

PBI MEXICO

New accompaniment in Oaxaca

Gobixha Committee for the Comprehensive Defence of Human Rights (CÓDIGO-DH)

The Gobixha Committee for the Comprehensive Defence of Human Rights (Comité de Defensa Integral de Derechos Humanos Gobixha, A.C.; CÓDIGO-DH), is an organisation which continues the work initiated by the 25th of November Liberation Committee (Comité de Liberación 25 de Noviembre, A.C), which received PBI accompaniment in 2009-10. Several members of the 25th of November Committee will continue to work with CÓDIGO-DH to confront the reigning impunity in Oaxaca by attending to and supporting the victims of serious human rights violations. The latest threats received by Alba Cruz, CÓDIGO-DH lawyer, prove that the organisation's security situation continues to be of great concern; accordingly, PBI will maintain its accompaniment of Alba Cruz and the other members of CÓDIGO-DH.

CÓDIGO-DH is a civil society organisation created for the comprehensive defence of human rights in its legal, medical and psychological aspects. By attending to victims and survivors of human rights violations in Oaxaca State, the organisation continues the work undertaken by the 25th of November Liberation Committee. Its aim is to promote the construction of a more democratic, just and equitable society, by exposing and combating the impunity and lack of access to justice which surround basic human rights violations in Oaxaca.

Its objectives include education and capacity building – in human rights and conflict management – for various actors, sectors and communities, with the aim of mitigating the culture of violence and social disintegration affecting the Oaxacan people. Through an office providing legal assistance and human rights training in the municipality of San Pedro Amuzgos, the organisation also aims to uphold the rights of the indigenous peoples of the region.

CÓDIGO-DH owes its existence to the commitment to human rights defence held by lawyer Alba Cruz (legal coordinator), Sara Méndez (CÓDIGO-DH coordinator) and Elena Vázquez (coordinator of the San Pedro Amuzgos office), as well as other colleagues.

Unabated risk

On 21 July 2007, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted precautionary measures¹ to the members of the 25th of November Liberation Committee because of the dangerous security situation they faced as a result of their legal work in paradigmatic cases related to Oaxaca's social conflict of 2006-7.

Alba Cruz has been singled out as the victim of a systematic series of harassment and threats. Despite being a beneficiary of these IACHR protective measures for more than three years, and despite the change in Oaxaca's government in late 2010, Alba Cruz has still not been provided with significant protective measures. Those responsible for the threats against her have not been identified, and she continues to be the target of intimidatory acts. On 11 and 31 January 2011, she received two threatening SMS messages that provoked the response of both Amnesty International and the International Observatory for Lawyers (IOL).²



Alba Cruz, CÓDIGO-DH lawyer, accompanied by a PBI Oaxaca volunteer during the fourth anniversary of the repression of 25 November 2006

¹ www.cidh.oas.org/medidas/2007.eng.htm

² [Mexico: Further information: Mexican human rights lawyer harassed: Alba Cruz, AMR 41/001/2011, Amnesty International, 12/01/2011; Alba Cruz, lawyer victim of repeated intimidations and threatened in Oaxaca, Mexico, International Observatory for Lawyers, 03/03/2011.](#)

CÓDIGO-DH: Continuing the fight against impunity

CÓDIGO-DH continues to run the joint legal case of more than 30 ex-prisoners who were detained during Oaxaca's social protests in 2006. This group demands justice for the crimes of torture, arbitrary detention, threats, physical aggressions and sexual abuse, of which they were victim.

Alba Cruz also continues to represent the trade-union leader Marcelino Coache Verano in his legal case for the torture he suffered during an illegal detention in March 2009. Mr Coache and his family continue to be victim of harassment and intimidation, despite the fact that they have been beneficiaries of the IACHR's precautionary measures since 2009. On 31 January 2011, Mr Coache's family were again under attack when his son Edgar received a SMS message which contained a death threat against his father.³

“The accompaniment of Peace Brigades International has been a determining factor in [choosing to] continue our work”

Alba Cruz, November 2010

25th of November Liberation Committee: Emblematic cases of human rights violations

The 25th of November Liberation Committee arose in the context of the repression against the Oaxacan people by the state government in 2006. Since then, it has focused its efforts mainly on the legal defence and accompaniment of the political prisoners, attention to their families, and public denouncements on a state, national and international level of the multiple

³ [Mexico: Further information: Son of leading activist threatened in Mexico](#), AMR 41/004/2011, Amnesty International, 02/02/2011.

human rights violations committed. Its work has been recognised both in Mexico and abroad. The Committee has represented – together with lawyer David Peña Rodríguez of the Association of Democratic Lawyers (Asociación de Abogados Democráticos, ANAD) – the civil society victims in the “Oaxaca case” before the Mexican Supreme Court of Justice (Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, SCJN).

Alba Cruz also represented Juan Manuel Martínez Moreno, imprisoned for more than 18 months under the accusation that he had murdered US cameraman Bradley Roland Will. He was freed in February 2010 because of the lack of evidence against him, but he continues to be subjected to surveillance and harassment. On 4 November 2010, the IACHR expressed its concern for the serious risk he was facing by granting precautionary measures for Juan Manuel Martínez Moreno and his family.⁴

During its four years of operation, the Committee ensured: public recognition for the serious human rights violations which occurred in Oaxaca during and after the social conflict of 2006; the liberation of 109 political prisoners; the publication of recommendations by the National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos), the IACHR and various UN Special Rapporteurs; and the SCJN's recognition of the violation of individual rights in the Oaxaca case, among other successes. The Committee's web page says, 'We consider that we have made our small contribution, and we understand that the reasons for the Committee's existence have yet to be resolved.'⁵

⁴ www.cidh.oas.org/medidas/2010.eng.htm

⁵ <http://comite25denoviembre.org/>

Para más información sobre Código-DH o el Comité de Liberación de 25 de Noviembre, véase también:

* Pagina Web de Código-DH: www.codigodh.org

* Pagina Web Comité de Liberación de 25 de Noviembre: <http://comite25denoviembre.org/>

Y las últimas noticias de PBI en www.pbi-mexico.org:

* [PBI México: Marcelino Coache resulta herido tras la protesta magisterial por la visita de Felipe Calderón](#)

* [PBI México: Nuevas amenazas hacia Alba Cruz, abogada de derechos humanos](#)