

# Peace Brigades International

# in Mexico

PBI Mexico Project Bulletin

Number 24 April 2008



Notes on the Current Situation

Louise Arbour Visits Mexico

Sterilized Indigenous People Demand Compliance with the CNDH's Recommendations

The IACHR Sends Rosendo Radilla's Case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Concern about Militarization in Indigenous Regions of Guerrero

PRODESC, Defending Collective Rights: Mining Companies in Mexico

**pbi**  
making space for peace

## Notes on the Current Situation

### Reforms to the Justice System

On February 28 Congress approved reforms to the justice system, supported by legislators from all political parties.<sup>1</sup> Before these reforms become law, they must be ratified by state congresses. While the need for judicial reforms in Mexico is clear, the reform that was approved contains many contradictions and discrepancies in its articles. Sergio García Ramírez, president of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, considers these reforms a setback in terms of human rights.<sup>2</sup>

Among the articles that were put into question by lawyers, human rights organizations, and the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) was an article authorizing raids on private homes without a warrant – however, this was not approved. Other articles, such as one that allows for “arraigo”<sup>3</sup> pre-trial detention for up to 80 days, are considered unconstitutional, putting fundamental guarantees at risk and creating an environment that allows for abuse of authority.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Work Group on Arbitrary Detentions has stated that the Mexican arraigo is a form of arbitrary detention.<sup>5</sup>

This reform makes the requirements for arrest warrants much more flexible and creates two justice systems, one for *common crimes* and another for *organized crime*. This second justice system would take the form of a sub-system that allows for exceptions, with fewer rights, a complete lack of presumption of innocence, and the possibility of being confined without a trial for up to two years.<sup>6</sup> According to Amnesty International, the ambiguity in which *organized crime* has been defined in these reforms means that this definition could be used improperly to detain and process people without appropriately protecting their rights.<sup>7</sup>

Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora stated that this reform is one of the most important constitutional reforms since the Constitution of 1917 was approved, and that these reforms are necessary to fight organized crime.<sup>8</sup> Human rights organizations recognize that the reform contains positive aspects, but they also insist that the most criticized aspects represent setbacks in terms of the protection of human rights. Organizations are working on keeping the debate alive so that recommendations from international organizations can be taken into account by the states – they are working to assure that the reform is not approved in state congresses and is sent back to the National Congress for review.<sup>9</sup> According to the CNDH, other important issues have been left out of the reforms including impunity amongst government workers, corruption, inefficiency in the justice system, and an increased control over police forces.<sup>10</sup>

### Oaxaca

The human rights situation in Oaxaca is still “in an extremely critical state” according to the International Civil Commission for the Observation of Human Rights (CCIODH) after their second visit to Oaxaca in February 2008.<sup>11</sup> The CCIODH had already documented human rights violations against the teachers in Oaxaca and the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO) during mobilizations in 2006.

The CNDH also put together a Special Report on human rights violations in Oaxaca that include the right to freedom, property, integrity, and the right to life, and recognized that civil society suffered from threats, persecutions and physical aggressions. Organizations report that the Oaxacan government has not complied with the CNDH’s recommendations.<sup>12</sup>

There have also been many reports of increasing militarization in different regions in Oaxaca, as well as reports of arbitrary detentions, abuse of authority and threats by state and federal police forces directed towards activists and their families. APPO leader Flavio Sosa was detained without an arrest warrant in 2006, and he is seen as an emblematic example of the criminalization of social protest since authorities have used legal maneuvers to keep him imprisoned. Of the 500 sympathizers of the APPO that were originally detained, seven remain in prison.<sup>13</sup>

In the international arena, the International Jurist Commission and Amnesty International have published reports about the situation in Oaxaca that point out the impunity that prevails in regards to aggressions suffered by participants in the Popular Guelaguetza on July 16, 2007.<sup>14</sup> The political and economic demands have turned into a fight for the most basic human rights and a fight for the freedom of the leaders and families in a context in which those responsible have yet to be punished.

### NAFTA’s Agricultural Chapter takes effect

On January 1, 2008 the agrarian chapter of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed by Mexico, the United States and Canada in 1994 took effect, a chapter that allows for the complete opening of the agricultural market and takes away taxes on the importation of basic grains such as beans and rice and on milk.

Widespread opposition to the opening of the market began to fight for the renegotiation of NAFTA – close to 10 thousand appeals were presented in several different courts throughout January. Felipe Calderón’s government has said that a renegotiation is unviable since it could mean a loss of confidence with the U.S. and Canada. Federal authorities made recommendations to the one judge that accepted the appeal saying that he should deny the appeal, given that even one appeal could provoke “legal confusion” and “social instability”.<sup>15</sup> The Mexican government continues to defend NAFTA, saying that its effects have been positive, and that the complete opening of the market will bring more benefits to the economy and to Mexican society.<sup>16</sup>

Both the opposition movement as well as several intellectuals have warned that Mexican agriculture is still not prepared to face competition with U.S. producers in terms of price and volume, especially when faced with large differences in subsidies between the two countries. Cruz López Aguilar, leader of the National Farmers Confederation (CNC), stated that 2 million jobs were lost in the countryside during the 14 years in which NAFTA has been in effect, and that more than 650 million people emigrate from the countryside annually.<sup>17</sup> He also stated that at least 400 thousand producers of corn, beans and milk are at risk due to the complete opening of the market to imports. Experts Armando Barta and Alejandro Nadal have stated that NAFTA has been a fiasco that has caused a complete break-up of rural communities and mass-migration. In addition, problems related to drug trafficking are taking over the countryside given that growing narcotics is now more profitable for farmers.<sup>18</sup>

1 *La Jornada*, February 28, 2008.

2 *El Universal*, February 26, 2008.

3 *Arraigo* is a type of informal detention applied to suspects so that judicial police and prosecutors have time to build their case against the suspect in order to bring official charges.

4 *La Jornada*, February 28, 2008 and *El Universal*, February 26, 2008.

5 *Report by the Work Group on Arbitrary Detentions on their visit to Mexico*, December 17, 2002.

Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center and others,

6 *Reforma judicial. ¿Unos derechos humanos más importantes que otros?*, February 27, 2008.

7 *Amnesty International, Public Statement*, February 7, 2008.

8 *La Jornada*, March 1, 2008.

9 *Proceso*, March 2, 2008, p. 28.

10 *La Jornada*, March 3, 2008.

11 *La Jornada*, February 14, 2008.

November 25th Committee, *¿Cumple el Gobierno de Oaxaca*

12 *las Recomendaciones de la CNDH?*, February 6, 2008.

13 *Proceso*, January 6, 2008.

Amnesty International, *MEXICO: Oaxaca, 16 July human*

14 *rights violations still waiting for justice*, March 5, 2008.

15 *La Jornada*, February 5, 2008.

16 *Idem*.

17 *CNC, Press Release*, January 6, 2008.

18 *Proceso*, January 20, 2008, p. 60-66.

## Louise Arbour Visits Mexico

Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), visited Mexico on February 5-8, 2008. During her visit Arbour met with President Felipe Calderón and with different representatives from the government, culminating in the signing of a new agreement that would allow the Office of the UNHCHR in Mexico to continue its activities. The Office began work in Mexico in 2002 when it was invited by President Vicente Fox and was given the task of elaborating a diagnosis of the human rights situation in Mexico. This document was published in 2003.

Due to the importance of the new agreement and of recognizing the “leadership” role that Mexico has taken in the UN Human Rights Council (most importantly during the time in which Mexico was in the presidency), Arbour expressed concerns to President Calderón about the human rights situation, referring to her meetings with several organizations from civil society.<sup>1</sup> She pointed out the danger generated for human rights when armed forces participate in public security tasks, even if it is justified by the fight against drug trafficking,<sup>2</sup> and asserted that the fight against impunity is the biggest challenge for the country. She also pointed out the cases of femicides in Ciudad Juarez, the scarce advances in clarifying the cases of disappearances during the *Dirty War* and the increasing danger to freedom of expression, due to the excessive concentration of the media in the hands of very few. Regarding reforms to the criminal justice system recently approved by the federal Congress, she insisted on the importance of maintaining an open dialog to ensure that human rights are protected. She pointed out the danger of including the practice of “arraigo” in these reforms, a practice that can be converted into arbitrary detention before the victim faces a trial.<sup>3</sup>

Felipe Calderón defended the presence of the army in public security efforts, while he also stated that the army’s presence will be “supplementary” and sporadic. According to Felipe Calderón, organized crime represents the biggest threat to Mexican citizens, and security continues to be a priority for this administration. He also pointed out governmental initiatives such as the creation of the General Direction for Human Rights in the Department for National Defense, the Special Prosecutor for Crimes related to Acts of Violence against Women, and the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People, all of which have been created to improve the human rights situation in



Abel Barrera, Director of Tlachinollan, presents testimonies from organizations in Guerrero to Louise Arbour. Photo PBI

Mexico, as well as the continuous support given to the National Human Rights Commission.

During her stay in Mexico, the only state Louise Arbour visited outside Mexico City was Guerrero. On February 7 she traveled to the municipality of Huamuxtitlán (in the Montaña region) where she collected testimonies from cases that represent different human rights violations in the state. These cases included: **Valentina Rosendo Cantú**, a Me’phaa indigenous woman who has denounced sexual assault before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights by members of the army; the CECOP, the opposition movement to the construction of the hydroelectric dam La Parota; the **Regional Council for the Development of the Indigenous Me’phaa People of the Bathaa Linguistic Variety**, who defend the right to bilingual education in 28 communities – they explained that the response from the government has been 17 arrest warrants against members of the organization; the **Organization of Indigenous Me’phaa People (OPIM)** who demanded respect for indigenous people and an end to the “extermination strategy” from the military; the case of the Na savi community **Mini Numa**, who has reported the lack of medical and sanitation attention in the community, and reported deaths due to common sicknesses; the 14 indigenous men that report being forcibly sterilized in the community **El Camalote**; the **Community Police** who state that the government does not recognize the System for Justice and Community

Security that they established in their communities 12 years ago; and the community radio, **Radio Ñomndaa**, in the Amuzgo municipality of Xochistlahuaca, whose staff have been harassed for defending communication between people through their community radio.<sup>4</sup>

In the state capital Chilpancingo, the High Commissioner met with the Coordinating Committee for Analysis and Participation in Human Rights, which is in charge of elaborating one of the first state diagnoses on the human rights situation. Representatives from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, the State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights, public and private universities, the Unit for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights from the Department of the Interior and human rights organizations from civil society will participate in the diagnosis, under the observation of the OCHCHR.<sup>5</sup>

PBI was present in the meeting with Louise Arbour in Huamuxtitlán and accompanied the Organization of Indigenous Me’phaa people.

1 *La Jornada*, February 9, 2008.

2 *Reforma*, February 7, 2008.

3 *La Jornada*, February 9, 2008.

4 Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, *Indigenous people from the Montaña of Guerrero meet with UN High Commissioner*, February 7, 2008.

5 *Committee web page*:

<[www.diagnostico-guerrero-mexico.org.mx](http://www.diagnostico-guerrero-mexico.org.mx)>.



## Rights of the Indigenous Population and Proposals for Autonomy

### Sterilized Indigenous People Demand Compliance with the CNDH's Recommendations

*In 1998 and 2001, 14 indigenous Me'phaa people from El Camalote (a community in the Costa Chica region of Guerrero) were sterilized by the Health Department in exchange for social benefits for their community.<sup>1</sup>*

The affected individuals belong to the Organization of Indigenous Me'phaa People (OPIM), and have filed complaints about this case with the State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Guerrero (Coddehum). The Coddehum emitted a recommendation to the government, led by René Juárez Cisneros, in 2004. This recommendation was rejected. In 2007, the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) emitted a new recommendation, reaffirming what the Coddehum had already sustained. This recommendation was based on the Mexican Constitution, the International Labor Organization's Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and Mexican norms that state that indigenous people have the right to make choices about their sexual reproductive rights. The CNDH expressed concern about the respect for human rights in Guerrero and asked Zeferino Torreblanca's government to take responsibility for the case, adopt the necessary measures to ensure a proper investigation, and provide reparations of two hundred thousand pesos (about twenty thousand dollars) to each affected individual.

The *Tlachinollan* Human Rights Center states that the consent of the indigenous people in order to be operated on was manipulated in exchange for social benefits: this is not "informed consent" but is instead "uninformed consent."<sup>2</sup> The current Health Secretary, Luis Barrera Ríos, continues to defend the argument that the individuals were completely aware of the operation: "we have confirmed that they understand and speak Spanish."<sup>3</sup>

The Health Department established reparations that were less than what was allotted in the recommendation. These reparations were rejected by the victims.

While the administrative process against those responsible remains open, the government continues to argue that "any administrative process should be given time to be applied; complaints about this recommendation have been made at the wrong time."<sup>4</sup> Zeferino Torreblanca had already stated that "his government's obligations are only moral and not legal."<sup>5</sup>

The OPIM and *Tlachinollan* demand that the government comply with the CNDH's recommendation, which includes adequate housing for the people in El Camalote and the construction of an appropriately equipped health center. According to Abel Barrera, Director of *Tlachinollan*, this case "is another sign of the way in which the new government continues to treat the indigenous population - with discrimination, despotism and a lack of interest [...] Everything was forgotten, with the idea that if the people are illiterate, they will not remember and have no dignity."<sup>6</sup>

- 1 Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, Sterilized Indigenous Men demand Compliance with CNDH Recommendation, January 16, 2008.
- 2 Idem.
- 3 La Jornada Guerrero, March 6, 2008.
- 4 Idem.
- 5 El Sur, January 17, 2008.
- 6 Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, In 2007, standstill and regression in the human rights field, January 11, 2008.

## Impunity and Access to Justice

### The IACHR Sends Rosendo Radilla's Case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

*In the most recent Bulletin (Number 23), we spoke of the cases of human rights violations in Guerrero that are currently under review by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). One of these was that of the forced disappearance of Rosendo Radilla Pacheco, community leader and municipal president of Atoyac de Álvarez during the 1950's. After being detained in 1974 by the military, he was seen for the last time in the military barracks in Atoyac. His daughter, Tita Radilla, vice-president of AFADEM, took his case to Mexican judicial authorities and was unsuccessful until the case was admitted by the IACHR. Now, after 30 years of impunity, Mexico will be judged by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the first time on crimes of the past.*

On January 31, the National Attorney General's Office (PGR) announced without prior notification that it would begin scanning the land in several areas where the town hall in Atoyac is currently located, and where the military barracks were once located, to search for irregularities in the soil that would indicate the existence of hidden graves that could contain the remains of the disappeared, among these Rosendo Radilla. The investigation began on February 2 and 3, and family members from AFADEM, the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH) and two independent forensic anthropologists were present.<sup>1</sup> For the families, the scan is an accomplishment in their 30-year struggle to find the whereabouts of their family members. However, there are many questions about the political will of the government to investigate these crimes and combat the forced disappearances of today, as was expressed in the National Popular Trial in Acapulco on February 17, and in an act by the Guerrero Front against

Repression and Impunity on March 9.<sup>2</sup>

In a press release, the IACHR announced that on March 15 this entity filed a complaint against Mexico with the Inter-American Court in the case of Rosendo Radilla due to the "lack of clarification as to his whereabouts, the state of impunity surrounding the facts, and the lack of reparations to members of his family for damages incurred as a result of the loss of someone who was dear to them and the prolonged denial of justice."<sup>3</sup> According to the IACHR, Mexico did not comply with recommendations detailed in the report approved by the IACHR in August 2007, despite the fact that the results from the scan showed irregularities in the territory that could indicate the existence of graves.<sup>4</sup> For AFADEM, this decision has symbolic value for the 470 other cases of forced disappearance registered in Atoyac, and for their demands for truth and justice. They hope that the investigations continue independent of the Court's decision.<sup>5</sup>



*Scanning of the territory where the Municipal Town Hall in Atoyac is located. Photo PBI*

- 1 El Sur, February 3 and 4, 2008.
- 2 La Jornada Guerrero, February 18, 2008 and El Sur, March 5, 2008.
- 3 IACHR, Press Release number 13/08, April 1, 2008.
- 4 El Sur, March 12, 2008.
- 5 Proceso, March 16, 2008, p. 27

## Militarization

### Concern about Militarization in Indigenous Regions of Guerrero

*Since the beginning of his presidency in 2006, President Felipe Calderón has turned to the army as part of his strategy to strengthen public security. According to the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, previous presidencies have used the same formula, even though this produces questionable results, and the army's participation in operations to combat organized crime has provoked human rights violations.<sup>1</sup>*

On February 19, the Day of the Mexican Army, the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center recalled the army's strong and constant presence since the 1970's in the Montaña, Costa Chica and Costa Grande of Guerrero. In many cases, the army sets up camps on the edge or at the entrance to communities, and places checkpoints on roads and highways. The military incursion in Guerrero has always been characterized by a high level of violence, especially against the civil population, through harassment, abuse, mistreatment, massacres, arbitrary detentions, and sexual assaults against women. While in the last few years this presence has been justified by the fight against drug trafficking, according to Tlachinollan, the army "has to understand that drug control policies correspond to civil authorities. In this transition to democracy it is concerning that, instead of strengthening society's participation in public security matters and in the promotion of human rights, the federal executive is turning to the army to support this administration, and in this way legitimize a government that came about in the middle of an electoral crisis."<sup>2</sup>

In early February in Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero, the Organization of Indigenous Me'phaa People once again documented military checkpoints and raids by the army and state police on the roads and in the communities of the municipality. On Sunday January 27, army troops entered the community of San Felipe in the Mixteca region of Ayutla, supposedly looking for drugs and arms. The press later reported that, according to official information, two people who carried arms were detained.<sup>3</sup>

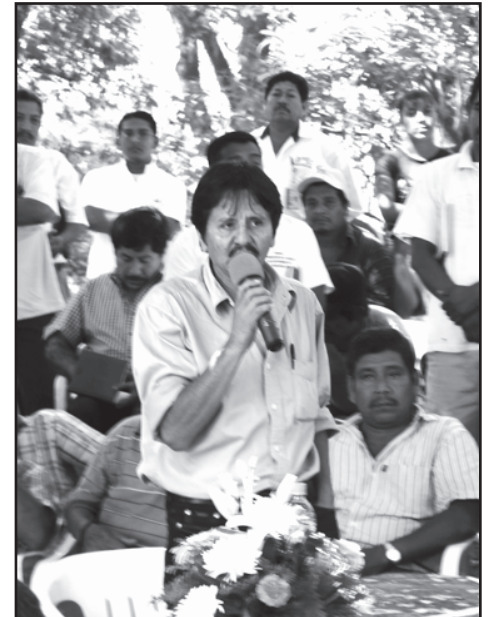
On February 10, Lorenzo Fernández Ortega's body was found in the Center of Ayutla.<sup>4</sup> Lorenzo, originally from El Camalote, was part of the Organization of Indigenous Me'phaa People, and was doing construction work in

Ayutla. His body showed signs of torture.<sup>5</sup> Lorenzo Fernández is Inés Fernández Ortega's brother. Inés, together with Valentina Rosendo Cantú, has filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in which they report sexual assault by members of the army in 2002. Lorenzo Fernández had actively supported the case of 14 indigenous Me'phaa men from El Camalote that report being forcibly sterilized by the state Department of Public Health.

According to the OPIM, the military presence and checkpoints in indigenous communities decreased last year due to the complaint presented at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Just after Louise Arbour's visit to Guerrero, Lorenzo Fernández was assassinated, and military checkpoints once again began in the region. (see article on page 3).

Days before his assassination, Lorenzo had reported that armed men were looking for him and had threatened him. Obtilia Eugenio Manuel reported surveillance activities around her home and received phonecalls on the night of February 9. In one of them, a woman told her: "I know that you are Obtilia, you better calm down your people [...] You better calm down, because my people are out there watching you."<sup>6</sup> The OPIM has reported armed groups in the communities who act under the protection of the army.<sup>7</sup>

Tension has increased since last March 25, when newspapers reported an interview with dozens of indigenous people in the region, with their faces covered and armed with rifles and machetes. They stated that they form part of the guerrilla group known as the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People (ERPI), and they protest repression, military presence in the region, the incarceration of indigenous leaders, migration, excessive



*OPIM President Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez gives his testimony to Louise Arbour. Photo: PBI.*

logging, and the lack of teachers, schools, doctors, and hospitals.<sup>8</sup> However, some people reported that this announcement was suspicious, and have interpreted this act as a state maneuver to justify future actions by security forces in the region.<sup>9</sup>

- 1 Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, El ejército debe retirarse de las tareas de seguridad pública, January 26, 2008.
- 2 Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, The dark history of the army in Guerrero, February 19, 2008.
- 3 El Sur, February 4, 2008.
- 4 El Sur, February 11, 2008.
- 5 Amnesty International, Urgent Action, February 22, 2008.
- 6 El Sur, February 11, 2008.
- 7 La Jornada Guerrero, March 22, 2008.
- 8 La Jornada Guerrero, March 25, 2008.
- 9 La Jornada Guerrero, March 26, 2008.

## Natural Resources and Development Projects

### PRODESC, Defending Collective Rights: Mining companies in Mexico

The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Project, A.C. (Prodesc), formally began work at the beginning of 2006 with the goal of providing integral defense to economic, social and cultural rights. In an interview with PBI on March 12, director Alejandra Ancheita explained the philosophy of the organization and its work, which focuses on the mining sector in states such as Guerrero and Durango.



Alejandra Ancheita with Luismin Workers. Photo: PRODESC

Prodesc's legal work to defend collective rights is accompanied by work to strengthen organizing processes, combined with political and media impact strategies. Prodesc has also worked to involve community, state, federal and international actors to generate support for its work and make it more effective.

*«Our subjects are always communities or farming settlements or groups of workers, such as unions or coalitions - this is the only way to talk about collective rights work. We work on labor rights, migration, right to the land, territory and natural resources, with the perspective of working with communities, the government and companies.»*

#### Human Rights and the Extraction Industry

In Durango, Prodesc accompanies landowners from la Sierrita, in the municipality of Tlahualilo, in their negotiations with Minera Excellon Mexico, a subsidiary of the Canadian company Excelon Resources Inc. During the last three years, the mining company carried out exploration activities on land rented at a very low price, and in 2007, the company wanted to buy about 2,700 hectares to exploit the subsoil resources. While landowners were against selling the land, they were open to negotiating a rental fee. However, the lack of valid negotiations led them to go on strike. After 20 days on strike, they were able to establish a negotiating table with the Canadian vice-president of the company. The result was an agreement signed on March 11 that included

land rental at a favorable price, the creation of a fund for public works, services and projects that provide social benefits, concessions to landowners for transporting workers, a dining hall, a scholarship program, and a water treatment plant for agricultural use.

#### Labor Rights

Last year the case of Carrizalillo was well-known in Guerrero. Landowners organized themselves against Luismin, a company that is part of the Canadian gold-extraction company Gold Corp, and fought for the right to exercise their rights to land and territory. Some 570 workers from the Los Filos - El Bermejil mine began to organize themselves with the support of Prodesc. After a technical strike that lasted 12 hours, the company decided to negotiate.

*«Now they have work conditions that are above the national average, and they have the possibility of doing preventative work. When we say that we have a group of workers who are informed and organized, we mean that they can exercise their collective rights in an industry that can be tremendous. There is an organizing process here that prevents serious violations of their collective rights, ensures satisfactory work conditions, employment stability, gender equality, and collective contracts. This also has a clear and evident repercussion not only on the workers but also on family and community life.»*

#### The Effects of NAFTA

In another community in Guerrero, Cuetzala, 30 small landowners are organizing themselves so that Luismin will provide them with compensation for having used their land without a permit for exploratory projects four years ago, and for environmental damages incurred.

*«We are talking about land that is no longer productive due to the effects of the Free Trade Agreement. The people once used the land for developing their communities and for local development, but they no longer have the resources needed to invest in this land so that the countryside can be productive. The transnational company comes in and is seen as a way to recuperate the possibility of remaining in their communities - in communities that are subject to migration. With these transnational companies, communities now have the possibility of making this land productive. Many workers have this possibility and have decided to return to their communities.»*

This is also due to the precedent achieved with Luismin in Carrizalillo, in which the work conditions that were attained are better than the conditions of immigrants in the U.S.

#### The Environmental Impact

*«We have been careful to do the work with the environment in mind. No contract is signed if there is no compensation for the environment. Part of what we have achieved is the commitment that all projects have to comply with standards to protect the environment. The problem is not the standards, the problem is that the companies do not comply with the standards.»*

Companies tend to take advantage of poverty and marginalization in order to work in a region. State governments provide concessions for the exploitation of the subsoil, but they do not ensure that companies comply with consultation mechanisms with communities and landowners, and with environmental standards and labor legislation.

*«The states have orders to be completely open to international investment. All facilities should be given so that companies can come in and exploit labor and natural resources. We have maintained processes with the communities, with federal and international accompaniment, and we have made the government get involved and comply with legislation and workers rights.»*



## The Team's Work in Mexico

### Accompaniments:

- Emiliana, Francisco and Alejandro Cerezo Contreras, members of the Cerezo Committee, in Mexico City and on their trips to visit their imprisoned brothers.
- Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, Andrea Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez, leaders of the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM), in the municipality of Ayutla, Guerrero and in their activities throughout Guerrero.
- Tlachinollan Human Rights Center: staff of the Ayutla Office; staff of the Tlapa office in their work on the cases of Sócrates Tolentino González Genaro and La Parota
- Tita Radilla Martínez, vice-president of the Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM), in the municipality of Atoyac, Guerrero and in her activities throughout Guerrero.
- Celsa Valdovinos Ríos and Felipe Arreaga, leaders of the Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán(OMESP), in the municipality of Petatlán and in their activities throughout Guerrero.

## Public Relations

### Interviews with Mexican Authorities

#### Federal Level.

**National Attorney General's Office:** Carlos Garduño Salinas, General Director of Human Rights; Rafael González Morales, Head of Institutional Participation; Marco Polo Bernáldez Reyes, Director of Penal Procedures "A" in Morelos; **Department of Public Security:** Monte Alejandro Rubido G., Under Secretary for Prevention and Human Rights; Patricio Patiño Arias, Under Secretary for Strategy and Police Intelligence; Víctor Hugo Pérez Hernández, General Director for Human Rights; **National Institute for Migration:** Israel Estrada, Assistant Director for Migration; **Department of Foreign Affairs:** Alejandro Negrín, General Director for Human Rights and Democracy; Ximena Mariscal de Alba, Assistant Director for International Litigation in Human Rights and Democracy; **Department of the Interior:** Carlos Aguiar Suárez, Director of the Unit for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights; Rodrigo Espeleta Aladro, Assistant General Director for Investigation and Attention to Cases; **House of Representatives:** Omeihra López Reyna, President of the Commission on Human Rights, Jorge Justiano González Betancourt, President of the Commission on National Defense.

#### State of Guerrero.

**Department of Public Security and Civil Protection:** Gregorio Ventura Huerta, Advisor in Legal Matters and Human Rights; Héctor Arragón Inzunza, Head of the Unit for Control and Internal Affairs; **State Attorney General's Office:** Pedro Loyo Malabar, Regional Prosecutor for the Costa Grande in Atoyac; Juan Rivera Altamirano, Regional Prosecutor for the Costa Grande in Zihuatanejo; Joaquín Juárez Solano, Regional Prosecutor for the Montaña; José Luis Martinaz Hilda, Director of the Public Ministry in Ayutla;

Moises Santana Morelos, Ministerial Police in Petatlán; State Congress: Rossana Mora Patiño, President of the Commission on Human Rights; Carlos Reyes Torres, President of the Commission on Government; Arturo Álvarez Angli, President of the Special Commission on La Parota; Benito García Meléndez, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Section of the PAN; Mario Ramos del Carmen; **State Commission for the Defense of Human Rights:** Hipólito Lugo Cortés, General Examiner; Adelaido Memije Martínez, Executive Secretary; Municipalities. **Ayutla de los Libres:** Homero Lorenzo Ríos, Municipal President; Santiago Vilalba Mora, Director of Public Security; C. Sidronio Bibiano Ayodoro, Municipal Official; Gilberto Gabino Vidal, Assistant Director of Public Security; **Tlapa de Comonfort:** Martín Benítez Flores, Municipal President; Sebastián Gómez Barragán, Director of Public Security; Atoyac de Álvarez: Silvestre Balbuena Martínez, Director of Public Security;

#### State of Morelos.

**State Attorney General's Office:** Dr. José Francisco Coronato Rodríguez, Attorney General; **Department of the Interior:** Rafael Martínez Flores, Under Secretary of the Interior; Sara Olivia Parra Téllez, Under Secretary for Social Readaptation; Carlos Monroy Salinas, General Director for Social Readaptation; Pedro Martínez Bello, General Director for Social Readaptation.

### Interviews with embassies and international entities:

Meetings with representatives from the following embassies: Australia, Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United States.

### Interviews with non-governmental organizations, academics, and the church:

#### International:

Misereor; Global Exchange; International Service for Peace (SIPAZ); German Coordination for Human Rights in Mexico; Konrad Adenauer Foundation;

#### Mexico City:

Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights; Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Limedd); Infancia Común, Boca de Polén, Access for Community Development (Adeco); Article 19; National Center for Social Communication; Sin Fronteras; Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Project;

#### Guerrero:

"Tlachinollan" Human Rights Center; Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM); Guerrero Human Rights Network; "José María Morelos y Pavón" Regional Human Rights Center; Collective against Torture and Impunity (CCTI); Oaxaca: November 25th Committee; "Bartolomé Carrasco Biseño" Regional Human Rights Center (BARCA); Center for Community Support Working Together (CACTUS). Hidalgo: Human Rights Committee of the Huasteca and Sierra Oriental (CODHHSO);

### Attendance at forums:

**Federal District:** World Social Forum *Militarization, Repression and Human Rights*; *Human Rights and Constitutional Reforms* organized by the Heriberto Castillo Foundation, the Human Rights Commission for the Federal District and "Fray Francisco de Vitoria O.P." Human Rights Center.

## PBI Mexico at the United Nations Human Rights Council

Marielle Tonossi and Susana Nistal, representing PBI Mexico, participated in a series of meetings in March 2008 in the United Nations Human Rights Council, and met with diverse human rights organizations that work in Geneva.

The dual goal of the meetings was to present human rights problems faced by organizations accompanied by PBI, and to explore possible mechanisms with United Nations entities in Geneva to work for positive change.

In this tour PBI Mexico met with permanent delegations from Mexico and Switzerland in the United Nations and exchanged information with representatives from entities such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples, and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. PBI also sought possible collaboration with other non-governmental organizations that do advocacy work in Geneva, such as the Association for the Prevention of Torture, Geneva for Human Rights, the International Juri Commission, Promoting Human Rights, and Dominicans for Peace and Justice.

Looking towards the future, PBI Mexico is working to provide information to the human rights entities of the United Nations about human rights violations suffered by those organizations that receive PBI accompaniment. At the same time, there is the possibility of collaborating with international networks that work on the defense and promotion of the rights of the indigenous population, the eradication of forced disappearances and the protection of human rights defenders.

Marielle Tonossi and Susana Nistal were received with great interest for PBI's work in Mexico. In all meetings, there was an overall concern about the human rights situation in Mexico and an interest in providing greater visibility to the problems in Mexico, so that U.N. entities are more effective in addressing these problems.



*Carola Hausotter from the German Coordination visits with Tita Radilla from Afadem and Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, Cuauhtémoc Ramírez Rodríguez and Orlando Manzanares from the OPIM.*

### 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 dialogue with civil and military authorities in an effort to raise international awareness.

### The PBI Mexico Project Information

**Bulletin** 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 newsletter 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 Mexico Team in April 2008:**

*Françoise Greve (Germany), Sergi Sendra (Spain), Lucía Herrero (Spain), Maik Müller (Germany), Sandra Caluori (Switzerland), Antonella Pes (Italy) and Sandra Camacho (Spain).*

#### **PBI Mexico International Office**

P.O. Box 40007  
San Francisco CA 94140 USA  
Tel / Fax: + 1 415 287 0895  
pbimexico@pbi-mexico.org  
www.pbi-mexico.org

#### **Mexico City Office**

Medellín 33  
Colonia Roma  
06700 México D.F.  
Tel / Fax: 01 55 55 14 28 55  
pbidf@pbi-mexico.org

#### **PBI Team in Guerrero**

Herdo de Tejada 9  
Barrio de San Mateo  
39022 Chilpancingo, Guerrero  
Tel/Fax: 01 (747) 47 119 62  
pbigr@pbi-mexico.org