

Peace Brigades International

in México

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Notes on the Current Situation

Human Rights Abuses by the Mexican Military

On May 15th the President of the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) José Luis Soberanes Fernández stated that the Army “should be taken off the streets.”¹ Despite this declaration, human rights abuses committed by the Mexican military continue.

On June 2, 2007, soldiers assassinated a family of five (including three children) at a military checkpoint in Sinaloa. Congressional legislators of the Permanent Commission, which is made up of the PRI, PRD, and PAN parties, condemned the assassination and demanded “a thorough investigation and proper punishment for those responsible.” The commission also stated that “soldiers and police corporations should not be granted immunity. Any action taken against organized crime should respect human rights.”²

Soon thereafter on June 15th, the CNDH confirmed “two of the four cases, in which military forces are accused of raping women during an anti-drug operation on May 2, 2007 in Carácuaro, Michoacán.”³ In his statement about the cases, the president of the CNDH added that “the Department of National Defense cannot simultaneously be the judge of a crime and the entity on trial. The reaches of the military justice system must be reviewed (...). What happened in Sinaloa shows that the Army is not trained to carry out police activities.”⁴ The Inter-American Convention on Human Rights establishes that soldiers that commit acts of torture or rape should be investigated and tried by civil, not military, courts. These cases in Mexico are currently tried in the military justice system. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the military justice system “by definition lacks the necessary independence needed in order to impartially investigate reports of human rights violations by members of the armed forces.”⁵

Another similar case is that of Ernestina Ascencio Rosario, a 73 year old indigenous woman from the Sierra de Zongolica, Veracruz, who died as a result of an alleged rape by soldiers last February. Her case was taken on by international human rights organizations⁶ and to this day the perpetrators have not been brought to justice; official versions attribute her death to a “chronic gastritis.”⁷

Arie Hoekman, representative of the United Nations Population Fund in Mexico, stated that the United Nations is interested in training the Army and the Marines about human rights, gender equality,

reproductive health, preventing violence against women, and HIV awareness. In addition, she pointed out that the Army “is in the streets and has frequent contact with civilians, which increases the risk that they will violate individual rights.” When a soldier finds himself at risk, “the immediate reaction is to use violence in whatever way possible. This can prove disastrous for the civil population and contributes to the abuse of power through sexual violence.”⁸

Mexico does not follow through with international human rights agreements

Since 1987 Mexico has signed 607 human rights agreements with international organizations, however, legislators, specialists, and NGO’s recognize that these agreements have not been carried out.⁹ After a recent visit to Mexico, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) stated that Mexico only defends human rights outside of Mexico.¹⁰ In a recent interview, Director for Latin America Soraya Long pointed out that “Mexico is a country in contradiction, since in foreign affairs it shows an interest in human rights- and has even ratified international human rights agreements- but refuses to apply the same principles within Mexico. Since there have not been any substantial changes in the practices that go along with violations of these new agreements the real question is why Mexico’s foreign policy does not have an impact within Mexico.” In addition, Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International pointed out that Mexico is “a champion” in promoting human rights internationally, but the population within Mexico still suffers from violations of individual liberties.¹¹

In April 33 organizations and universities delivered a report to Florentin Melendez, president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) listing at least 15 treaties that Mexico has not complied with. Mario Enrique del Toro, legislator for the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and member of the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, stated that “a mechanism for supervision should be created so that the Department of Foreign Affairs can evaluate why these treaties are not carried out. When the Government signs these treaties, they should also be expected to present initiatives that respond to specific commitments in the treaties.”¹² Similarly, Irene Khan pointed out that the “true test” for the current federal administration will be to put an end to the impunity that prevails in Mexico, establish an adequate system for supervising police and Public Ministry workers, and include in the Constitution the human rights guarantees that are laid out in international treaties.¹³

Criminalization and repression of social protest

On April 26, 2007, the Mexican Senate approved the reform of 12 laws that sanction terrorism, despite the fact that these laws “criminalize social protest” and allow for social activists to be accused of terrorism. According to PRI Senator Fernando Castro Trenti, article 139 of the Federal Penal Code “can in effect be used to generate a confrontation in a social movement that ends up in tribunals. Subsequently, people who are exercising their political rights are sentenced as criminals.”¹⁴

On May 6, 2007, Ignacio del Valle Medina, Felipe Alvarez Hernández and Héctor Galindo Gochicua, leaders of the “Frente de Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra (FPDT)” from San Salvador Atenco, were each sentenced to 67 years and six months in prison. They were found responsible for “organized kidnapping” of government workers between February and April of last year. Their defense lawyer, Barbara Zamora, stated that the sentence “is an infamy”, given that the government workers who were supposedly detained were not even able to recognize the Atenco leaders as those responsible for their kidnapping. Members of the FPDT considered the sentence “a message” and proof that “the state government is interested in setting a political example in order to worsen the conflict.”¹⁵ This sentencing coincides with a public declaration published by Amnesty International titled “Mexico: The first anniversary of San Salvador Atenco – Untouchable impunity?” in which it expresses deep concern for the lack of advancements in the investigation and sanctions those responsible for the human rights violations “such as the excessive use of force, illegitimate homicides, torture, arbitrary detentions, sexual aggressions, and the violation of the right to a fair trial”¹⁶ in the police operative in San Salvador Atenco.

- 1 Reforma, May 16, 2007
- 2 La Jornada, June 7, 2007
- 3 La Jornada, June 15, 2007
- 4 Ibid
- 5 Reforma, July 9, 2007
- 6 Urgent Action, World Organization against Torture, March 8, 2007
- 7 El Proceso, April 8, 2007
- 8 Reforma, July 5, 2007
- 9 Reforma, July 9, 2007
- 10 La Jornada, June 30, 2007
- 11 La Jornada, August 8, 2007
- 12 www.cencos.org “Mexico does not follow through with International Treaties”.
- 13 La Jornada, August 8, 2007
- 14 La Jornada, April 27, 2007
- 15 La Jornada, May 6, 2007
- 16 Amnesty International Public Declaration (AMR 41/018/2007), May 2, 2007

The Cerezo Committee Receives New Threats



Francisco Cerezo Contreras of the Cerezo Committee and a PBI volunteer. Photo: PBI.

On June 26, 2007, the Cerezo Committee received an email message threatening the Cerezo Contreras family: "[...] we are on to you three, the ones in La Palma and your beloved family [...] we are going to make you vulnerable and fuck you up." This threat refers to those family members that work with the Cerezo Committee and those still detained in the "La Palma" prison. The email also alludes to a possible link between the Cerezo Contreras family and guerrilla groups, which signals an increase in the continued harassment of the Cerezo Committee¹.

In response to this threat, the Limeddh (Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights) and other organizations that defend human rights emitted an urgent action to Felipe Calderón, to Secretary of the Interior Francisco Ramírez Acuña, to the President of the National Human Rights Commission José Luis Soberanes, to federal legislators, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The urgent action requested that this threat be investigated and that "concrete and urgent measures" be taken to ensure adherence to treaties regarding the rights of human rights

defenders.²

On June 12, days prior to the written threat, an unidentified man pointed a cell phone camera at Alejandro Cerezo while he was waiting for a medical appointment. That day Alejandro also received a voicemail message on a cell phone that had been provided to him by the Secretary of the Interior with a phone number that was to remain confidential. The message was a recording of a conversation between Alejandro and Emiliana. Neither knows how that conversation could have been recorded. The cell phone is part of the protection measures put in place in October 2006 after the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted precautionary measures to the family.

Francisco and Emiliana Cerezo Contreras have been victims of threats since they founded the Cerezo Committee shortly after their three brothers Alejandro, Héctor and Antonio Cerezo Contreras were detained with two other men on August 13, 2001 on charges of planting explosives in a bank. In May 2006, Francisco Cerezo realized that he was being

filmed by someone who carried identification from the Department of National Defense, and in September 2006 Francisco received a death threat by email.⁴

Since its inception, the work of the Cerezo Committee has provided human rights workshops, information about their brother's case, and documentation of the penal situation of political prisoners in federal and state maximum-security prisons. The Committee has also created a national count of political prisoners, prisoners of conscience, and those who have unjustly been imprisoned.

According to the Committee, "the Mexican State has not been able to clarify information about allegations of family ties to guerrilla groups, and this information is being used to destroy the work that we have been doing during the last six years. Our work not only includes the Cerezo case but also the documentation of political prisoners in Mexico, visits to prisoners who are isolated or abandoned, monitoring of marches, mediation in order to obtain the release of those who are detained without cause, advising other activists who have received death threats, and denunciation of State repression."⁵

PBI considers the events surrounding these threats very important since they concern the security of these individuals. According to the United Nations' "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," human rights defenders have the right to carry out their activities without restrictions and without fear of reprisals. The threats against the Cerezo Committee hinder their ability to pursue their human rights work.

- 1 Urgent Action, Amnesty International, July 11, 2007
- 2 La Jornada, July 3, 2007
- 3 Urgent Action, Amnesty International, July 11, 2007
- 4 Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights, Urgent Action, AU-010-2006 CEREZO
- 5 Boletín Comité Cerezo, 13 de agosto de 2007

The OMESP Mobilizes to Protect the Environment



First Regional Forum organized by the OMESP, Petatlán. Photo: PBI

On July 7th, the Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán (OMESP) organized the forum “Deforestation and Reforestation” in the Petatlán Culture House to showcase their work on deforestation and global warming. This was the first forum of its kind, and it was an opportunity for many environmental organizations to speak. Representatives from the Mayan Institute, Eco-Ixtapa, Foresta, Campesinos Conservationists of Naturally Protected Areas, the Autonomous Campesinos of Banco Nuevo, the Network of Sustainable Development in Mexico, and a representative of the National Forest Commission (Conafor) took part in the forum. Silvestre Pacheco of SOS Bahía collaborated in organizing the event and served as the moderator.

In the forum, Celsa Valdovinos Ríos, President of the OMESP, detailed how an increase in earthquakes and decrease in water supply in the region began with indiscriminate logging operations 15 years before. The recognition that a more sustainable land use policy was needed resulted in the birth of many concerned environmental organizations. Her address included several informational videos on global warming. She also lamented that although the forum was highly successful,

many authorities that were invited did not attend, showing little interest for the environmental cause.¹

Many organizations showed how environmental damage is perpetuated by traditional methods used for farming and for cattle grazing. They stated that there is a lack of knowledge and training about modern methods. They also pointed out that social problems such as disagreements between families or communities can cause violence that in turn affects the land (such as when natural areas are burnt in reprisal). The decomposition of community social networks has also negatively affected the environment.

Representatives of the Mayan Institute presented their work against the importation of and planting of transgenic corn. They have worked to promote the National Campaign in Defense of Food Sovereignty, which demands that regulations for the importation of corn and beans in the North American Free Trade Agreement be revised.

At the end of the forum, OMESP emphasized

the lack of support for people and organizations that defend the environment and the persecution they face for this work. Illegal logging is generally tolerated by the government as a solution to the high unemployment in the region.² According to the Agricultural and Environmental Science registry at the Autonomous University of Guerrero (UAG), five hectares of forest are cut down daily in the state as a result of the logging, and the government does little to prevent this problem. Neither the government nor the state has a clear policy that addresses preserving environmental biodiversity, and those who denounce environmental exploitation risk their lives, as in the case of Juan Millán Morales, who denounced at least 100 cases of illegal logging in the Omiltemi forest (Chilpancingo, Guerrero). He was killed on March 3, 2007, in the park to which he dedicated 20 years of his life.⁴ On May 15, 2007, Aldo Zamora was killed and Misael Zamora was injured for similar reasons. Both were children of Ildefonso Zamora Baldomero, president of San Juan Atzingo and a vocal defender of the forests in his community, which is part of the Zempoala Lagoons National Park (State of Mexico and Morelos). The shooting of Aldo and Misael adds to the long history of repression against those who defend the forests. Similar cases are those of Rodolfo Montiel, Teodoro Cabrera, Isidro Baldenegro, Felipe Arreaga and Albertano Peñaloza. For this reason, Celsa Valdovinos and her husband Felipe Arreaga have been accompanied by PBI since 2005.⁵

In addition to organizing the forum, Celsa Valdovinos Ríos has provided workshops on organic agriculture emphasizing the importance of conserving the environment since 2002 to more than 100 women in the communities of the Sierra de Petatlán.

1 El Sur, July 8, 2007

2 La Jornada Guerrero, June 22, 2007

3 La Jornada Guerrero, June 25, 2007

4 La Jornada, 18 de mayo de 2007

The Anniversary of the Aguas Blancas Massacre

On June 28, 2007, two PBI team members accompanied Tita Radilla Martínez, Vice-President of the Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM), at the anniversary of the Aguas Blancas massacre, in the municipality of Coyuca de Benitez, Guerrero. PBI has provided international accompaniment to Tita Radilla since 2003.

On June 28, under intense sunshine, three groups of protesters left the town of Aguas Blancas for the clearing where state police massacred 17 farmers 12 years ago. The three caravans that commemorated the anniversary of the massacre were led respectively by two sections of the Sierra del Sur Farmer's Organization (OCSA) (one from Coyuca and one from Atoyac), and by the Organization of Producers of the Costa Grande.

Around midday, Tita Radilla, accompanied by PBI team members, and the other marchers walked a mile and a half on the highway that leads to the clearing where the massacre occurred. About 600 people participated in the event that began with a mass held by priest Juvenal Aponte in memory of the victims. The priest expressed sorrow for the deaths of these people who "lost their lives for the fight, for justice, and for better living conditions."¹

During the ceremony, more than ten people spoke next to the monument that was erected in memory of the lost community members, demanding the

reopening of the Aguas Blancas case, the punishment of the ex-governor Rubén Figueroa Alcocer (who is considered to be the intellectual author of the massacre), and the rejection of a truth commission that the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) has proposed. Rocío Mesino of the OCSA in Atoyac stated, "we do not need a truth commission when we all know that there is someone who is responsible here, and that person is Rubén Figueroa Alcocer, and he should be put on trial."²

The mothers and widows of four of the men who were executed manifested their discontent with the impunity of the perpetrators. Cruz Lozano Rebolledo, widow of Paz Hernández González, lamented that even though 12 years have passed since her husband's death, the intellectual authors of the massacre have still not been detained.³

Representatives from the Social Leftist Movement, the Council of Ejidos and Communities Opposed to the La Parota Dam (CECOP), the 9th Section of the National



Religious ceremony in memory of the Aguas Blancas massacre. Photo: PBI

Coordination of Education Workers, the National Front for Socialism, the Worker's Party, and the Democratic Revolutionary Party also participated in the ceremony.

At the end of the event, a list of the men who were assassinated was passed around, and the organizations reiterated their desire to shed light on the truth about the Aguas Blancas massacre.

- 1 El Sur, June 29, 2007
- 2 El Sur, June 29, 2007
- 3 La Jornada Guerrero, June 29, 2007

Indigenous People Demand Justice at the Nine Year Anniversary of the Massacre at El Charco



March commemorating the ninth anniversary of the massacre at El Charco and a PBI volunteer. Photo: PBI

On June 6 and 7, 2007, two PBI Mexico team members accompanied members of the Organization of the Indigenous Me'Phaa People (OPIM) at the anniversary of the massacre of 11 people in El Charco, in the municipality of Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero. PBI has provided international accompaniment to OPIM since 2005.

On the morning of June 7, 1998, in the community of El Charco, 10 Mixtec people and one student of the National Autonomous University of Mexico died at the hands of Mexican soldiers in the bilingual elementary school "Caritino Maldonado Pérez." Every year

the community commemorates the anniversary of the massacre with a march. This year, PBI accompanied the OPIM, who had supported the Independent Organization of Mixtec People (OIPM) in organizing the event.

PBI team members accompanied the caravan that left Ayutla on June 6th and arrived at the community of El Charco. Upon nightfall the family members of those who died held a vigil. The school's two classrooms are just as they left them 9 years ago and still have bullet holes and blood stains on the walls, ceiling and floor. In one of the classrooms there is a cross with the names of the victims hanging above an offering with flowers and candles. Throughout the evening the family members prayed and sang songs about their lost loved ones.

The next day, three widows and two mothers of the victims led a march on the road leading from the community to the school. About 500 people participated in the event, most of them Mixtec and Me'Phaa people from this municipality. They carried a sign demanding that the soldiers that committed this massacre be punished. In addition to justice, the indigenous people of the region seek reparation of damages and indemnization for the victims' families.

After a memorial mass, several speakers representing the indigenous peoples and social movements in Guerrero spoke at a rally. Felipe Castro Morales, brother of one of the widows, spoke in the name of the victims' families: "On June 7, 1998 the soldiers arrived here and in cold blood killed our fellow Mixtec people. Our people were not armed, but instead were talking with other indigenous people about how they were going to improve the conditions in the community. Those that attended this meeting slept in the school; the next morning the soldiers arrived and killed them"¹

In this region, the massacre at El Charco is one of many continued aggressions, and the president of the Organization of the Mixtec People, Raúl Lucas Lucía, summed up the feeling: "All of the indigenous people desire justice. We have been massacred, exploited, harassed, and repressed by our corrupt government."²

- 1 El Sur, June 8, 2007
- 2 El Sur, June 8, 2007

Ten Years Working for Human Rights in Chilapa

Last March, the Regional Centro for Human Rights "José María Morelos y Pavón" celebrated ten years of work. The PBI team recently visited their offices in Chilapa de Álvarez and spoke with treasurer Casiana Nava Rodríguez and Manuel Olivares Hernández, who since last year has been the director of the organization. Since the organization's founding, both have been working with Bernardo Sánchez Cruz, parishioner and President of "La Villa" neighborhood.

In March 1997 Chilapa and the surrounding areas saw the beginning of an increase in militarization that continues to this day. Guerrero is one of the states that has suffered militarization as a result of the appearance of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas in 1994. Manuel states that "at that time there were constant arbitrary detentions, torture, and disappearances. Through public denunciations, we were able to help stop these practices. At the time we took on the case of two women from the municipality of Atlixac and Zopilotepec, who had been raped while their husbands were detained." Despite not having sufficient infrastructure or the personnel to provide legal defense for these cases, the Center recognizes that "here we were able to obtain the freedom of their detained husbands who were going to be prosecuted for federal charges. This was a major success because the community realized that we were doing things the right way." By gaining a closer relationship with the communities, the Center realized that "human rights violations are all encompassing" and that "they [occur] mainly due to [people's] lack of knowledge about their rights."

The region that makes up the municipality of Chilapa and the surrounding localities where Morelos y Pavon began its work (Atlixac, Ahuacotzingo and Zitlala) is located between the Central and the Mountain regions of Guerrero and is mostly populated by indigenous groups; more than 70% of the population is Nahuatl. High rates of illiteracy and small numbers of Spanish speakers make these communities "easy victims of the system due to abandonment, marginalization, lack of public services, and violence by the Army and the police." In this context, the Center acts "as an entity of social support that provides people with the attention that other government institutions (such as the Public Ministry, the Civil Court, and the Family Development Institutions) do not provide."

Currently, Morelos y Pavon is working to consolidate its work in three main areas:

Defense of indigenous land

The constitutional reforms surrounding land ownership and the Land Certification Program, "Procede," aim to incorporate land into the market and favor its privatization. This has had a particular impact on this region, where land is



Image of one of the activities of the Center. Photo: C.R. D. H. Morelos and Pavón

mostly communal. "Procede's privatization program is implemented through threats, pressure, bribes and corruption", generating new agrarian conflicts. In addition, the traditional "uses and customs" of the land are not respected and Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization is ignored. In San Jeronimo Palantla work is being done to elaborate a communal land title that would help reconstruct the social fabric that has been damaged under Procede since 2005.

Women's rights

Years of work experience has allowed the Center to focus on violence against women as a central part of its work. The Center indicates that "both systematically and in the home, women experience violence in all areas of their life."

The right to due process

The institutions in charge of procuring justice function without guaranteeing access to justice and the right to due process. "Many indigenous people are in prison because there were problems in their cases from the very beginning of the preliminary investigation, throughout the penal process, and in the sentencing," states Manuel. He points out that high rates of corruption in the

Public Ministries and in the Penal Courts makes justice unlikely in a majority of cases and creates obstacles for the work of human rights defenders. To help address these issues, Morelos y Pavon has been doing human rights education workshops with successful results.

Another initiative of the Center currently underway is the creation of the Citizens Council of Chilapa. Given the city's poor waste management policy and the need for public works, the Council is an entity through which people can put pressure on city decision makers to do the work that is needed in the municipality.

The accompaniment work of Peace Brigades International, Morelos y Pavon says, "has been one of the reasons that [worker] physical integrity remains intact, since the physical accompaniment and the meetings with authorities at different levels of government has, in a way, inhibited the possibility of any violent actions against [the Center]."

Casiana highlights that PBI team members have an "individual and team commitment to help us attain our dream of working toward a culture in which human rights are respected."

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.
- Otilia 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 on 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.
- Members of Radio Calenda, community radio in San Antonino Castillo Velasco, during the state elections for Congress, Oaxaca, August 2007.

Public Relations

Interviews with federal authorities

Federal Level:

Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR): Juan de Dios Castro Lozano, Deputy Attorney General, Attention to Victims and Services to the Community; Carlos Garduño Salinas, General Director of Human Rights; Rafael González Morales, Head of Institutional Participation and Pascual Moreno Méndez, General Director for Attention to Recommendations and Friendly Settlements in Human Rights. **National Institute of Immigration (INM):** Carmen Muguera, Director of Migration and Ricardo Guillén, Assistant Director of Migration. **Department of the Interior (SEGOB):** Dr. Esturardo Mario Bermúdez Molina, Head of the Unit for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights and Rodrigo Espeleta, General Director of Investigation and Attention to Cases. **National Human Rights Commission (CNDH):** Luis Raúl González Pérez, General Director of the office of the Fifth Examiner, Joaquín Blanes Casas, General Director, León Rodrigo Pérez Gómez, Director of Indigenous Affairs in the Office of the Fourth Examiner and Andrés Calero Aguilar, Third Examiner. **Department of Public Security (SSP):** Celina Ocegüera Parra, Commissioner of the Decentralized Organ of Prevention and Social Readaptation and Rubén Hernández, Director of Human Rights; Víctor Hugo Pérez Hernández, General Director of Human Rights and Juan Álvarez de la Vega, Assistant General Director of Human Rights; Marco Antonio Venegas Ramírez, Assistant General Director of Bilateral Affairs and Marcela Mora Córdoba, Director of Latin America, Europe and Multilateral Affairs. Senate: Senator Gabino Cué Monteagudo, Senator for Oaxaca. **Department of Foreign Affairs (SRE):** Alejandro Negrín, General Director of Human Rights and Democracy; José Ignacio Martín del Campo Covarrubias, Director of International Litigation.

State Level:

DF:

Mexico City: Juan José García Ochoa, Under Secretary for Human Rights and Miriam Estrada Jiménez, Human Rights Advisor. **State Attorney General's Office (PGJDF):** Juan López Villanueva, General Director for Human Rights, Dr. Fernando Coronado Franco, Deputy Attorney General for

Justice and Human Rights and Dr. Sergio Rivera, Advising Coordinator. **Human Rights Commission for the Federal District (CDHDF):** Emilio Alvarez Icaza Longoria, President, María Erendira Cruz Villegas Fuentes, Head of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Attention to Human Rights Defenders, and María Alejandra Nuño Ruiz Velasco, Fourth Examiner

Guerrero:

INM in Acapulco: Gloria Ocampo, Regional Representative. Congress: Rossana Mora Patino, President of the Human Rights Commission. **State Attorney General's Office:** Jesús Alemán del Carmen, Deputy Attorney General for Regional Control and Penal Procedures

Municipal Level:

Atoyac: Silvestre Balbuena Martínez, Director of Public Security; Leobardo Radilla Galeana, Municipal Official. **Ometepec:** Eduardo Montano Salinas, Municipal President; Efrén Suastegui Mayo, Regional Prosecutor for the PGJE; Osiel Muñoz Flores, Head of the Department of Supervision and Coordination, Regional Representative of the Department of the Interior in Ometepec.

Oaxaca:

State Attorney General's Office (PGJE) Oaxaca: Evencio Nicolás Martínez Ramírez, Attorney General, Maritza Escarlet Vasquez Guerra, General Examiner, Heriberto Antonio García, Human Rights Director, Rubén Vasconcelos Méndez, Deputy Attorney General for Internal Affairs, Lic. Fernando Santiago Hernández, General Director for Professional Development. **State Government:** María del Rosario Villalobos Rueda, General Coordinator for Human Rights and José Manuel Vásquez, Head of the Assessment Unit; Sergio Segreste Ríos, Director of Public Security. **Federal Attorney General's Office (PGR):** Lic. Javier Dovala Molina, Regional Representative. **State Human Rights Commission:** Jaime Mario Pérez Jiménez, President; In Ocotlan de Morelos: Andrés Sergio Mariscal Aguilar, Municipal President, Jorge Luis Moreno, Municipal Official, Secretary and Edith Aguilar Maldonado, Education Council; Joel Lopez Sanchez, Municipal President of San Antonino Castillo Velasco.

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

Federal and International

National Civil Organizations Network "Todos Los Derechos Para Todos"; Center for Justice and International Law; Mexican Commission for the Defense and Protection of Human Rights; World Association of Community Radios; Juan Carlos Gutiérrez, Consultant for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; AsíLegal; Global Fund for Human Rights; Mexican League for the Defense of Human Rights (Limeddh).

State Level:

Guerrero: Radio Ñomndaa; Council of Ejidos and Communities Opposed to the La Parota Dam (CECOP); Father Mario Campos Hernández, Office of the Bishop in Tlapa; Independent Organization of Mixteca Communities. **Oaxaca:** Educa; Center for Indigenous Rights "Flor y Canto"; Oaxaca Human Rights Network (Rodh); Regional Human Rights Center "Bartolomé Carrasco Briseño"

Embassies and United Nations:

Meetings with representatives of the following embassies: United Kingdom, United States, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Australia.

Presence in Forums:

Federal: International seminar sponsored by the State Human Rights Commission in the Federal District: "The Rights to Defend Human Rights and Freedom of Expression". Seminar about Human Rights in Calderon's Government at the Autonomous University of Mexico City. **State - Guerrero:** Forum at the Autonomous University of Guerrero "Thinking without Borders" - Colloquium - "Militaryization in Mexico: Impacts and Alternatives". Forum "Through the roads of resistance", organized by Tlachinollan to celebrate their 13th anniversary. Forum "Deforestation and Reforestation" organized by the OMESSP.

PBI's Work in Oaxaca

During the last several months, PBI has carried out different activities in the state of Oaxaca, including security and protection workshops, public relations with authorities, and accompaniments.

In response to the serious security situation for organizations in the state of Oaxaca, PBI organized and taught an introductory workshop about security and protection to various groups. The workshop was funded by the Fund for Global Human Rights and was designed to give human rights defenders tools to protect their physical safety and to decrease the risks that are inherent in their work. Several organizations attended this first workshop including Educa, the Oaxaca Human Rights Network and Services to the Mixe People.

In July, PBI met with authorities in Oaxaca City, San Antonino Castillo Velasco, and Ocotlán de Morelos, Oaxaca, in order to maintain contact with several state and local authorities and establish new contacts in preparation for the accompaniment of members of Radio Calenda. PBI also held meetings with several human rights organizations. In August, PBI accompanied members of Radio Calenda, a community radio station in San Antonino Castillo Velasco, while they covered the state elections for Congress in Oaxaca. This accompaniment was requested by the Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights and the World Association of Community Radios.

Also in August, PBI México invited Marie Caraj from the PBI European Office to teach a three-day security and protection workshop to human rights organizations in Oaxaca City. Many different organizations from Oaxaca City and from Huajuapán de León participated in the workshop. These organizations had suffered from harassment during the last year, and this workshop provided them with the necessary tools to improve their security situation. Some of the groups that participated in this workshop include "Ojo de Agua," Cactus, the Binational Indigenous Front, Radio Calenda, "Barca", and the Limeddh. One PBI team member and one member of the Cerezo Committee also participated in the workshop as co-trainers.



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: Miranda Zagone (Italy), Sergi Sendra (Spain), Michael Tambllyn (Australia), Marielle Tonossi (Switzerland) Billy Kyte (England).

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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