

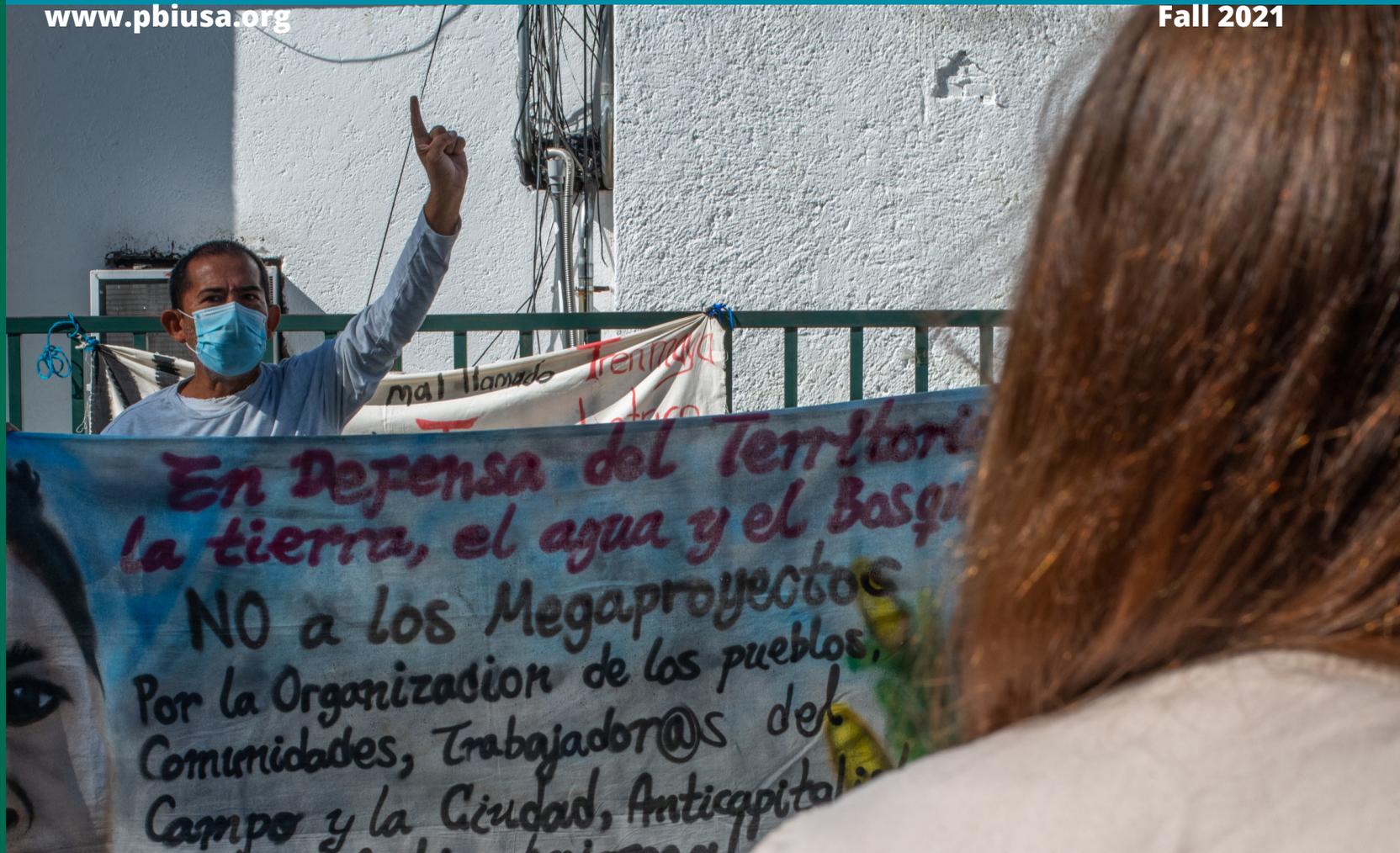


Peace in Action

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About PBI-USA

Peace Brigades International - USA

PBI was founded in 1981 with the mandate to create space for peace and protect human rights. PBI has a horizontal, international structure with an office in Brussels, international committees, seven field projects, and over a dozen country groups, including PBI-USA. The work of PBI-USA is made possible through the efforts of a small staff and a host of dedicated interns and volunteers, including PBI-USA's Board of Directors (the National Coordinating Committee or NCC).

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If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to support the work of PBI:

- Return the included envelope with a check or credit card information to the address below; or
- Go to www.pbiousa.org and click on "Donate to PBI-USA" to donate online; or
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PBI-USA
P.O. Box 75880
Washington, DC 20013

Thank you for standing with us alongside human rights defenders at risk.

Join our Team!

Do you have 5 hours per month to dedicate to international peace and solidarity? PBI-USA would love for you to join our board (the NCC). You can express your interest in joining the NCC by calling or emailing Finance and Operations Director, Amelia Parker, at amelia@pbiousa.org or 202-232-0142.

2021



We are hugely proud of our movement and what we have achieved alongside human rights defenders over the past 40 years. We will continue to stand beside them until their right to defend human rights is fully respected and guaranteed.

About PBI-USA

40 years ago, in 1981, a group of international activists came together to create a movement for peace, solidarity and non-violent action. While our core mission remains the same, we have adapted our tactics to ensure defenders are protected despite the rapidly changing global context and ever-evolving risks and threats they face. 40 years on, PBI remains convinced of the vital role human rights defenders play in strengthening democracy, upholding the rule of law, and protecting our shared environment. Together, through their protection, we can create a more peaceful and just world.

2021 Is PBI's 40th year anniversary!

In 2021 we take stock of our achievements, and more importantly those of the brave individuals and organizations we have stood beside during their struggle to defend human rights over the past 40 years. The world has changed drastically, and many positive steps have been taken towards the progressive fulfillment of human rights. However, continued attacks and threats against human rights defenders, as well as increased digital attacks, criminalization and the persecution of environmental defenders, and subsequent demand for PBI's presence in different parts of the world, indicates that there is still a long way to go.

Read more about the work of PBI and the groups and individuals we accompany in the project updates in the next pages. For more information, please visit pbiousa.org.



PBI-Honduras

Photo: PBI-Honduras accompanying COPINH In 2020 at Rio Blanco. © PBI Honduras

The humanitarian crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and worsened by hurricanes Eta and Iota took a heavy toll on Honduras. With the majority of its citizens living in rural areas, and with a marked inequality in land ownership, the defense of land, territory, and the environment is key within the current context. Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the hurricanes, 10 volunteers accompanied human rights defenders in 2020 and 2021 ranging from LGBTQI activists to indigenous land and territory defenders.

Since March of last year, human rights defenders and journalists have seen their freedom of movement increasingly restricted as a result of the suspension of constitutional guarantees. Due to the fact that human rights defenders lack inclusion in the exceptions to the lockdown proposed by the government, they have faced many obstacles to the verification of their wellbeing and the human rights situation in the country and the undertaking of their important role in the management of the crisis in their communities.

Under this context, PBI maintained its presence in Honduras throughout 2021, seeking new ways to open spaces so that human rights defenders and their organizations could continue fighting for human rights, land, and territory. Throughout the year, PBI was present alongside human rights defenders, even if only virtually, on more than 174 occasions. Accompaniments, observations, phone and video calls, and PBI's constant monitoring helped the PBI-Honduras team feel closer despite the distance and lockdown.

PBI-Honduras strengthened their political accompaniment and advocacy work. In 2020, they undertook 63 actions with the international community, diplomatic corps, and international organizations, and 43 actions with national authorities. The increased number of criminalization processes, the lack of peasant-focused agricultural policies, and attacks against human rights defenders were some of the topics they addressed in these spaces. To contribute to the security of the accompanied organizations, PBI-Honduras carried out at least 21 actions to build capacity, protection, and spaces for psychosocial support.

In 2021, PBI-Honduras accompanied the Arcoiris Association, the Honduras LGBTQI organization, journalists, including Dina Meza, and organizations defending land rights, including the Honduran Center for the Promotion of Community Development (CEHPRODEC), and the National Union of Rural Workers (CNTC), and the Lenca Indigenous organization Civil Council of Grassroots and Indigenous Organizations In Honduras (COPINH).

For more information, please visit pbi-honduras.org.



PBI-Guatemala

Photo: PBI-Guatemala accompanying International Women's Day march in Guatemala City, March 2020. © PBI Guatemala

Around 16 murders take place every day in Guatemala, and with around 98% impunity, the vast majority go unpunished. Human rights defenders working to secure respect for human rights and accountability for past crimes are particularly at risk in this climate, as are those resisting mining and other large-scale development projects in rural areas.

In 2021, PBI continued to accompany members of the CCDA in their goals to unite indigenous and peasant organizations to address agrarian conflicts in Guatemala. PBI also accompanied several organizations namely the Human Rights Law Firm (BJDH), the Union of Peasant Organizations (UVOC), the Peaceful Resistance of La Puya, and the Peaceful Resistance Cahabón.

In April 1982, during the internal armed conflict (IAC), the population of the village of Los Josefinos (Petén) was the victim of a massacre perpetrated by the Guatemalan army. 39 years later, following a long struggle for justice by survivors of this horrific act, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) held a virtual hearing to review the case between February 17 and 18, 2021. PBI accompanied the Association of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared of Guatemala (FAMDEGUA) in the transfer of witnesses during the hearing.

On July 30, 2020, the Guatemalan government repealed the governmental agreements which created the Secretariat for Peace (SEPAZ), the National Reparations Program (PNR), the Secretariat for Agrarian Affairs (SAA), and the Presidential Commission for the Coordination of the Executive's Human Rights Policy (COPREDEH). PBI-Guatemala has expressed concern over the impact that the closure of the Peace Institutions is having on the Guatemalan State's commitment to the Peace Accords.

For more information, please visit pbi-guatemala.org.



Photo: New field volunteers to the PBI Colombia project 2021. © PBI Colombia

2020 and 2021 were marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which in Colombia resulted in harsh mobility restrictions for most of those years. This generated greater defenselessness for those people, organizations, and communities that carry out the work in defense of human rights, especially in the territories due to isolation and lack of access to prevention and protection measures. This lack of protection led to an increase in human rights violations in Colombia. In 2020, the violence claimed the lives of 292 people. According to Indepaz, 310 leaders were assassinated in Colombia in 2020.

This situation of mobility restrictions and increased violence against defenders forced PBI to consider new work methodologies in a significant reduction in human resources. The outbreak of the pandemic made half of the volunteers in Colombia choose to return to their countries of origin. However, thanks to a quick and coordinated reaction with the accompanied organizations, it was possible to adapt our accompaniment to the new needs of the context.

By strengthening the political and psychosocial accompaniment, PBI-Colombia was able to counteract the impossibility of physically accompanying for six months. They managed to maintain the same number of meetings with the Diplomatic Corps in Colombia, while increasing those with Colombian authorities and institutions outside the country by 36% and 34% respectively.

Finally, the area of Support for the Reconstruction of the Social Fabric used telematic tools to carry out 56% more workshops than in 2019, reinforcing support in digital security through external collaborations. These figures indicate that, despite a hyper-restrictive context, and even with PBI-Colombia's human resources depleted, PBI-Colombia had a great capacity to adapt in this difficult period. The agile management and commitment of its team, as well as the identification of virtual protection opportunities, allowed PBI-Colombia to continue their work optimally and start 2021 with their capabilities at full capacity.

In 2021, PBI-Colombia accompanied several organizations and individuals including, the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (J&P), the Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights (CREDHOS), the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado, and more. PBI-Colombia also accompanied several judicial processes for the killings of protesters by members of the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad (ESMAD).

For more information, please visit pbicolombia.org.



Photo: Accompanying the International Mission of Observation and Documentation of the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca © PBI Mexico

In Mexico, during the health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic, while there were some advances, PBI-Mexico also noted a series of worrying setbacks. PBI-Mexico recognizes that important actions were taken to attempt to resolve the serious issue of people who have been forcibly disappeared and are still yet to be located across Mexico. These include the recognition by the Mexican State of the competence of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the publication of the Standardised Protocol for Searching for Disappeared and Missing Persons, and the agreement to establish the Extraordinary Mechanism for Forensic Identification. It is also significant that the Escazú Agreement – the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean – was ratified, which will now allow the treaty to enter into force. This will promote the right to live in and protect a healthy environment; above all, it will make it incumbent on States to protect those who protect that healthy environment. On the other hand, despite organized civil-society groups warning the government of the importance of maintaining a human rights focus as it attends to the health crisis and implements its responses, the situation has been very complicated. With the government's austerity policy, 109 public trusts were cut, among them the Fund for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, as well as the Trust Fund for Help, Assistance, and Holistic Reparation. It is unclear what the plan is for institutions – like the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists or the Executive Commission for Attention to Victims– to continue with their mandates to protect human rights defenders and victims, given there has been no end to the violence against defenders.

According to a report on the situation of individuals defending human rights and freedom of expression in Mexico, between the beginning of the pandemic and October 2020, there were at least 18 killings of human rights defenders, including nine environmental defenders, as well as four journalists.

Amid all of this, and in a global pandemic, it has not been easy for PBI-Mexico to remain in the country. With a reduced physical presence and an increased digital presence, PBI-Mexico has managed to continue its work to open spaces for human rights defenders to continue their struggles.

For more information, please visit pbi-mexico.org.

PBI Special Projects: Kenya, Indonesia, Nepal, Nicaragua

PBI-Kenya



PBI Kenya began the year on a high note, by continuing to support the work of the defenders of the Social Justice Centres in Kenya through a new project titled 'Raising the voice, visibility, and effectiveness of the human rights movement in Kenya'. This follows after the successful completion of the pilot project 'Increased capacities, stronger networks'.

In March 2021, they held an internal project start-up with the PBI Kenya team and then a workshop with the members of the SJCWG from the eighteen social justice centers in Nairobi. They discussed the project's objectives and together went carefully through the project's planning, activities, and intended outcomes.

The members expressed optimism about the project and they look forward to building on the results of the pilot. As the country gears towards the 2022 general elections and with the ongoing constitutional review process, this project will also hope to contribute to preparing human rights defenders for the planned elections, especially in enhancing their safety and security.

Following extended discussions with civil society organizations and other stakeholders, PBI began a new Indonesia Project in 2014. The project aims to promote human rights in Indonesia through strengthening the capacities of human rights defenders in remote areas, with a focus on their ability to document human rights abuses, advocate to the Indonesian government and internationally, and build their personal security and protection networks.

The Indonesia Project also collaborates with national human rights organizations to organize shorter trainings on specific topics such as dealing with aggression, preparing organizational security codes of conduct, and monitoring security sector reforms in conflict zones.

From 1999-2011, Peace Brigades International provided protective accompaniment and participatory peace education to human rights defenders in Papua, Aceh, Flores, West Timor, and Jakarta.



PBI-Indonesia



PBI-Nepal

PBI opened its Nepal Project in 2006. Despite the signing of peace accords in the same year, and democratic elections in 2008, Nepal is still experiencing political violence, instability, poverty, inequality, and economic and energy crises.

During its years of operation, PBI Nepal developed NepalMonitor.org, a tool for the protection of human rights defenders that maps and forwards human rights and security reports to human rights defenders located close to where the incidents happen and allow them to submit reports through e-mail and text message.

As part of our ongoing commitment to raising awareness about and supporting the work of Nepali human rights defenders, we are cooperating with COCAP, a local organization, which will enable us to work in partnership with them to design an international advocacy strategy to complement the work of human rights defenders on the ground.

Since 2020, Peace Brigades International has begun a new project in Latin America, PBI Nicaragua in Costa Rica, that seeks to accompany Nicaraguans in exile. Since the social crisis of April 2018, over 100,000 Nicaraguans have been exiled from the country and Costa Rica has received 77,000 as refugees.

PBI Nicaragua in Costa Rica accompanies the farm workers' movement as well as women and youth in exile in Costa Rica through workshops that seek to respond to the psychosocial impacts of exile and provide protection, self-care, and organizational strengthening strategies. We maintain our peacebuilding focus through psychosocial and gender perspectives.



PBI-Nicaragua

The project, like all other PBI projects, accompanies human rights defenders, making use of all the tools available for safe communication that allow us to reach individual and collective groups of those in exile. Our commitment is day-to-day, presential, but currently also virtual.



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Your support is a critical part of our work to protect threatened human rights defenders and help create space for peace.

Together, we can provide life-giving support to communities and human rights defenders whose lives and work are threatened by violence because of the important work they do.

Visit [PBI-USA.org](https://www.pbi-usa.org) today to make a contribution and get involved.

Front Cover: PBI-Mexico accompanies members of FPDTA-MPT in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in August 2021.
Back Cover: PBI-Mexico accompanies Paso del Norte and families joined for justice and truth, Juarez City, Mexico, August 2021.