapulco, but we are unable to visit prisons outside Acapulco because of the economic and human resources needed to travel outside the city. We haven’t encountered many problems entering and visiting the prisoners because we’re able to arrange many of them as family visits. Once we were able to officially gain access to about 20 prisoners in Chilpancingo and Acapulco. In addition, we are looking to create a professional psychological model to document cases of inmate mistreatment, but this has not been easy.”

The Collective is concerned about torture in Guerrero since “at the state level, there is no law against torture. At the federal level, torture is defined as a crime only if there are severe injuries, which makes the work difficult for organizations that fight to eradicate this practice that is still very common.”

The opening of an official CCTI office in Guerrero represents an important accomplishment in “a state that is particularly violent and does not criminalize torture in the penal code.” CCTI can now better respond to the high level of violations against individual and collective rights that characterize the state.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with José Raymundo Díaz Taboada on February 7, 2007 by PBI Mexico

## Obtilia Eugenio Manuel meets with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

*Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, human rights defender of the indigenous Me'Phaa people and secretary of the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM), took part in a hearing before the president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on April 12th in which the status of her precautionary measures (granted to her in 2005 to protect her physical safety) were reviewed. PBI has been providing international accompaniment to Obtilia Eugenio Manuel since 2005.*

Florentin Melendez, president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and Rapporteur for Mexico, visited Mexico in order to "observe and receive" information about the human rights situation the country and to meet with authorities in the newly-elected government as well as with civil society organizations<sup>1</sup>.

During a hearing on April 12th, Mr. Melendez met with representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and with Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, who was represented by Mario Patrón Sánchez, attorney with the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center. This meeting reviewed the compliance of order 6/05 dated January 14, 2005, which states that the Mexican government must provide protection to Obtilia, her family

members, and members of her organization. The hearing also took steps to judicially clarify the events that justify the adoption of the measures. Representatives of the SRE asked the president of the IACHR to annul the protective order, however Mario Patrón Sánchez stated that the "precautionary measures were never carried out in the way in which they were agreed upon, and Obtilia still remains vulnerable."<sup>2</sup> Patrón stated that "we consider that investigating the threats Obtilia has received is the best [protective] measure, since from our perspective, impunity is what makes human rights defenders vulnerable."<sup>3</sup> He added, "there has been no attempt to investigate the threats, despite the fact that we have information that at least one of those who is harassing her works for the Mexican Army."<sup>4</sup> According to Patrón, "the Mexican government wants to withdraw the precautionary measures, tacitly assume that Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is not at risk, and as a result there is no need to guarantee her safety."<sup>5</sup> Obtilia stated to the president of the IACHR that "the people in government protect the soldiers and don't want to investigate, while I am still being watched and pursued."<sup>6</sup>

During his visit, Florentín Meléndez presented a report to the SRE concerning the situation of human rights defenders in the Americas. This document expresses its "profound concern" for the alarming rate of impunity in the Americas. It also shows that even though the number of human rights organizations and individual human rights defenders has multiplied, the government is still "obligated to guarantee the protection of individual human rights." In addition, activists may require special protection in situations in which their cases are not appropriately investigated, in which the administration of justice is slow, or situations in which there is little knowledge about the obstacles that activists face in carrying out their activities. These are all factors that allow for the impunity of those who carry out aggressions against human rights defenders.<sup>7</sup>

- 1 El Universal, April 3, 2007
- 2 "Military Threat" El Proceso, No. 1589, April, 15 2007
- 3 ibid.
- 4 ibid
- 5 ibid
- 6 ibid
- 7 La Jornada, April 12, 2007.

## The Guerrero Human Rights Network mobilizes against gender violence

Although the Guerrero Human Rights Network was originally created to strengthen the different groups that are actively working in the area of human rights, the role of the Network has been changing and increasing throughout the years. The Network currently acts not only as a coordination of organizations but also has its own objectives as an independent organization that organizes workshops, carries out investigations, and offers legal support with their recently opened space.

During the last year, the Network has been investigating violence against women and represents the first organization to investigate this area. In November 2006, it presented the "Diagnostic Report about Human Rights and Violence against Women in the state of Guerrero" that specifically deals with women's rights and access to justice.

According to Silvia Castillo Salgado, Technical Secretary of the Network, "violence against women has increased in the last few years and the situation in Guerrero is now worse than in Ciudad Juárez. Public figures do not reflect the reality and the State Attorney General always denies information. It is difficult to determine the exact number of "femicides" in Mexico."<sup>1</sup>

The diagnostic report offers an analysis about the different types of violence (physical and psychological) that women experience as well as explaining its causes. It points out what can be done in these situations and the fundamental rights of women, such as the right to life, health, justice and equality. The report hopes to provide information, increase awareness of women's rights, and make recommendations to institutions that work in this field. The Network also wants to include information about the situation of women in the human rights report of Guerrero by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). According to Castillo Salgado, "the State must react to the OHCHR diagnostic report."<sup>2</sup>

Women's rights organizations have reacted positively to the investigation and publication of the report, and point out that violence is not only domestic but also institutional. The cases outlined "show that the violence women are exposed to is not only a result of being a woman, but is also based on gender discrimination by the State that includes physical, psychological and sexual violence."<sup>3</sup> Concerning the cause of violence in Guerrero, the authors of the report consider that "militarization and drug trafficking are two important elements in Guerrero that contribute to human rights violations."<sup>4</sup>



*Offering to women killed in Guerrero state: October, 2006. Photo: The Guerrero Network*

Silvia Castillo Salgado explains that the Network wants to present this work to smaller municipalities, in regions where there are fewer reports of gender violence. Since most violence occurs in the victim's home, there is intense pressure for the victims not to report these crimes.<sup>5</sup>

*As part of this campaign, the Network published "Women's Right to a Life Without Violence."*

- 1 Interview with Silvia Castillo Salgado on February 14, 2007
- 2 Idem 1
- 3 Guerrero Human Rights Network, et al, "Diagnostic about Human Rights and Violence against Women in the State of Guerrero," November 2006, p. 31
- 4 Idem 3, p. 64
- 5 Idem 1

## Remains Returned to Atoyac of People Detained and Disappeared During the *Dirty War*



Tita Radilla with the relatives of the missing persons delivered opposite the office of the AFADEM. Photo: PBI

In June 2005, the Femospp (Office of the Special Prosecutor for Past Social and Political Movements) exhumed the bodies of Lino Rosas Pérez and Esteban Mesino Martínez. The two had been guerrillas and collaborators with Lucio Cabañas (guerrilla leader of the Poor People's Party), who were detained together with him on December 2, 1974. They had been disappeared for 33 years. Following the exhumations, their family members spent months waiting to receive their remains. In February 2005, the family members were able to recover their remains, commemorate their deaths, and give them a funeral.

"Finally! After 32 years of suffering, uncertainty about the location of more than 1,300 people who were detained and disappeared, sadness, continuing pain, intentional injury caused to the family, to the town, and to society, this has finally come to an end. (...) The resistance of family members organized in AFADEM [Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico] and the solidarity of many other organizations has now shown results (...)."<sup>1</sup>

On February 7, 2007, the General Coordination of Investigations of the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR), who has now taken over the cases of the recently closed Femospp, delivered the remains of the first two victims to be identified from the Dirty War of the '70s and '80s. The delivery of these remains is the result of a long process during which family members and AFADEM filed complaints, reports and legal and administrative paperwork.

Due to pressure from family members and as a result of the Femospp's investigations to clarify the detentions and disappearances during the *Dirty War*, the Office of the Special Prosecutor exhumed the remains of two gravesites in June 2005 in Guayabillo, in the Sierra de Tecpan de Galeana, Guerrero. "(...) As a result of the criminal, anthropological, dental, and video forensic studies by investigators, the remains were identified as belonging to the two

people who accompanied Lucio Cabañas in the last encounter on December 2, 1974. These remains were found to have perforations in their skulls which included traces of lead."<sup>2</sup> The victims were rural teachers in the Sierra de Atoyac and are the only victims that the Femospp has been able to identify during years of investigation.

"The judicial investigations establish that both guerrilla leaders were extra-judicially executed, and their bodies show signs of having suffered from different types of injuries, which AFADEM considers proof of the 'illegal actions and the terror used by the government against dissidents.'<sup>3</sup> In November 2006, the exact identity of the two victims was confirmed and the family members were informed. Since that day, there have been months of delays and complications in the return of the remains to their families. Despite the fact that the Femospp initially promised to return the remains to family members in Atoyac de Álvarez in December, the remains were not delivered until 11pm on February 7th in Mexico City. The family members had to travel to Mexico City to recover the remains, which meant a personal and economic effort that added to their

physical and emotional exhaustion.

"(...) After a delay of eight hours and without showing any sensitivity or respect toward the family members of the victims, the General Coordination of Special Investigations of the PGR delivered the remains of the victims, warning the family members that if the media took pictures of the coffins, they would not be handed over."<sup>4</sup> According to Julio Mata, Executive Secretary of AFADEM, "after living in uncertainty for more than three decades, the families were once again victimized by the 'arrogance' of the authorities."<sup>5</sup>

For AFADEM, the return of the physical remains is a symbol of the fight to recover the disappeared family members, and a symbol of the search for truth and justice in the crimes the State committed against the population. "By delivering the remains of the first identified victims, the PGR is acknowledging the extrajudicial executions by the State during the '70s and '80s. The National Human Rights Commission recognized this in 2001."<sup>6</sup> However, recovering the remains does not mean that the case has been closed. "They were executed by members of the Mexican Army, which means that there are people who are responsible for these crimes."<sup>7</sup>

AFADEM continues to document and denounce the hundreds of cases of people who were forcibly disappeared. Its members continue to have hope that they will continue to recover their family members, obtain justice and punish those responsible for the crimes. They hope that Felipe Calderón's government continues with the investigations of these past crimes.

1 AFADEM, Press Bulletin, February 10, 2007

2 El Sur, July 12, 2005

3 La Jornada, February 11, 2007

4 Diario Monitor, February 8, 2007

5 Idem 4

6 Idem 3

7 El Sur, February 9, 2007

## 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:

Juan de Dios Castro Lozano, Deputy Attorney General, Attention to Victims and Services to the Community of the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR); Víctor José Mejía Domínguez, Director of Immigration of the National Institute of Immigration (INM); Hugo Flores Zúñiga, Deputy Director of Immigration of the National Institute of Immigration; Alberto Piedra, Director of Communication with NGO's, National Human Rights Commission; Francisco Carrillo Díaz Barriga, General Director of the Office of the Commissioner of the Decentralized Organ of Prevention and Social Readaptation, Department of Public Security and Citizen Protection; Omeheira López Reyna, Federal Representative and President of the Human Rights Commission of the House of Representatives

#### Public Presentations:

Presentation of PBI's work before the Public Security Commission and the Human Rights Commission in the House of Representatives .

#### Municipal Level:

##### Ayutla:

Revy Olea Trujillo, Chief of the Ministerial Investigative Police in Ayutla de los Libres.

##### Atoyac:

Héctor de la Rosa Morena, Chief of the Ministerial Investigative Police in Atoyac de Alvarez.

##### Tlapa:

Jorge Rodríguez Ponce, Representative of the Department of the Interior for the Montaña; Pedro B. Manzano Vega, Director of Public Security.

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

#### Federal and International Level:

National Civil Organizations Network "Todos Los Derechos Para Todas y Todos"; ProDesc (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Project); Primate World Relief Development Fund; Mexican Commission for the Defense and Protection of Human Rights; World Community Radio Association.

#### State Level:

Guerrero Human Rights Network

#### Embassies:

Meetings with representatives from the following embassies: United States of America, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Canada, and Sweden.

#### Presence in Forums:

Presence in the forum sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs: "Dialogue with civil society organizations regarding the Presidency of Mexico in the United Nations' Human Rights Council"; "Militarization in Mexico"; Accompaniment of Tita Radilla in the International Seminar sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs regarding the United Nations International Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons.

## Meeting of the three Latin American PBI Projects

From March 24 until April 15, 2007, representatives from the three PBI projects in Latin America, which include Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico, participated in a visit of the three countries. The goal of the tour was to learn about the activities of the three projects, increase contacts, visit human rights defenders and exchange strategies. The representatives began the visit in Colombia, continued on to Mexico and finished in Guatemala. They visited the Peace Communities of San José de Apartadó in Colombia during the celebration of their tenth anniversary, and met with several human rights organizations in Bogotá and Medellín including the Judicial Freedom Corporation, the Interchurch Commission for Justice and Peace, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, and the Lawyers' Collective José Alvear Restrepo. In Mexico the group met with experts on indigenous rights, staff from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People, the Cerezo Committee and Serapaz. Following Mexico, the delegation traveled to Guatemala where they met with the Association of Friends of the Izabal Lake, the National Coordinator of Marginalized Areas of Guatemala, and the Guatemalan Association of Indigenous Mayors and Authorities. In the three countries the delegation had the opportunity to learn about the situation of various human rights defenders who are accompanied by PBI. These human rights defenders work in several areas including indigenous people's rights, land, economic, social and cultural rights, impunity, and the strengthening of local processes. These human rights defenders live in a high-risk situation due to the sensitive nature of their work.



### 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: Michael Tamblyn (Australia), Miranda Zagone (Italy), Billy Kyte (England), Pilar Romera (Spain), Marielle Tonossi (Switzerland) Jamie Wick (United States)*

**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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