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Fall 2020

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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).

Staff:

Jorge Rodriguez-Larrain
Director of Grassroots
Fundraising and Communications

Amelia Parker
Finance and Operations
Director

Pat Davis
Advocacy Director

National Coordinating Committee (NCC):

Faith Garlington
San Jose, CA

Andrew Miller
Washington, DC

Dr. Janet Powers
Gettysburg, PA

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
- Call us and make a credit or debit card donation by phone (202-232-0142)

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.



Photo: Pat Davis, PBI's Advocacy Director, Lena Weber, PBI-Mexico Project Advocacy Coordinator, and Javier Martinez, Casa del Migrante de Saltillo.

About PBI-USA

In 2020, PBI-USA continued to support PBI projects in Mexico, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Kenya, Indonesia, and Nepal with advocacy support focused on Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. In March 2020, PBI-USA hosted an advocacy tour for Casa del Migrante de Saltillo accompanied by PBI-Mexico Project Advocacy Coordinator, Lena Weber, and PBI's Advocacy Director in DC, Pat Davis.

The delegation planned on visiting six cities in the United States and Canada, meeting with local and federal authorities and advocacy groups to discuss immigration policy, the challenges that migrants and human rights defenders face, and to help strengthen the international support network for migrants. Unfortunately, the tour had to be cut short before it was able to visit Canada due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased travel restrictions.

PBI is turning 40. Let's celebrate it together!

2020 presented us with many challenges, that we are overcoming together. Looking ahead, 2021 is an important year for PBI, because it is our 40th year anniversary. We have many activities planned to celebrate this important milestone in our history together! Stay tuned for more updates in the coming months.

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: National Union of Rural Workers (CNTC). The CNTC, is a small-scale farming and trade union organization, which fights for the distribution of land. PBI-Honduras has been accompanying CNTC since May 2018. Photo by PBI-Honduras.

"I thank PBI for accompanying me in the defense of human rights and the exercise of journalism. Without this accompaniment, I think my name would be on a forgotten gravestone". With these words, Dina Meza, journalist and director of the Association for Democracy and Human Rights in Honduras (ASOPODEHU) sums up the presence of PBI in the Central American country since its arrival in 2013.

During these seven years, the Peace Brigades International Project in Honduras has worked to open spaces to allow human rights defenders and their organizations to continue fighting for human rights, land and territory, and of course, for life. To this end, the PBI field team has been present alongside human rights defenders on at least 311 occasions through accompaniments, observations, and office visits, which aim to bring visibility to their human rights work and dissuade possible attacks.

In 2019, PBI-Honduras held 46 meetings with national authorities and 56 with international authorities and the diplomatic corps. In these meetings, PBI representatives expressed their concerns over violations of human rights and defenders' need for protection. They also held 75 events to strengthen the security and protective capacities of national organizations.

In 2019, PBI-Honduras expressed their grave concern over the precarious situation of trans women and the murder of human rights defender and Arcoiris Association member, Bessy Ferrera. This situation led them to launch two alerts on the alarming increase in attacks against trans women that has continued into 2020. So far this year, six LGBTQI+ persons have been murdered in Honduras.

In 2019, 8 human rights defenders had the opportunity to travel to the United States and Europe to share their perspectives on the situation in Honduras, and that of their organizations, with the support of PBI. This tour allowed the defenders to bring attention to the central role that women play in the defense of land, territory and the environment, and the specific risks they face as women. They also spoke to the need for differential protection mechanisms from the Honduran State. PBI Honduras reflected this situation in their contribution to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which they presented in September 2019.

The human rights situation in Honduras has also reached the wider world thanks to dozens of communications and advocacy actions undertaken in 2019. All these activities were made possible by the commitment of the 15 volunteers who passed through the field team in 2019, as well as the various PBI Country Groups in Europe, Australia, the United States and Canada, as well as all the volunteers and donors who, from outside Honduras, contributed to the project's day-to-day work.



Photo: by PBI-Guatemala accompanying the Peaceful Resistance of Olopa, Chiquimula, member of the accompanied organization 'New Day' Ch'orti' Campesino Central, Guatemala City, August 2019. Photo by PBI-Guatemala.

Peace Brigades International Project in Guatemala accompanies organizations and social movements who are fighting, through peaceful means, against impunity, for access to land and in defense of the territory. The groups that PBI-Guatemala currently accompanies Includes: Cunén Communities' Council (CCC), Chicoyogüito Neighborhood Association of Alta Verapaz (AVECHAV), Chinautla Multisector, Edgar Pérez Archila and the Human Rights Lawyer's Office, 'New Day' Ch'orti' Campesino Central Coordinator, the Peaceful Resistance Cahabón, the Peaceful Resistance La Laguna, the Peaceful Resistance La Puya, TZ'KAT Network of Ancestral Healers of Community Feminism from Iximulew, and the Union of Campesino Organizations for the Verapaces (UVOC).

Last year, PBI-Guatemala provided support to 13 organizations and social movements (227 people: 148 men and 79 women). They also provided International observation on 14 different occasions for a variety of activities (hearings, demonstrations, press conferences, etc.) requested by various social organizations. These included observation of the security situation during the Association of University Students (AEU) elections at the University of San Carlos, Guatemala (USAC), and observation at the Constitutional Court (CC) during the public hearing in the appeal of the injunction given by the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) to the Q'eqchi' communities impacted by the Renace Hydroelectric Plant, where the communities requested that the CC uphold the injunction and suspend the activities of this hydroelectric plant.

PBI-Guatemala has been accompanying the Peaceful Resistance of La Laguna since 2015 after members suffered attacks and threats. Members of the Peaceful Resistance have said: "PBI's accompaniment supports us in our actions. The authorities take care to attend our requests, with the accompaniment of PBI we feel safer. We could approach the businessmen who were blocking our access to the river."

PBI-Guatemala is continuously engaged in monitoring the situation of human rights defenders through observation, specific accompaniments and dissemination of information, paying special attention to women human rights defenders in high-risk situations.

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



PBI-Colombia

Photo: The Communications team accompanies the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado in an act of memory commemorating 15 years since the Mulatos and La Resbalosa Massacres. Photo by PBI-Colombia.

Four years after the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Peace Brigades International Project in Colombia has analyzed the agreement's impact on the defense of human rights and our work in the country. Far from seeing an improvement in the guarantees to defend human rights, the numbers of attacks against defenders have progressively increased.

Colombia continues to be the world's most dangerous country for human rights defenders. According to local NGO Indepaz, more than 1,000 social leaders and human rights defenders have been murdered since the signature of the peace accord. Threats towards defenders have sky rocketed, with high-levels of Impunity. PBI's work in Colombia continues to be critical to ensure the protection of human rights defenders.

In response to the deteriorating security situation faced by human rights defenders, PBI-Colombia has strengthened its actions to protect and promote the mission of 18 organizations and communities, using physical, political, and psycho-social accompaniment. In 2019, PBI celebrated 25 years of International accompaniment in Colombia. 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, until physical accompaniment had to be halted due to COVID-19 quarantine travel restrictions.

After a five month quarantine, PBI-Colombia returned to the field accompanying the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission. The accompaniment was a 15 day journey following the footprints of memory and opening space for peasant, Afro-descendant, and indigenous communities of Urabá to meet with Truth Commissioner Patricia Tobón.

On 15 August, after weeks on adapting biosafety protocols and waiting for the specific permits to be authorized, a caravan of six vehicles reached the rural community of Caracolón, just a few kilometers from Dabeiba, Antioquia. These cars transported Truth Commissioner Patricia Tobón, human rights defender and national JyP coordinator, Danilo Rueda, and a multidisciplinary team from the same NGO. The NGO has been anxious to restart its work, focused on legal accompaniment, awareness raising, and providing support to the communities they have been accompanying for over 20 years.

For more information, please visit pbicolombia.org.



PBI-Mexico

Photo: Teresa Santiago, Land and Territory Defender of the San Mateo Tlacotepec Community, and a member of PBI-Mexico, during the filming of the documentary The Blood of the Earth, Puebla, 2019. Photo by PBI-Mexico.

This year, 2020, Peace Brigades International celebrates 20 years of working in Mexico. It has been a long trajectory, full of both successes and dark moments shared with Mexican human rights defenders (HRDs). Over the course of these two decades, PBI-Mexico has worked to open spaces so human rights defenders can continue their campaigns. They have been by the side of many human rights defenders and advocates, women and men, who have contributed to the development and strengthening of international accompaniment as a tool for protecting human rights.

PBI-Mexico works in providing physical presence, building advocacy and support networks, raising awareness, and capacity development. In 2019, PBI Mexico provided international accompaniment to 13 organizations and two civil society coordination spaces in Chihuahua, Coahuila, Guerrero, Oaxaca and Mexico City. PBI's accompaniment –which includes physical presence; national and international advocacy; awareness raising; training in security, protection, and the creation and maintenance of support networks; facilitating spaces for dialogue between HRDs and key actors in their protection – benefits more than 70 Mexico civil-society organizations and 396 HRDs, of whom more than 60% are women human rights defenders.

The situation of human rights in Mexico has changed since PBI first arrived. Now, Mexico relies on a stronger civil society. However, we have not stopped expressing our concern about the high levels of impunity and the public-security strategy based on militarizing the country. The threats and acts of aggression against defenders and journalists have not ceased. Especially during these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to protect the women and men who defend human rights continue to represent a challenge in Mexico.

In 2019, 38 volunteers supported social leaders and human rights defenders across Mexico from the northern and southern teams. PBI-Mexico continued to raise the profile of at-risk defenders, whilst drawing International attention to the Issues that they work on Including land and environmental rights, migration, forced disappearance, women's rights and gender-based violence.

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

PBI Special Projects: Kenya, Indonesia, Nepal, Nicaragua



In Kenya, PBI supports a range of grassroots defenders across Nairobi's urban settlements, raising their profile in the national and International contexts.

On April 2020, PBI-Kenya started the pilot project, 'Increased capacities, stronger networks' supporting Social Justice Center Working Group's members in Nairobi's urban settlements'.

The project draws on a close collaboration between the Social Justice Center Working Group and PBI Kenya and seeks to sustainably broaden or maintain the civic space and security for the Social Justice Centers. We seek to bring together members of the various Social Justice Centers in Nairobi through different activities, such as risk analysis, capacity building -with specific attention to holistic security management-, and joint and separate advocacy activities on the national and international level.

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 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.



This year, PBI-Indonesia implemented a successful PBI Language Buddies Program, and will be expanding the program by recruiting more volunteers. The program addresses a long-time request from PBI-Indonesia alumni to strengthen their English language skills. Given the importance of English at the international and regional levels in Asia, grassroots HRDs see it as an important skill they need to build their advocacy and protection networks. Volunteers get the opportunity to learn firsthand about the work of HRDs in Indonesia and support HRDs through language learning.



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.

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

As part of PBI's ongoing commitment to raising awareness and supporting the work of Nepali human rights defenders, we are cooperating with local organization, COCAP, to work in partnership with them to design an international advocacy strategy to complement the work of human rights defenders on the ground.

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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 & Back Cover Photos: Photos of PBI-Colombia's first accompaniment after 5-months of quarantine. The Urabá field team accompanied members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission collecting testimonies of victims with Commissioner Patricia Tobón of the Commission of the Truth.
Photos by PBI-Colombia.