



“ International accompaniment is saving our lives ”

Benjamin Sierra

Nueva Esperanza Humanitarian Zone, Colombia



Annual Review 2019

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2019: A year of activism

“

Thanks to PBI's accompaniment, the threats against me have been greatly reduced. When people see you with PBI volunteers they think, he's not alone, he's accompanied, he's strong

DOMINGO VÁZQUEZ
Pelillo Negro community,
CCCND, Guatemala

”

2019 saw the growth of social movements across the world; from environmentalists to feminists, people from different countries, different ages and different world views actively made their voices heard and participated in the construction of dynamic democracies.

This wave of activism is an important reminder

of the power of collective action and conviction. Activism has, and continues to, shape the world; holding power to account, pushing for social change and denouncing rights violations. Activism has caused seismic shifts in discourse, changing people's perception and behaviour and forcing the creation of new laws and protections for the most vulnerable members of society.

Those who make their voices heard are activists, and activists are human rights defenders. Whether joining a mass protest, forcing governments to uphold their promises to decarbonise economies and defend natural resources, or bravely standing up to aggressors and denouncing sexual violence, these courageous people defend their own rights and in doing so, defend the rights of others, upholding justice and pushing for fairer societies.

Despite its importance, activism comes at a price. Standing up to power and questioning the status quo can be risky, especially in contexts of socio-political violence. PBI believes that international solidarity can lower these risks, raising the profile of defenders and

generating consciousness of the root causes of attacks they face. The more people involved in upholding human rights, the less risky the work becomes and the greater the achievements of the global social justice movements will be.

Activism will remain key to ensure that those in power respect the masses, make the changes necessary to protect our planet and create conditions of wellbeing for its inhabitants. For this activism to be successful, it must be supported by the solidarity of people across the world, and those on the frontline who make their voices heard and represent the rights of many must be protected.

This is PBI's model: encouraging global solidarity to support the defence of human rights. We constantly seek to adapt to the needs of defenders, evaluating our impact to ensure we respond appropriately to the challenging and changing global contexts. This approach has successfully protected activist, social leaders, lawyers, journalists and other human rights defenders around the world for nearly 40 years, thanks to the dedication and conviction of hundreds of volunteers.



2019 in numbers

“

**I'm sure that I'm
alive thanks to PBI's
accompaniment**

**BERENICE
CELEITA**
Nomadesc,
Colombia



”

“

**I'm thankful for PBI's support.
We cry with them, we laugh
with them, and they help to
settle our nerves**

DONALD HERNÁNDEZ
Honduran Centre for
Promotion of Community
Development

”

A key part of PBI's work is the facilitation of trainings and meetings between defenders so we can share best practices in terms of their protection and build strong national and international support networks. In 2019 PBI organised **403** capacity development activities, including the training of young women student activists in **Indonesia** on security strategies including risk assessments, threat reduction and mitigation and digital security. This work has helped to strengthen their movements by ensuring protection is a priority.

“

**This training was
important because in
my experience, women
activists in Papua
face higher risk
than men**

**GEMA
KONDONIP**
Participant

”



In **Germany** we organised an educational programme in schools to raise awareness about trans-phobia, drawing attention to the risk that defenders of the trans community live through, particularly in contexts such as **Honduras**. These programmes help to bring visibility to the plight of defenders across the world, helping build a new generation of human rights defenders.

PBI accompanies **51** organisations comprising of **1,360** individuals who defend the following rights:

Civil and political

52%



Gender and sexual

6%



Economic, social and cultural

12%



Land and environmental

30%



“

Since we have been accompanied by PBI we perceive less risk. Accompaniment has managed to lower the persecution we experience

LESBIA ARTOLA
CCDA – Las Verapaces, Guatemala

”

“

If we are alive it's thanks to PBI, who has accompanied us for years and has been with us in our most critical moments

CARLOS MORALES UVOC, Guatemala

”



Throughout 2019 PBI amplified the voices of human rights defenders, shedding light on their cases and the challenges that remain in terms of their protection through **429** communications activities including printed publications, social media activity, online newsletters, videos and press releases.



Maricela Vázquez from the Paso del Norte Human Rights Centre travelled from Chihuahua to Geneva to speak about grave human rights violations in the North of **Mexico**, including torture by state security forces and forced disappearance. She met with the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and made important connections with international lawyers which have assisted in strengthening the organisation's litigation strategies.



An important strategy that PBI uses to raise the profile of certain defenders and their cases are advocacy tours. In 2019, PBI organised **21** advocacy tours, including a tour for Ninfa Cruz to the **Netherlands**;

human rights defender from Colombia whose work seeks to reconstruct social fabric in areas affected by the armed conflict. The meetings reinforced the Dutch Government's commitment to protect defenders in

Colombia.

“

[We had an] important meeting with women human rights defenders from Colombia. Terrible to hear the risks they have to face as a result of their work

KIRSTEN VAN DEN HUL
Member of the Dutch Parliament, Dutch Labour Party (PvdA)

”

“

I'm very grateful to PBI for hosting me here in France. I really appreciate it because I'm a woman from Kibera, a woman that you couldn't believe she could one day take a flight and represent other people outside of her country

KATE WANGUI

Kenyan defender

”



“

PBI is an important partner for us and we recognise the great work they carry out

PETER DERREK HOF
Dutch Ambassador for Honduras in Costa Rica

”

Alongside these advocacy tours, PBI met with national and international authorities **721** times in 2019, held and participated in **311** events and provided physical accompaniment to human rights defenders across the world on **1107** occasions.

Meetings with authorities

139

Diplomatic Corps

445

Government authorities

135

Multilateral bodies

2

Political parties

Physical accompaniment activities

710

Accompaniments

44

Monitoring

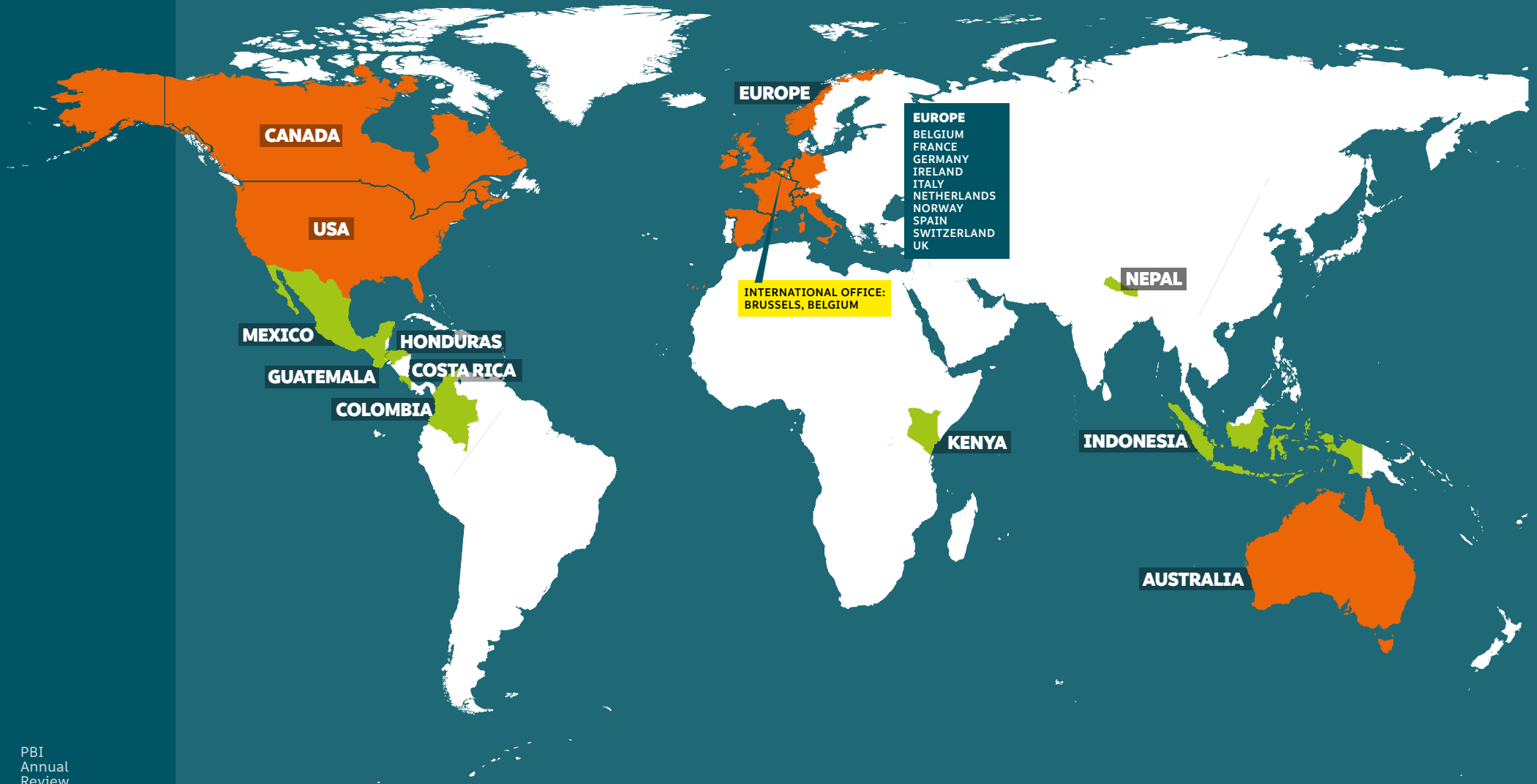
70

Observations

283

Office visiting

Where we work



PBI is a community of activists of different ages, nationalities and genders who push for better conditions for human rights defenders across the world. We are currently active in 21 countries, where dedicated staff members and volunteers carry out different activities to ensure human rights defenders at risk are protected and supported. These activities range from physical accompaniment to political advocacy, awareness raising, capacity development, psychosocial support, fundraising, and educational activities.

We currently work in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, UK, USA.

COLOMBIA

In 2019 PBI celebrated its 25th anniversary in Colombia, surrounded by friends and allies who expressed their huge appreciation for our work and dedication. Throughout the year 47 volunteers continued to accompany defenders from teams in Bogota, Barrancabermeja and Uraba in a tireless effort supporting peacebuilding and social justice across the country.

MEXICO

38 volunteers supported defenders across the country from the northern and southern teams. The project continued to raise the profile of at-risk defenders, whilst drawing national and international attention to the issues they work on including land and environmental rights, migration, forced disappearance, women's rights and gender-based violence.

GUATEMALA

In Guatemala, 22 volunteers stood beside those defending their territories against the imposition of large-scale economic projects. They have witnessed the criminalisation of these brave people and raised the issue with the Guatemalan government and diplomatic corps. Despite challenges, PBI continues to support movements of resistance against injustice.

HONDURAS

37 volunteers accompanied human rights defenders from different parts of the country, shedding light on the discrimination faced by the LGBTIQI community and the gendered nature of attacks that women defenders face. With violence increasing across Honduras, our presence has helped defenders feel supported despite the huge risk they are often exposed to.

NICARAGUA IN COSTA RICA

In 2019, PBI began a short-term project focused on providing psychosocial support and capacity development to defenders from Nicaragua who, due to the situation of serious risk in their home country, have been forced into exile in Costa Rica. The project hopes to support them to ensure they can safely return to Nicaragua, maintain their support networks and continue to defend human rights.

NEPAL

The Nepal Monitor is the most comprehensive violence monitoring and mapping system in Nepal. Five national staff and one international peace worker work to keep the database up to date and accurate as well as performing outreach, capacity building and protection activities with human rights defenders nationwide.

KENYA

In Kenya PBI supports a range of grassroots defenders across Nairobi's urban settlements, raising their profile in the national and international contexts. In 2019, defenders took part in advocacy tours to Europe to discuss the challenges they face defending human rights in Kenya.

INDONESIA

2019 was a tumultuous year for human rights defenders in Indonesia, with mass anti-racism protests and widespread demonstrations against revisions to the powers of the anti-corruption commission and the criminal code. Five volunteers supported defenders in the country through training workshops to ensure they could continue their work despite the context.

Supporting those protecting the planet



Verification mission in Pichima Quebrada, San Juan Choco, Colombia

Throughout 2019 PBI has accompanied environmental defenders and activists in different parts of the world as part of our commitment to protect the environment and prevent further climate breakdown. The people we accompany often put their own lives on the line to defend their land, territory and our shared environment

prevents, so they can continue with their important work despite the risk that their work implies.

This idea can and must be extended to environmental protection. Those who defend our water, mountains and ecosystems are at the frontline of environmental protection and must be able to continue their work in secure conditions. These are often

in steadfast conviction of their importance for humanity and for the health of our planet. Without these people who stand up to large economic interests, the unique threats that currently face the earth will cause drastic changes in climate and an increase in suffering for the most vulnerable.

PBI believes that a culture of respect for human rights can only be achieved when local human rights defenders are protected, and attacks against them



Embera leaders from the Alto Guayabal, Colombia, March 2019



Berta Cáceres case hearing, Honduras, October 2019

indigenous communities, whose right to free, prior and informed consultation before the instalment of an economic project is almost never respected. They are at risk due to the powerful economic and political interests that lie behind environmental destruction. In a system that favours profit over rights, economic models that encourage the forced displacement of those defending their resource-rich territories will continue and those at the forefront will remain at risk of violence.



In **Guatemala** we accompany the Coordinadora Central Campesina Ch'orti' Nuevo Día (CCCND), an organisation that supports communities in their peaceful resistance against mining project “Cantera Los Manantiales” owned by American Minerals. The mine was installed without respecting the right of the indigenous communities to be consulted and to give their free, prior, and informed consent.

Due to the severe attacks, we have increased our physical accompaniment and advocacy activities. In November 2019, the Guatemalan Supreme Court ordered the cancellation of the mining concession, a huge victory for the communities and the organisations supporting them.

“**PBI’s accompaniment has been fundamental in the strengthening of the communities and their security**

**NORMA SANCIR
CCCND, Guatemala**

”

In November 2019 **Colombian** environmental defenders Julia Figueroa (CCALCP) and Ivan Madero (CREDHOS) travelled to **Canada**. PBI organised meetings for them to express their serious concerns over the impacts of Canadian companies in their territories and the lack of adequate protection for environmental defenders. This has helped the defenders build useful contacts in Canada whose support can raise the political cost of any attack against them.



In November 2019 PBI was part of the coordinating group that organised a parallel session during the **United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights**. The session encouraged states to protect defenders who speak up against business-related human rights impacts.

“

Knowing PBI is looking out for me in prison dissuades those who want to cause me harm

**BERNARDO CAAL XOL
criminalised leader of the
Peaceful Resistance of
Cahabón, Guatemala**

”

Throughout 2019, The Alliance for Lawyers at Risk in the UK carried out over 20 interventions on behalf of defenders at the request of and supported by PBI. In April 2019, the Alliance wrote to the Ambassador for **Guatemala** in the UK expressing concern about the criminalisation of defenders in the country, specifically jailed indigenous leader Bernardo Caal Xol.

Solidarity in action

Meeting in the Albatros Library, Geneva, Switzerland, September 2019



Solidarity is strength in the connection and collaboration forged by the empathy we feel as interconnected individuals across the world. It is the opposite of individualist capitalism that has destroyed the social fabric and environment in so many countries and forces us to believe that we are independent of each other and that our success depends on others' failures. Solidarity is the hope that many of us seek in this concerning time

in world politics. It offers a sense of community, collective responsibility and possibility.

Solidarity helps amplify the voices of human rights defenders, providing them moral support in letting them know they are not alone. PBI embodies this solidarity in different ways with different actions across the world to ensure human rights defenders are given the attention and platform they deserve.

“

PBI is a light in the darkness that all human rights defenders are living through

CARLOS MORALES
Cahucopana,
Colombia

”



“

In the middle of the solitude that human rights defence work can bring, turning round in a hearing and seeing the green jacket and a volunteer's face you say to yourself, 'ok, it's fine, let's keep going, I'm not alone, we're not alone'

GERMAN ROMERO
DH Colombia

”



Accompanying Arcoiris in the Gay Pride march in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, August 2019

In November 2019, PBI organised a forum in **Spain** alongside ally organisation Mundubat with the participation of seven defenders from **Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Palestine and Sahara**. The defenders spoke about the defence of land and environmental rights, the right to defend from a feminist perspective, local level peace building, collective rights of afro-descant communities and the rights of the LGBTIQ community. This event helped raise the profile of the defenders and strengthened bonds of solidarity between them and those who attended the forum.

In July 2019, the **UK** Government released a policy paper outlining the importance of human rights defenders to the UK and the ways in which they would support them. The policy was developed in close consultation with several NGOs including PBI. The document has been made available online in all six UN languages, and sent to all posts in the UK diplomatic network for use in their work with defenders.

In December, PBI launched a campaign **#HRDsAtTheCentre** to ensure human rights defenders are at the centre of society, in the position they deserve given the fundamental role they play in the protection of human rights and the construction of fair and peaceful societies. As part of the campaign we published a short video, *The Defenders*, produced by Manu Valcarce.



In February 2019, Otilia Eugenio Manuel, indigenous Me'phaa defender from Guerrero, **Mexico**, was forcibly disappeared. Thanks to the huge national and international mobilisation, including actions on the ground in Mexico and a letter initiated by PBI and signed by influential organisations from the **USA** to the Mexican authorities, she was eventually found and freed.

“

Thanks PBI! I am sure that this result was in part, due to the international pressure. Thanks for the quick reaction

URSULA INDOCOCHEA
Due Process of
Law Foundation, USA

”

On the frontline defending rights

Human rights defenders continue to provide voices for the voiceless, pushing for social justice across the world. They often risk their lives to stand up for what they believe in, holding states to account and pushing for human rights to be respected, protected and fulfilled.

PBI believes that a world without human rights defenders is a world without human rights. We will continue to ensure that, despite the huge challenges that defenders face in the current political and economic contexts, they receive the recognition and support they deserve so they are able to continue their fundamental work in secure conditions.

“

PBI helps us to work with greater confidence. Through the collaboration with PBI we have seen a change in attitude in the authorities including greater openness

**ERNESTO PALENCIA
ASMAC, Mexico**

”

To celebrate World Press Freedom Day 2019, PBI organised an event in Tegucigalpa with the British Embassy for **Honduras** in Guatemala to raise awareness of the difficulties facing journalists in the country. We produced a [short film](#) for the event based on testimonies from at-risk journalists.

“

I thank PBI for accompanying me in my defence of human rights and my work in journalism. Without this accompaniment I think my name would be on a forgotten tomb

**DINA MEZA
Association for Democracy and Human Rights in Honduras (ASOPODEHU)**

”



Accompanying ASODEBICOQ, Honduras, May 2019



“

Since PBI arrived we feel we have international support. This is hugely helpful as the national press stigmatises us

SEBASTIÁN REYES
CNTC, Honduras

”

In **Honduras** we accompany the National Rural Workers Union (CNTC), an organisation that works on the fair distribution of land and territorial defence. Members of this organisation have been criminalised for their activism.

PBI has observed the hearings of these defenders, accused of crimes they have not committed. This presence has helped to build pressure and has led to the dropping of charges on many occasions. With the eyes of the international community closely on the justice system, irregularities are less likely to occur.

2019 saw a serious humanitarian crisis in the Bajo Atrato, **Colombia**, generating huge difficulty for indigenous communities. Accompanying the Inter-church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) who support the communities in their fight for justice and territorial defence, PBI has been present in the area to ensure local leaders and the population are protected.

Alongside physical presence, PBI organised meetings with the Diplomatic Corps in Bogota and a verification mission bringing several embassy representatives to the field in order to ensure international support. PBI's presence and advocacy have ensured that these communities are able to remain in their territories and submit testimonies to the Special Peace Jurisdiction (JEP) in their fight for justice.



In collaboration with the **UK** law firm Simmons & Simmons, PBI has designed a [toolbox for human rights defenders](#) which contains a range of legal fact sheets designed to inform and assist defenders in upholding the rule of law in the face of corporate aggression.

Our volunteers and supporters

PBI is a growing community of activists who are committed to social justice and peacebuilding. Without the dedication of hundreds of volunteers, this international solidarity would not be possible.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has collaborated with PBI, for your time, energy, enthusiasm, courage and steadfast solidarity with defenders at risk.

“

We see PBI volunteers as human rights defenders who accompany other defenders, they are an expression of international solidarity, they are expression of fraternity amongst peoples

ADRIANA ARBOLEDA
Corporación Jurídica y Libertad, Colombia

”

In 2019, **465** volunteers from **28** countries supported **1,360** human rights defenders at risk. **70%** (**324**) of those volunteers were women and the other **30%** (**141**) men



These volunteers came from:

Argentina **Australia** **Belgium**
Bolivia **Brazil** **Canada** **Chile**
China **Colombia** **France** **Germany**
Guatemala **Indonesia** **Ireland**
Italy **Kenya** **Mexico** **Netherlands**
Paraguay **Peru** **Russia** **Spain**
Switzerland **Thailand** **UK**
USA **Venezuela**



Our volunteers not only accompany defenders in the field, but also help to raise awareness of their risk when they return home. In December, two former PBI volunteers and a Kenyan activist gave two school workshops in Bulle, **Switzerland** on International Human Rights Day, as part of a human rights awareness morning for the students.

Financial summary

We would like to thank the many organisations and individuals who made generous contributions to our work throughout the year.

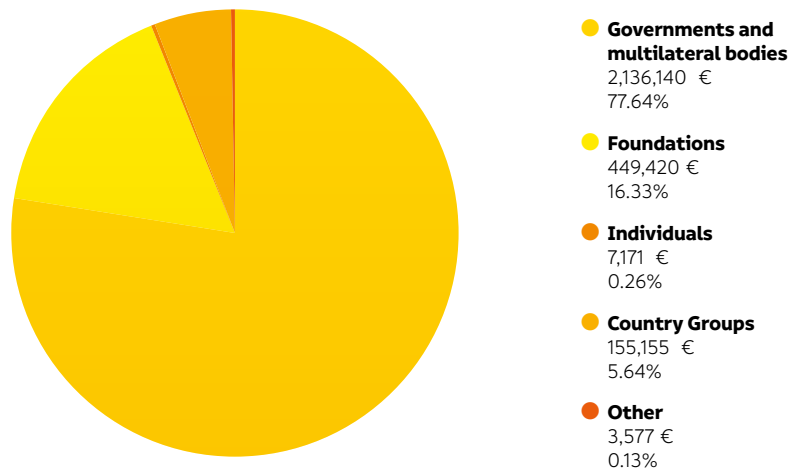
Who funds PBI?

In order to protect human rights defenders, we rely on the support of individuals, trusts, foundations and religious groups as well as governments and other multilateral funders.

Most of our income from governments and foundations is raised by country groups with project support. Country

groups also work closely with our committed individual donors in Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.

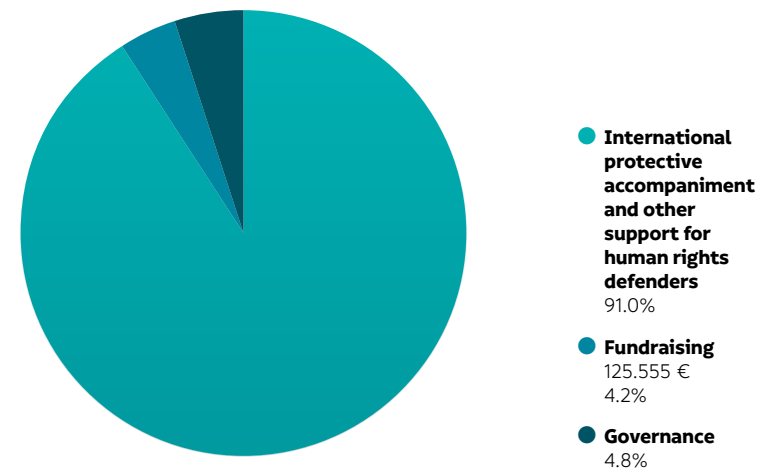
Total income in 2019*
2,751,462 €



How we spend your money

From every €1 you give us we spend 91 cents protecting defenders and 4.8 cents on ensuring best practice in organisational governance is followed in line with PBI's principles of non-hierarchy and consensus decision making. The remaining 4.2 cents is used to raise the next €1.

Total Expenditure in 2019*
2,814,664 €



*All figures are in EURO and subject to final audit. This financial analysis does not include the accounts of PBI country groups which are separate legal entities

Donors

Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament (ACCD)

Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación para el Desarrollo (AExCID)

Ajuntament de València (País Valencià)

Ajuntament de Vila-real (País Valencià)

Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden

Ayuntamiento de Alicante (País Valencià)

Ayuntamiento de Barcelona

Ayuntamiento de Castellón (País Valencià)

Ayuntamiento de Donosti

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

Ayuntamiento de Pamplona

Ayuntamiento de Santander

Ayuntamiento de Torrelavega

Ayuntamiento de Valladolid

Basauriko Udala (Ayuntamiento de Basauri)

Basilian Human Development Fund

Brot für die Welt

Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben

Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

Canadian Local Initiative Fund in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua

Christian Aid

Czech Republic Embassy in Mexico

Diputació de Barcelona (DIBA)

Diputación de Córdoba

Donostiako Udala (Ayuntamiento de San Sebastián)

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Engagement Global – Förderprogramm für Entwicklungspolitische Bildung

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

Evangelische Kirche Deutschland

Fédération Vaudoise de Coopération (FEDEVACO)

Ferster Stiftung

Fondation Smartpeace

Fonds de solidarité du Barreau de Paris

Fonds pour le développement de la vie associative (FDVA)

Fribourg-Solidaire

Garapenerako Lankidetzaren Euskal Agentzia (Agencia Vasca de Cooperación al Desarrollo)

Gemeente Utrecht

Generalitat Valenciana

Gezamenlijke religieuzen in Nederland via KNR – Projecten in Nederland (KNR PIN)

Gipuzkoako Foru Aldundia (Diputación de Guipúzcoa)

Gobierno de Cantabria

Gobierno de Navarra-Mugarik Gabe

Haëlla Stichting

Huisman Vredesfonds

ICCO Cooperation

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Zivik – zivile Konfliktbearbeitung)

Katholischer Fonds

Kinder- und Jugendhilfeplan des Bundes

Kirchgemeinde Wallisellen

Kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst

Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law – Knowledge Management Fund

LUSH Charity Pot

Mairie de Paris

Matrix Chambers

Maya Behn-Eschenburg Stiftung

Misereor

National Union of Public and General Employee (NUPGE)

Non Violence XXI

Norddeutsche Stiftung für Entwicklung

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Open Society Foundation

Oxfam

Oxfam Solidarité-PBI Belgium

Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Foundation

Secours Catholique – Caritas France

“

Thanks to PBI's work, we persist and hope that new generations can continue to promote and defend human rights

DANILO RUEDA
Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, Colombia

”

Service de la Solidarité International (SSI)

Sisters of Saint Francis Philadelphia

The Netherlands Embassy in Costa Rica

Trocaire

Unifor

Ziviler Friedensdienst (ZFD) // Civil Peace Service

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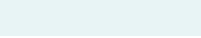
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“

PBI has been able to train the human rights defenders on digital security, wellness and connecting them to empowering opportunities to grow as grassroots defenders

SAMUEL KIRIRO

Ghetto Foundation, Kenya

”



Peace Brigades International

Promoting nonviolence
and protecting
human rights
since 1981

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