



# Annual Report 2012

PBI Mexico March 2013

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PBI volunteers accompany Alba Cruz during a visit to Isthmus of Tehuantepec (Oaxaca) to verify the beginning of work of the wind farms company  
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# “Explore and adapt”

Globally, the keywords for PBI during the year 2012 were “Explore and adapt”. In various different countries, Peace Brigades International organised exploratory missions and extensive investigative processes in order to assess the organisation’s capability to assist human rights defenders (HRDs) and social activists in new circumstances; difficult circumstances, for which the current context does not facilitate the work of defenders, and requires PBI to adapt and improve protection methods. Kenya, Indonesia and Honduras are three countries in which exploratory work was performed. The missions were accomplished in a global context of financial crisis, an additional challenge that demanded considerable effort and great adaptive capacity from PBI and its members.

International dynamics were reflected in PBI’s work in Mexico. In 2011, the Project decided to adapt in response to changes in the national scenario, and to explore new locations where defenders could be supported. In 2012, the Mexico Project carried out an exploratory mission covering six states. Throughout this process, PBI team members organised more than 100 meetings with NGO representatives, scholars, authorities and members of the diplomatic corps, aiming to gain a deeper insight into the current human rights situation. As a result, PBI Mexico decided to assemble a new team in the state of Chihuahua in 2013, dedicated to human rights monitoring in the states of Chihuahua and Coahuila.

The Mexico Project’s objective is to respond to civil society petitions and contextual challenges, characterized by widespread violence and conflicts between criminal groups and the Mexican government, which continue to generate an appalling number of assassinations, disappearances and other crimes among the population of Mexico.<sup>1</sup> The use of militarization as a tactic to combat organized crime did not improve security; inversely, the deployment of the army and other public forces led to an alarming increase in human rights abuse, as documented by national and international organizations.<sup>2</sup> This situation directly affects the work of defenders and social activists that continue to face high risk situations in their pursuit of justice and the protection of human



**Presentation of the initiative for the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists  
© Mexican Senate**

rights.

On the other hand, 2012 has brought important achievements to the Mexico Project and to human rights organisations based in the country. Although there were threats made against accompanied HRDs, none of them were carried out and the organisations have been able to keep defending and promoting human rights. Additionally, Mexican civil society achieved a remarkable success: the creation of a Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. This along with the acknowledgement by President Felipe Calderon of the high risks faced by defenders after more than two years of dialogue between civil society and the government.

PBI accompanied this process by petition of the Civil Society Organizations Group (CSO Group). Supporting this initiative was a key point in our advocacy work, both in Mexico and abroad. PBI is pleased by the work of Mexican civil society and the authorities involved; this can be a ma-

jor step toward improving the situation of defenders at risk in Mexico. Enforcing and implementing this Mechanism is now of the greatest importance and supporting this objective is one of PBI’s major commitments for 2013.

Despite the challenges faced due to Europe’s financial crisis, last year the Mexico Project was able to increase its budget and perform all planned activities. In 2013 PBI Mexico will make every effort to continue opening new paths for peace and space for the work of defenders, to build support networks, assure protection and facilitate dialogue. The objective if this annual report is to present our work and achievements during 2012 and to challenge you to support our work for human rights. Your support is of great importance to us!

1 “Segob: 70 mil muertos con Calderón”, Proceso nr.1894, February 2013; “Mexico: Displacement due to criminal and communal violence”, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre – NRC, Geneva, November 2011; Report of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances: Mexico Mission, par. 20, Mexico, March 2012.

2 Amnesty International (AI): Known abusers, but victims ignored Torture and ill-treatment in Mexico (AMR 41/063/2012), October 2012; and Human Rights Watch: Neither safety nor rights: Executions, disappearances and torture in Mexico’s war against drug trafficking, November 2011.

# 2012: The end and beginning of a presidential mandate

The First day of December, 2012, marked an end to the six year mandate of Felipe Calderon and gave way to the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto. This change was not without controversy, 235 aggressions against human rights defenders were registered over the six years Calderon was in office.<sup>3</sup> Despite the existence of a Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, its implementation is still in process and the risks associated with the defence

to the "war against organized crime"<sup>6</sup> in its official speech, and has announced a new strategic plan for security,<sup>7</sup> according to scholars and civil society, its militarized security policy hasn't changed substantially, failing to decrease rates of violence.<sup>8</sup> The Peña Nieto administration owes a debt to defenders and to the thousands of victims left by the former administration. The Mexican state must investigate, prosecute, punish, repair damages and guarantee the right to justice, in order to

caused disputes between international corporations and indigenous or 'mestizo' rural communities across the country. Mexican civil society organizations have warned that "implementing development measures in the terms proposed by the government and multiparty organizations completely exclude any questions posed collectively by communities about "what we want to do and how we want to do it?" [...] Until [this question] is integrated, no full access to democracy and human rights will be achieved."<sup>9</sup> Currently, community and rural defenders that fight for the right to a free, previous and informed consultation and for protection of the environment, are exposed to a higher risk.<sup>10</sup>

Both of these issues highlight the role of non-governmental actors as the perpetrators of crimes against defenders, confirming a trend pointed out at the international level by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.<sup>11</sup> This situation has lead PBI to reflect on our protection model;<sup>12</sup> it is clear that the international legal framework currently centres on the responsibility of the State, as the major subject and actor of international law. The Mexican state must prevent, protect and react to aggressions against defenders whether perpetrated by its own agents or others;<sup>13</sup> especially because the risk situation faced by defenders is known and has been denounced by national organizations and international organisms.<sup>14</sup> Whether the next six years will bring the promised protection to human rights defenders remains to be seen. Mexico needs their effort more than ever.



**"Don't Shoot"** during an action of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity © PBI Mexico

of human rights have far from decreased. Beyond the statistics, two issues have been especially relevant for defenders in the past six years and represent major challenges for the new government: widespread violence in the country and territory disputes over natural resources.

Since 2006, Mexico has faced an alarming rate of violence, crime and human rights abuse that remain in impunity. In 2009, PBI Mexico warned about the effects of the national security strategy and the "war" on organized crime on the work of Mexican defenders.<sup>4</sup> PBI observed with concern that the increased violence, militarization and the proliferation of armed actors and the confusion generated when trying to identify responsible parties had caused a rise in risk for defenders. Three years have passed, and at the closure of Calderon's mandate the numbers range from 40,000 to 70,000 assassinations, 140,000 displaced people and more than 3,000 forced disappearances.<sup>5</sup> Although the new government limited references

prevent recurrence of such cases in the future.

There is also a growing concern about conflicts, and the violation of individual rights or collective agreements perpetrated by multinational companies with acquiescence of the Mexican state. Development projects (or mega projects) have

3 Urgent Action for Human Rights Defenders (ACUDDEH): Informe de violaciones de derechos humanos cometidas contra las personas defensoras de los derechos humanos en el periodo 2011 – Primer trimestre de 2012, page 47, Mexico, 2012.

4 PBI Mexico: "Human Rights Defenders in Mexico face drug trafficking", EPU: Mexico evaluation, pages 11-13, Bulletin 26, September 2009.

5 See note 1.

6 See also CHABAT, "La Violencia bajo la alfombra", El Universal, 14th January 2013.

7 "Anuncia EPN seis líneas de acción contra inseguridad", Animal Político, 18th December 2012.

8 CHABAT, see above note 6; CORTEZ, "¿Qué cambió?", El Nuevo Mexicano, 8th January 2013; "La violencia recorre de Norte a Sur al país, mientras la preocupación por la estrategia de EPN crece", Sin Embargo, 20th February 2013.

9 Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Centro Prodh): Transición traicionada: Los derechos humanos en México durante el sexenio 2006-2012, page 30, Mexico, 2013.

10 Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR): Second Report on the situation of Human Rights Defenders in America (OEA/Ser.L/V/II), Doc. 66, pages 136-146, 2011.

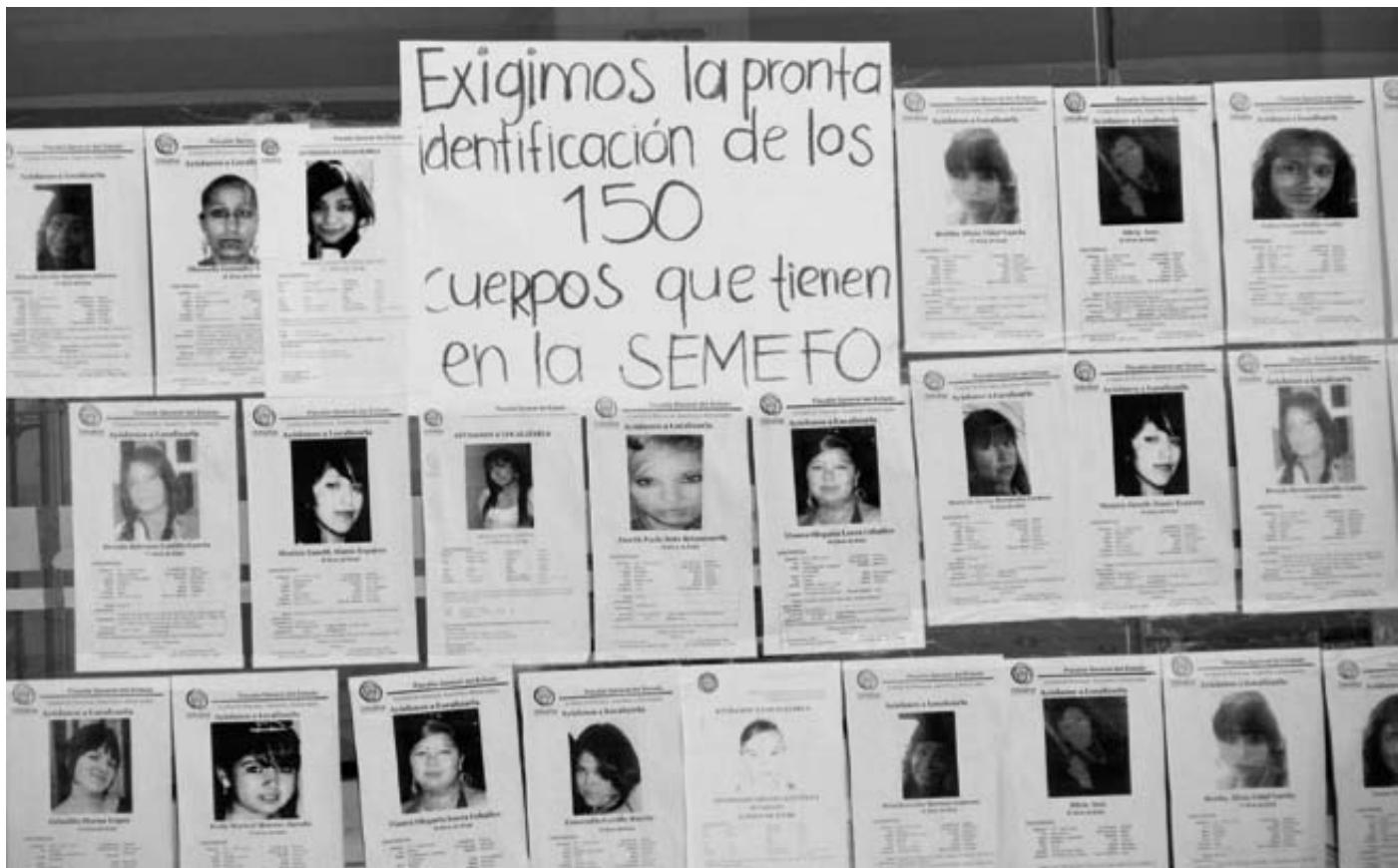
11 UN Human Rights Council: Especial Report on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekagya (A/HRC/13/22), page 39, 2009.

12 PBI: 30th Anniversary Conference on Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Conference Report, pages 10-13, 2011.

13 UN General Assembly: Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (A/RES/53/144), art.12, 1999.

14 IACHR: see note 8; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mexico (OHCHR – Mexico): Informe sobre la situación de las y los defensores de derechos humanos en México: Defender los Derechos Humanos: Entre el Compromiso y el Riesgo, México, 2009, and Updated version in 2010, page 9, AI: Exigiendo Justicia y Dignidad: defensores y defensoras de los derechos humanos en México (AMR 41/032/2009), Madrid, 2010.

# Mission in Mexico



**Posters of Disappeared People at the entrance of the Special Prosecutor's Office in the state of Chihuahua © PBI Mexico**

During 2012, PBI México invested many of its resources and energy in an exploratory mission in the country. The activities carried out in this exploratory on one hand represent follow up to the 2011 evaluation, which indicated that PBI Mexico could have a greater impact in new areas, where international attention has, up until now, been limited. On the other hand, the exploratory was carried out in response to an increase in petitions from organizations from states where PBI had not previously had a presence in the field. The exploratory mission was the expression of PBI's effort to adjust to recent changes in the political context of Mexico.

In 2012, PBI Mexico conducted a thorough analysis of the situation of human rights defenders in the Republic and investigated the viability of opening a new team. Following a period of documentation and interviews with NGOs, human rights organisms, authorities and academics, PBI selected six states on which to center our analysis, based on the following criteria:

- The existence of a civil society with

human rights organizations at risk due to their work in favour of human rights and social justice.

- That PBI had received petitions from organizations from those states.
- That the issues covered by these organizations be relevant regionally/nationally.
- That the tools at PBI's disposal be useful in empowering local organizations.
- That PBI's work in the region could support structural changes and facilitate dialogue between civil society, authorities and international actors.
- That local authorities be open to dialogue with PBI.
- That there be adequate security conditions for our work in the region.

After this initial phase, the exploratory team carried out five visits to six states (Coahuila, Chihuahua, Baja California, Mexico State, Puebla and Tlaxcala). PBI

held meetings with civil society organisations and local authorities in order to fully understand the contexts in which human rights defence is carried out and thus further improve PBI's action in these states. We would like to thank those involved for granting us their time, trust and courage to pursue their important work, no matter the risks.

In all six states, PBI observed the impact of the "war against organised crime" and of militarization on the work of defenders, and on the general population. Although each state holds its own idiosyncrasies, the Project observed some common aspects between them; excessive use of force, forced disappearances, conflicts and human rights abuses related to natural resources exploitation, migration, environmental degradation, the omnipresent violence against women, and the precarious situation of labour and social rights. PBI compiled information gathered during the exploratory mission, with the aim of producing a document about the work of Mexico's defenders and the context in which they work. This report will

## Where has PBI worked in 2012



be published in 2013 and also includes the experiences of Oaxaca and Guerrero regions, where PBI has traditionally operated.

As a result of the exploratory mission, PBI decided to start a regional team operating in the states of Chihuahua and Coahuila. 19% of denounced human rights violations committed against defenders in Mexico during 2011 occurred in Chihuahua, revealing it to be the most dangerous Mexican state for human rights defenders.<sup>15</sup> Chihuahua and Coahuila are also amongst the states with the highest rates of militarization and violence in the country. Defenders in both regions are exposed daily to severe risks, especially when addressing issues such as excessive use of force, disappearances or migrants' rights.

Organisations from both states asserted that they had suffered defamation, ha-

rassment, threats and aggressions related to their work. Data collected during the exploratory mission indicates that most human rights issues in the region reflect problems that exist on a national level. Organisations in Chihuahua and Coahuila also benefit from little external support. PBI considers monitoring and international accompaniment of utmost importance in supporting local organisations in the defence of human rights; these actions also positively affect the recognition of organisations and the deterrence of defamation, harassment, threats and aggressions against defenders.

<sup>15</sup> ACUDEH: Informe de violaciones de derechos humanos cometidas contra las personas defensoras de los derechos humanos en el periodo 2011 – Primer trimestre de 2011, page 47, Mexico, 2012.

# Advances and set-backs in the protection of Guerrero's human rights defenders.

In 2012, the federal government extended the "Guerrero Seguro" Operation to additional regions. The operation coordinates the actions of Federal Police, Navy and Mexican Army as well as state and city police corporations, tasked as a group with fighting violence and protecting public security in this state since October 2011.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, security in regions like the Costa Grande of Guerrero has worsened, and disputes involving different organised crime groups have forcibly displaced the population. This was among the contexts that obstructed the work of human rights organisations. The intervention of the Mexican Army in public security tasks has been greatly criticized by civil society organisations, namely the "Tlachinollan" Human Rights Centre, an organisation accompanied by PBI since 2003.

## Vidulfo Rosales forced to leave the country

Guerrero continued to be one of the most dangerous states for the defence of human rights, and aggressions continued to occur during 2012. In the 4th of May, Vidulfo Rosales Sierra, Legal Coordinator of Tlachinollan and beneficiary of provisional measures granted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, received an anonymous death threat in connection to cases of abuses committed by the military and police.<sup>17</sup> The defender was consequently forced to leave the country in order to protect his physical integrity. Tlachinollan demanded that the government of Guerrero guarantee the protection of its members and requested that PBI and other national and international organizations provide accompaniment at the time of Rosales Sierra's return in August. Despite the severity of these actions, threats and similar abuses towards human rights defenders remain in impunity.<sup>18</sup>

In February, members of the PBI team met the Governor from the State of Guerrero, Angel Aguirre, along with members of his cabinet; PBI conveyed deep concern about the security and integrity of defenders. Various issues were addressed, such as the arrest of indigenous leader Maximino Garcia Catarino (released in March 2012 after spending several months in prison), by members of the ministerial police, and the enforcement of protection measures granted by Inter-American Court to 107 people defending human rights in Guerrero.<sup>19</sup> PBI also asked that Aguirre make

public statement acknowledging the fundamental role of human rights defenders; this statement was made public a month later, during an act of recognition of Mexican state responsibility in the case of the indigenous me'phaa woman Ines Fernandez Ortega.

## Full compliance to Inter-American Court ruling

In 2012, PBI continued to lobby for full enforcement of the sentences issued by the Inter-American Court regarding cases of accompanied women defenders, both in meetings with federal and state government, and with written letters of concern promoting support actions abroad. The act of recognition, celebrated in March in Ayutla de los Libres (Costa Chica), was one of the most significant achievements of the year. PBI has accompanied Ines Fernandez and other members of the Me'phaa Indigenous People Organization (OPIM) since 2005, and was present at the official ceremony. Additionally, important progress was made in complying with the verdicts

concerning the cases of Ines Fernandez and Valentina Rosendo Cantu, who was awarded with the recognition in human rights Ponciano Arriaga Leija 2012. PBI will further pursue full compliance with decisions regarding both cases, including sanctions against the perpetrators, a review of military jurisdiction, and the creation of a trust funds that assures financial compensations to the indigenous activists and their families.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the forced disappearance of Rosendo Radilla, the Inter-American

Court held a hearing in the 22nd of June to oversee advances in compliance to the sentence; some progress was made throughout the year. Although it was not specifically stated in the courts ruling, the government began compensating the relatives of people disappeared during Mexico's "dirty war", many of whom are members of the Association of Relatives of the Detained, Disappeared, and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM), accompanied by PBI since 2003. Financial compensation and advances in the investigations such as the identifica-



From left to right: Ángel Aguirre Rivero, Governor of Guerrero; Alejandro Poiré, former Interior Minister; Inés Fernandez and Obtilia Eugenia Manuel during the act of state's recognition of responsibility  
© PBI Mexico

tion of military witnesses, as well as the planning of excavations in new sites, are a step forward; even so, the vice president of the AFADEM, Tita Radilla, claims that her struggle will continue until loved ones are found and the culprits are punished.<sup>21</sup>

16 "Refuerzan 700 federales operativo Guerrero Seguro", El Universal, 5th October 2012.

17 Red TdT: "Amenaza de muerte contra abogado de derechos humanos en Guerrero" (UA), 24th May 2012.

18 CSO: "El abogado Vidulfo Rosales regresa a México; demanda se garantice la seguridad de todas y todos los defensores de DH", Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (Cencos), 9th August 2012.

19 PBI Mexico: "Meeting with the office of the Governor of the state of Guerrero", PBI Mexico News, 13th February 2013.

20 Tlachinollan: "Two years after the ruling of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the cases of Inés Fernández Ortega and Valentina Rosendo Cantú, persists the impunity for the military", PBI Mexico News, 1st October 2012.

21 "No obstante indemnización, sigue la busqueda de desaparecidos: Radilla", La Jornada de Guerrero, 28th September 2012.

# CEREZO COMMITTEE MEXICO: 10 years of accompaniment

**"We believe the work of PBI as a whole enabled us to stay alive, offering us the opportunity to follow our mission."**

On the 13th of August, 2012 Cerezo Committee Mexico celebrated 11 years of existence, during 10 of which they were accompanied by PBI Mexico. Since the beginning of its work, the Committee has received 13 death threats and

urity advice PBI has also helped to disseminate the Committee's work, denounce their risk situation and give them legitimacy, both at the national and international level. Cerezo Committee stands as an example of how accompaniment and international support can help to strengthen the work of human rights defenders.

"From the moment they were accompanied by PBI, death threats against Francisco and Emiliana stopped. [...] The risk to which Committee members were exposed was reduced, creating the necessary conditions for their work to proceed, and ultimately, achieve Alejandro Cerezo's release in March of 2005".<sup>22</sup> The release of Alejandro Cerezo from prison was the starting point for the Committee to get involved in other cases of human rights abuse and later

on, to extend the scope of their activity to include providing security trainings to other organizations. Regarding security, in 2006 PBI contributed in training its members, "enabling risk assessments inside the Committee, but also teaching this methodology to other organisations and individuals who received threats. [...] This was the beginning of our empowerment to provide security trainings".

In 2010, Cerezo Committee launched the organisation Urgent Action for Human Rights Defenders (ACUDDEH), connected to Protection International (PI), and established security training as one of its main activities. The Cerezo Committee is one of the few local organisations that has developed expertise in providing security and protection training, and has provided support to grass roots social movements in particular. Between August 2011 and August 2012, both organisations carried out 63 training courses, half of which focused on security issues. They complement this work with valuable documentation activities. In June 2012, the organisation launched the 'Report on human rights abuses against human rights defenders during the period of 2011-first trimester of 2012'<sup>23</sup> by ACUDDEH.

"Over the years we also participated in international tours". At the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006, they travelled to Europe to raise awareness for their case,

the organisation's work and the threats and harassment they had endured: "It was fundamental that PBI could open doors for us this way, without their help it would have been impossible to, for instance, reach European governments. In 2008, another tour was completed with the help of PBI, this time with a little less contribution, as Cerezo Committee had further developed its own skills and resources". In 2012, activities with PI and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation were on the agenda, when the Committee travelled to Germany to receive the Aquisgrana International Peace Prize. This is a good example of how PBI facilitates processes and provides tools so that organisations come to develop their own support networks.

The Cerezo Committee succeeded in increasing the accompaniment of processes, empowering other organisations and defenders to carry out proper documentation of human rights abuse and build cases –for example, the documentation commission of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity. It has also created an educational section, two schools of human rights and training for popular educators. These activities reach approximately 800 people every year.

"PBI accompaniment has not only protected the members of the Cerezo Committee, it has also amplified its radius of action, which has permitted other defenders and victims [...] to also feel that they were effectively protected by the political weight that accompaniment generates.

In 2012, PBI continued to provide accompaniment to Cerezo Committee. Nevertheless, the work of the Committee was still being obstructed: in December, Alejandro Cerezo was unable to attend an event in Brussels due to a ban on flying over United States' airspace.<sup>24</sup> During 2013 PBI will continue to work against these kinds of limitations that hamper the work of this human rights defender and his organisation.

"In our perspective, the physical accompaniment, advocacy and empowerment provided by PBI in security issues, are crucial to our work. Without PBI's protection, it would be impossible to continue our work since a lot of time, human, and material resources would have to be spent just to reduce our risk".



**Antonio and Héctor Cerezo on the day of their release from prison, next to their sister Emiliana Cerezo; Pablo Alvarado (in the back) released three years before © PBI Mexico**

countless episodes of harassment, along with stigmatization which closed quite a few doors. The history of this accompaniment includes the physical presence of volunteers 24 hours a day, as happened during an emergency in 2006, following a series of incidents and threats; but there were also moments of celebration, such as when Antonio and Hector Cerezo were released from prison in 2009.

**Between December 28th and January 4th, Francisco and Emiliana Cerezo Contreras were persecuted, harassed and death threats were made against them due to their involvement in their brothers' human rights defence. On August 13th, 2001, Alejandro, Hector and Antonio Cerezo, who would later be declared prisoners of conscience, were arrested for terrorism and organised crime, among other accusations. They were tortured and sent to high security prisons. In January 2002, Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action (UA) AMR 41/003/2002/s and the IACHR granted precautionary measures to Francisco and Emiliana Cerezo. PBI accompaniment of Francisco and Emiliana began on the 14th of February 2002, and was later extended to the whole Committee.**

Throughout the last 10 years, PBI has been supported the Cerezo Committee's evolution as an organisation, providing accompaniment, advocacy and building support networks in Mexico, Europe and North America, along with providing secu-

22 Interview with the members of Cerezo Committee in 2012.

23 PBI Mexico: "ACUDDEH and Cerezo Committee present diagnosis of attacks on HRDs in Mexico", PBI Mexico News, 27th June 2012.

24 Comité Cerezo: "Relatoria de un viaje no permitido - Alejandro Cerezo Contreras", 5th December 2012.

# A hostile start to the year in Oaxaca

In the beginning of 2012, during the pre-electoral period, several HRDs were victims of slander, attacks and threats related to their activity in pursuit of human rights in Oaxaca. Between March and April, lawyer Alba Cruz Ramos was attacked while driving her car after leading a meeting with the Oaxaca State Attorney General's Office (PGJE);<sup>25</sup> Priest Alejandro Solalinde denounced collusion between authorities and criminal groups in planning an assassination attempt against him;<sup>26</sup> and Wilfredo Mayren (Father Uvi) was victim of a defamatory campaign in the local press. Each of them received death threats in a general context of risk that culminated with the death of activist Bernardo Vasquez Sanchez in San Jose del Progreso.<sup>27</sup>

## Public policies and human rights

During the first years of Gabino Cue's government in Oaxaca, after 80 years of Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) in the administration, the local congress approved several laws potentially protective of human rights: The Organic Law of the Executive Branch, The Organic Law of the Judicial Branch, The Law of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and The Organic Law of the PGJE. Nevertheless, organisations from Oaxacan civil society consider that such proposals should be accompanied by the creation of efficient institutions that ensure abidance to human rights and state governance. Along this line of thought, several entities have emerged, namely, The Human Rights Defenders Office, The Special Prosecutor's Office for Investigations into Crimes of Social Transcendence, the Constitutional Court and The Human Rights Coordinator. Most organisations that PBI works with in Oaxaca celebrated the creation of such institutions, but stress the need for strengthening and political support in order to get full results.<sup>28</sup>

On 14th of June 2012 the state of Oaxaca carried out an Act of Recognition of Responsibility regarding the events that took place during the social conflict that occurred in 2006 and 2007. The act was a consequence of recommendation 15/2007 by the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) and the investigative report carried out by the National Supreme Court of Justice (SCJN) on abuses occurred during the above period. During the historic

ceremony, which PBI attended, the Governor expressed support for the work of social organisations in Oaxaca and called for dialogue.<sup>29</sup> The state government then committed to developing a 'Full Plan for Repairing Damage to Victims of Human Rights Abuses', a petition supported by Oaxaca's civil society that will be a major part of PBI's advocacy.

On November 12th, Gabino Cue participated in installation of the Governmental Council of the Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, reiterating his support for the work done by defenders whose contribution, in his opinion, has been of utmost importance in the process of democratic transition in Oaxaca. PBI had previously stressed the importance of protecting defenders and emitting acknowledgment statements to the government of Oaxaca. They signed an agreement with the Protection Mechanism, committing to enforcement at the local level. PBI hopes that the state will coordinate with the federal government to reach this objective in 2013. Both civil

society organizations and PBI have pushed for better capacitation in human rights for government employees; in December of 2012, the creation of the School of Formation in Human Rights for Civil Servants was announced in Oaxaca.

## PBI reacts to wave of aggressions in Oaxaca

In response to the increase in aggressions against HRDs in the state, PBI implemented a response strategy with the goal of preventing attacks against accompanied organizations. We increased physical pre-

sence during travel, at the offices and homes of defenders and complemented this with meetings held directly with the authorities responsible for the security of defenders.

The same authorities received letters of concern from PBI's support network in various countries. Six embassies in Mexico invited defenders from Oaxaca to speak to their diplomatic corps, and political counsellors from the embassies of Canada and the EU –along with the



"The Beast" during the route across Istmo of Tehuantepec (Oaxaca) © PBI Mexico

Ambassador from the United Kingdom visited the state to meet with defenders and bring their concerns to the Governor of Oaxaca. In moments of great risk, and by request of PBI, diplomatic instances spoke directly to the federal government about the current situation of the defenders in Oaxaca and about establishing protective measures for accompanied HRDs.

In June, PBI facilitated an extended visit to Spain, Italy and Switzerland by Father Alejandro Solalinde (Human Rights National Prize 2012),<sup>30</sup> in Geneva, the de-

25 Codigo-DH: "New threats against defender Alba Cruz" (AU) (updated), PBI Mexico News, 14th April 2012.

26 PBI Mexico: "The aggressions to migrants and Father Alejandro Solalinde continue", PBI Mexico News, 17th April 2012.

27 PBI Mexico: "Punishment is demanded for the assassination of Bernardo Vasquez Sanchez (COPUVO) in Oaxaca", PBI Mexico News, 23rd March 2012.

28 For more information about this institutions and an assessment of its efficiency, please see PBI article "Protection of human rights defenders after two years of Gabino Cue in government"; available at [http://www.pbi-mexico.org/fileadmin/user\\_files/projects/mexico/files/Press\\_Release/1211BriefingProteccionOaxacaPBI.pdf](http://www.pbi-mexico.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/mexico/files/Press_Release/1211BriefingProteccionOaxacaPBI.pdf)

29 PBI Mexico: "The government of Oaxaca recognises the state's responsibility in the anniversary of the 2006 conflict", PBI Mexico News, 15th June 2012.

30 Prize granted by the NCHR and delivered by the President Enrique Peña Nieto on the 10th December 2012.

fender of migrants met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navy Pillay, who reiterated her willingness to support his return to the shelter he runs in Ixtepec, Oaxaca.<sup>31</sup> The priest also obtained commitments of support from the State Attorney General, the Governor of Oaxaca, and representatives of other governmental authorities responsible for his safety as well as members of eight embassies.



**Observatory mission on the situation of human rights defenders in Oaxaca, organised by PBI Mexico and Red TdT © Código-DH**

A month later, a delegation from the National Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (NLCHR) visited Mexico with the objective to work jointly on cases of severe human rights abuse and to support lawyers defending human rights. These U.S. lawyers, with the help of PBI, visited Oaxaca, where they met with social activists. They took defender's demands to the State Government and to the Attorney General's Office of Oaxaca, and also to the Federal Government and the U.S. Ambassador.<sup>32</sup> This visit increased media coverage of the current situation in Oaxaca and provided technical support to oaxacan human rights lawyers, adding to the follow-up on the commitment taken by the Mexican state regarding the protection of this population.

In October, PBI joined the National Network of Civil Society Organizations for Human Rights "All Rights for All" (Red TdT) in organizing an observation mission to Oaxaca conformed of representatives of civil society from several states. Participants in the mission demonstrated their

solidarity due to the grave situation faced by HRDs in the state of Oaxaca and provided an exchange of experiences and participated in meetings with the executive and legislative branches of government and the Human Rights Ombudsperson along side local defenders.

During the visit, which garnered the attention of the media, the Red TdT highlighted that Oaxaca is the state with the largest rate of aggressions per-

petrated against defenders in the country. According to data gathered by the Red TdT, there were 29 individual attacks on defenders and 12 attacks to groups defending human rights in 2011 and 2012. Additionally, 1,847 people benefited from precautionary measures issued by the ICHR to defenders in the state.

Included in the reports of human rights violations committed against defenders given to the Red TdT were assassinations, physical agressions, harassment, defamation, theft, arbitrary detention, and undue use of public force. The pattern of attacks and harassment against the defenders proves that these are not isolated incidents.<sup>33</sup> The investigation and punishment of those responsible is crucial to avoiding repetition of such cases.

## Natural resources and defence of land and territory: A dangerous role

In Oaxaca, those that work with natural resources, defend their land and territory and insist that prior and informed consultation is a right to be respected were indicated as being at particular risk for their work.<sup>34</sup> During 2013, PBI hopes to raise awareness about their situation and call upon the Mexican government and corporations to comply with their responsibility regarding mega projects rejected by community defenders, or where respect for human rights is not being met.

Some important cases are the mine in San Jose del Progreso (Valles Centrales), where two members of the Coordinator of United People from Valle de Ocotlan (COPUVO) were assassinated last year, as well as the case of the wind farms in Union Hidalgo and San Dionisio del Mar, where community leaders denounced death threats, physical aggressions and torture.<sup>35</sup> Two organisations accompanied by PBI, the Committee for the Comprehensive Defence of Human Rights "Gobixha" (Codigo-DH) and the Regional Centre for Human Rights "Bartolomé Carrasco Briseño" (Barca-DH), are working on these cases; the Mexico Project accompanied their members during civil observatory missions to the affected communities, aiming at dissuading eventual aggressions against activists. PBI also performed isolated actions for other organisations such as the Assembly of Indigenous People from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Services for an Alternative Education (EDUCA), and continues to raise awareness, inside and outside of Mexico, about the right to consultation and the danger of defending this right in Mexico, particularly in the state of Oaxaca.

31 PBI Mexico: "Father Solalinde will visit Europe to present the risk defenders and migrants are exposed in Mexico", PBI Mexico News, 15th May 2012, and "Solalinde reinforced his support to migrants during his tour to Europe", PBI Mexico News, 21st June 2012.

32 NLCHR: "NLCHR manifests its concern for the risk situation of human rights defenders in Mexico", PBI Mexico News, 6th July 2012.

33 PBI Mexico and Red TdT: "Mission formed by human rights defenders concludes in Oaxaca", News PBI Mexico, 3rd October 2012.

34 Ibid.

35 Código-DH: La situación de los derechos humanos en Oaxaca. Grandes Pendientes Report, pages 68-78, Oaxaca, Mexico, 2012

# PBI wagers on increased dialogue



**Ben Leather and Ivi Oliveira meet with Ángel Aguirre Rivero, Governor of Guerrero © PBI Mexico**

PBI Mexico has firmly maintained its objectives of protecting human rights defenders in Mexico, continuing to lobby for implementation of the Protection Mechanism. The approval of the law and the establishment of the Government Counsel were two important steps in this direction, and PBI has been a direct witness to these advances. But the project has also focused its advocacy strategy in other matters, such as providing special protection and giving visibility to the work of women defenders in Mexico. The support of international players, both inside and outside Mexico, was one of the pillars sustaining PBI's work during 2012.

Advocacy work is supported by a broader communication strategy. Through the organization of events and production of new materials, the Mexico Project increased media coverage and information outreach abroad. Since 2012, PBI shares relevant information daily through Facebook and Twitter, making information on human rights in Mexico and the role of PBI readily available. The project has produced thematic briefings and updated information on the web page, and the monthly Information Pack now reaches a wider public.

## Women defenders

Over the past 10 years, most of the defenders accompanied by PBI have been women.<sup>36</sup> United Nations human rights bodies and the Organization of American

States (OAS) have identified specific risks this population is exposed to, as well as the obstacles they face to gain legitimacy as activists. For this reason, in 2012 the project increased its efforts to raise awareness of the work of women human rights defenders (WHRDs).

On March 8th, International Women's Day, PBI presented 'Dignas: Voices of Women Human Rights Defenders in Mexico', a special publication that compiles the profiles and testimonials of 19 women defenders from nine federal states, including an article by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mrs. Margaret Sekkagyga.<sup>37</sup> Mexican authorities, NGOs and members of the diplomatic corps attended the launch event, which took place in the CNDH.<sup>38</sup> PBI also co-organised an event in Washington D.C. about women defenders, with the presence of accompanied WHRDs from Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia, as well as the presence of North-American and other international civil society representatives, and members of the U.S. government.<sup>39</sup>

PBI took the same message to Europe through the tours of four WHRDs: Alba Cruz and Celsa Valdovinos, from Oaxaca and Guerrero respectively; Silvia Vazquez

Camacho, defender from the border city of Tijuana, and Blanca Isabel Martinez, director of the Human Rights Centre "Fray Juan de Larios" in Coahuila.<sup>40</sup> These women defenders described the human rights scenario in Mexico to the European audience; they spoke to government representatives, members of parliament, lawyers associations and civil society groups from Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; their speeches focused on impunity, natural resources defence, forced disappearances, migrants' rights, torture and 'arraigo' (a type of informal arbitrary detention whose purpose is to detain the accused without charges in order to carry out an investigation), legal system reforms, as well as the risk they themselves face.

## Improved dialogue between EU and Mexico

The tours across Europe helped to increase PBI Mexico's advocacy work with European Union (EU) institutions based in Brussels, where public events and direct dialogue with EU representatives garnered support for the Mexican civil society petition to improve the process

36 To know more about the accompaniment to women human rights defenders by PBI Mexico, please see <http://www.pbi-mexico.org/los-proyectos/pbi-mexico/que-hacemos/gente-que-protегemos/?L=1#c9124>

37 Publication available at [http://issuu.com/peacebrigadesinternational/docs/dignas\\_online\\_esp/1](http://issuu.com/peacebrigadesinternational/docs/dignas_online_esp/1)

38 PBI Mexico: "Dignas – Voices of human rights defenders in Mexico", PBI Mexico News, 8th March 2012.

39 PBI Mexico: "Human rights defenders demand adequate protection measures to face the risk", PBI Mexico News, 30th March 2012.

40 PBI Mexico: "Lawyers and human rights defenders Alba Cruz and Silvia Vázquez conduct a speaking tour in Europe", PBI Mexico News, 23rd July 2012.



**Ben Leather representing PBI speaks during the presentation of the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Initiative © Mexican Senate**

and contents of the Political Dialogue on Human Rights between the EU and Mexico.

PBI took the same petition to the diplomatic representatives of the EU Delegation and its member states in Mexico. It should be highlighted that the Third Dialogue on Human Rights between Mexico and the EU took place in October, with the presence of representatives of the government elect and with space for the participation of civil society, in which some of the themes which PBI works on were put on the table. The protection of defenders was a central issue in the debate. The Mexico Project shared concerns with Mexican organisations in a joint letter sent to the EU last November, and hopes that this seminar represents the first step to a more effective and transparent dialogue.<sup>41</sup> PBI will continue to contribute to this dialogue through the working group that the EU Delegation in Mexico plans to assemble in 2013 following the request of local and international NGOs.

In response to the wave of threats and aggressions against accompanied people in Oaxaca that occurred in March and April, the Mexico Project activated its support network in Europe. When Father Solalinde reported death threats, PBI extended his visit to the region to speak about the impact of current violence in Mexico on migration patterns. In Mexico, project re-

presentatives worked together with their counterparts from the OHCHR in Mexico, Amnesty International and the CNDH to develop a joint security strategy that assisted the Father's return to Ixtepec. By meeting directly with federal and state authorities responsible for his protection and with ambassadors who supported his demands, the migrants' rights defender obtained the necessary guarantees to return safely to work.

### Strategic alliance with the diplomatic corps in Mexico

The constant labour of PBI along with embassies based in Mexico is still a fundamental piece in the accompaniment of defenders at risk. In response to violence against activists in Oaxaca, high profile representatives of the diplomatic corps visited the state, received human rights defenders in their offices and asked the government for more effective protection. Despite the progress in implementing protection measures for people accompanied by PBI in Oaxaca, and although safety conditions have generally improved since April, one of the Project's objectives is to ensure continuity of protection for defenders during 2013.

The visible support given by the diplomatic corps to the legal process that created the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was essential, and meetings held with activists at the embassies legitimized the defenders and their work. In 2013, the attention of embassies in Mexico will continue to be crucial to the full implementation the Protection Mechanism and support for PBI's new team in Chihuahua and Coahuila.

### PBI strengthens its support in the Americas

The year 2012 witnessed a stronger presence of PBI Mexico in Canada; during visits to Ottawa and Toronto in March and December 2012, respectively, the Project held meetings with government representatives, members of parliament and NGOs, including the Nobel Women's Initiative, and also attended public events for students, religious groups and the general public. The Project celebrated new alliances, promoted the dissemination of publications about Mexico and advocated for the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. PBI spoke of the responsibility held by States and corporations on the exploitation

<sup>41</sup> CSO: "CSO urge the EU to deal with the deterioration of human rights in Mexico", PBI Mexico News, 19th October 2012.

of natural resources and the right to consultation, which is among the subjects of concern to Mexican civil society organizations; the Project also strengthened its relationship with unions, including Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and United Steelworkers (USW), who will travel to Mexico in 2013 to meet with human rights defenders.

PBI also visited the U.S. twice, once with Alba Cruz, who spoke directly with members of the State Department, congressional staffers, social organizations and specialist attorneys. In 2012, PBI's contacts in the U.S. took the initiative of pressuring the Mexican government to approve the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, implement the rulings of Inter-American Court and protect activists in Oaxaca and Guerrero. Organisations close to PBI such as the Washington Office on Latin America (WOOLA), Latin American Working Group (LAWG), Human Rights Watch and the Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights, also broached these subjects in last year's talks with the Mexican state. In 2013, PBI will maintain collaboration with these organisations to launch events and initiatives in Washington D.C. addressing the condition of defenders in Mexico and the problems reported in northern states, where PBI plans to instal a new team.

In the context of uncertainty around how the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS) will continue to function, in 2012, PBI reiterated its support for the strengthening of the multi-national organism which is fundamental for the protection of accompanied HRDs. The Project held meetings with personnel from the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders and the Protection Program of the IACtHR, attended several hearings of the Inter-American Commission and, along with the Guatemala and Colombia Projects, contributed formal feedback on IARHS's operating mode and reinforcement.<sup>42</sup>

## Growing external interest in the human rights situation in Mexico

During 2012, civil servants and members of parliament from other countries visited Mexico and held meetings with PBI to understand the condition of defenders in the country. Among those who visited were Petros Mavromichalis, Head of the Mexican and Central America Division of the European External Action Service; Wendy Sherman, U.S. Under Secretary for Political Affairs; and Louise De Sousa, Head of the British Foreign Office's Human Rights and Democracy Department, United Kingdom.

PBI also facilitated contacts between accompanied defenders and lawyers networks: in March, the General Coun-

the protection of human rights defenders, including meetings with the Federal Police Commissioner and representatives of the Mexican Ministry of Defence, regular meetings were held with the Interior Ministry, Public Security Ministry, Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Federal Attorney General's Office, and several legislators from different political parties.

Apart from raising awareness of the need to protect activists, insisting on a more effective use of protection measures for accompanied defenders and pushing for effective implementation of Inter-American Court rulings, PBI highlighted the importance of public acknowledgment of the work developed and risk conditions endured by the human rights defenders. During 2012, the Governors of Guerrero and Oaxaca, the Under Secretaries of the

Federal Government, the Interior Minister and the President of Mexico at the time, Felipe Calderon, took this important step. The Mexico Project intends to maintain this level of dialogue with the new federal government throughout 2013 and to obtain clear commitments from the new administration for the protection of human rights defenders, for instance, the full implementation and enforcement of the Protection Mechanism.



**Tita Radilla (AFADEM) and Sara Méndez (Codigo-DH) at the launch of "Dignas: Voices of women human rights defenders in Mexico" © PBI Mexico**

cil of the Spanish Bar held meetings and supported initiatives with activists from Guerrero, Oaxaca and D.F. Lawyers from the NLCHR also met with defenders and authorities in Mexico City and Oaxaca in July.<sup>43</sup>

## Key dialogue with the Mexican government

PBI maintained a high level of dialogue with Mexican federal authorities regarding

42 OAS: Presentación de Brigadas Internacionales de Paz - Peace Brigades International - PBI CP/INF.6614/12 add. 21, 7th december 2012, Reflective process on the operating mode of IACtHR for the strengthening of IAHRS; available at <http://www.oas.org/consejo/sp/reflexion.asp>

43 See note 32.

# Mexico has a Protection Mechanism: A challenge for the new government

By request of civil society organizations and the Mexican government, PBI has accompanied the process of creating a Protection Mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists since 2009.<sup>44</sup> In 2012, 244 aggressions were committed against human rights defenders and journalists and 18 assassinations occurred,<sup>45</sup> therefor Mexican civil society continued to demand an urgent response from the authorities in order to protect vulnerable populations.

In the context of the accompaniment given to Civil Society Organisations Group (CSO Group), the driving force behind the Mechanism's creation, PBI was invited to observe the work of the groups responsible for drafting the law, which included the participation of representatives of the CSO Group and Senate advisors from the three major parties. This ensured the inclusion of international best practices and a response to current issues on the protection of defenders and journalists in Mexico.

In March, PBI participated along with legislators, representatives of the executive branch and national and international organizations in the presentation of this initiative<sup>46</sup> during an event held in the Mexican senate. PBI Mexico and Amnesty International launched an awareness campaign directed at legislators from both chambers, by means of letters and meetings with dozens of legislators from all parties. Additionally, PBI and Amnesty organised a photo exhibition in the Chamber of Deputies to raise awareness on the subject while waiting for approval by the Senate.<sup>47</sup>

As a result of the joint effort made by the OSC Group, international organisations such as PBI and legislators, the Law for the Protection of Human rights Defenders and Journalists was approved unanimously by the Senate and Congress and was signed by President Felipe Calderon, on the 22nd June.<sup>48</sup> The law obligates the Mexican government to create a Protection Mechanism that grants prevention, protection and emergency measures, and simultaneously assures the participation of civil society.

PBI later observed the working groups dedicated to the implementation of the Mechanism, successfully advocated for the participation of civil society and provi-

ded technical assistance on the internal regulation and proposed protocols. In December, after the vote of civil society organisations, the installation of the Governing Board –the highest body of the Mechanism– and approval of the internal regulation of the law, the protection mechanism was put into action, even if only partially.<sup>49</sup>

As part of the implementation campaign,<sup>50</sup> PBI produced a short film, 'The duty to protect',<sup>51</sup> in which highly experienced human rights defenders challenge the new government to ensure complete functioning of the Mechanism.<sup>52</sup> Their demands were announced during a launch event at the Museum of Memory and Tolerance (Mexico City), with the presence of federal government authorities, representatives of the diplomatic corps, civil society, international organisations and the press. Through the voice of the new Under-Secretary for Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Lia Limon, the Mexican government committed to enforce and strengthen the Mechanism.

PBI's support network played an indispensable role in demanding a Protection Mechanism by providing direct actions towards the Mexican government, public statements on this subject, meetings with the CSO Group, and letters of support in order to legitimize the proposal<sup>53</sup> were some of the activities which aimed to give substance to this instrument. In 2013, PBI



From left to right: Brisa Solis (Cencos), Agnieszka Rackzynska (Red TdT), Daniel Zapico (AI), Lia Limón (Under-Secretary of Legal Affairs and Human Rights) and Perseo Quiroz (Director of the Protection Mechanisms' Risk Evaluation Unit) during the event "The duty to protect" © PBI Mexico

again awaits a positive response to the demands of defenders and journalist at risk in Mexico, who compel the new federal government and state counterparts to fully implement the Mechanism with the participation of civil society.

There's still a long way to go before the Mechanism has real impact: support and information handling protocols, the establishment of a Unit for Prevention, Follow-up and Analysis; skilled staff and an awareness campaign so that potential beneficiaries know how to access the mechanism, as well as collaboration with state governments is still needed. PBI continues in close contact with civil society organisations and the Mexican government regarding this subject, and in 2013 it will continue pushing for the State recognition of its institutional responsibility to protect its citizens.

<sup>44</sup> To know more about this process, please read the bulletin "How many more? The need for a governmental mechanism of protection directed at human rights defenders", published by PBI Mexico in April 2011; available at <http://issuu.com/peacebrigadesinternational/docs/boletin-30-cuantos-mas-abril-2011/1>

<sup>45</sup> From January to November 2012, Cencos.

<sup>46</sup> To see more information and related documents, please visit PBI Mexico webpage dedicated to the Protection Mechanism <http://www.pbi-mexico.org/los-proyectos/pbi-mexico/que-hacemos/mecanismos-de-proteccion/mecanismo-gubernamental-de-proteccion/?L=1>

<sup>47</sup> PBI México: "PBI and AI open a photographic exhibition in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies", PBI Mexico News, 20th April 2012.

<sup>48</sup> OHCHR: "Pillay saluda la Ley para la Protección de Defensores de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas en México", 22th June 2012.

<sup>49</sup> "Instalan junta de gobierno de mecanismo de protección a periodistas y activistas", La Jornada, page 12, 13th November 2012.

<sup>50</sup> PBI Mexico: "The responsibility of the Mexican state to ensure the safety of human rights defenders and journalists", PBI Mexico News, 11th December 2012.

<sup>51</sup> To see the video, please visit <http://vimeo.com/55799039>

<sup>52</sup> PBI Mexico: "New Mexican Government commits to effective application of the Protection Mechanism", PBI Mexico News, 17th December 2012.

<sup>53</sup> WOLA: "El deber de proteger"; available at [http://www.wola.org/es/highlight/el\\_deber\\_de\\_proteger](http://www.wola.org/es/highlight/el_deber_de_proteger)

# Security training program maintained

The protection of human rights defenders continues to be one of the most important challenges for PBI and underlies the origin, permanence and expansion of the Project's activities in Mexico. International organisations and entities have stressed the risk and the urgency of protecting human rights defenders, as well as the State's duty to protect them.<sup>54</sup> They have also recognised the need for self-protection mechanism and developed tools for the analysis, diagnosis and planning that empower defenders and organisations to improve their own security conditions.<sup>55</sup>

Since the beginning of our work in Mexico, PBI has provided workshops and consulting directly to defenders in matters of security. Following this line of work, PBI intends to contribute to better security management by defenders operating in Mexico and to increase analytic and strategic skills related to security issues involved in human rights defence. The Project provides workshops and consulting by petition of local organisations. The program's aim is not to interfere with the work of the defenders, but to focus on developing their skills and build autonomy in terms of security management and protection strategies.

Trainings and consultancy were initially directed to organisations accompanied by PBI, but the number of petitions coming from other entities or activists has increased in the last few years. Since 2011, PBI has extended protection to other defenders. During 2012, besides consultancy done in the context of accompaniment, PBI also provided training and consultancy to 10 new organisations from three states (Puebla, Coahuila and Oaxaca), plus Mexico City, that were not otherwise accompanied; these organisations' work focuses on different themes relevant in Mexico (freedom of expression, political and edu-



PBI security training in Oaxaca © PBI Mexico

cational rights, environmental regulation, natural resources, labour rights, forced disappearances, migration and sexual and reproductive rights). Despite the expansion of activities to 10 new organisations, training and consultancies were limited due to lack of resources required to cover all requests.

The increasing number of petitions for security consultancies is clear evidence of the risk to which defenders are exposed to in Mexico. It simultaneously shows the growing awareness of organisations about this subject and the need to use a consistent risk analysis to improve self-protective measures. PBI gave priority to organisations with potential to create a "multiplier effect", and considering the growing need for protection, PBI invested a significant amount of time in the Red TdT, a network which includes 73 organisations from 21 states. Its empowerment

in security issues leads to the empowerment of other Mexican organisations, which can further train other associations and in this way establish an independent network of trainers in Mexico.<sup>56</sup>

54 Reports of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders and on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

55 CMDPDH: El derecho a defender los derechos humanos en México: Manual básico de prevención y autoprotección para defensoras y defensores de derechos humanos, pages 131-132, June 2011; available at [http://www.cmdpdh.org/docs/Manual\\_El\\_Derecho\\_a\\_Defender\\_los\\_Derechos\\_Humanos\\_CMDPDH.pdf](http://www.cmdpdh.org/docs/Manual_El_Derecho_a_Defender_los_Derechos_Humanos_CMDPDH.pdf)

56 Cerezo Committee stands as an example of empowerment of the civil society, see pages 7 and 8 of this report.

# “My heart is still with the Project”

Karim Jah is the most experienced member of the Mexico Project Training Committee. His collaboration with PBI National Group in Germany started 12 years ago. In 2001 and 2002, he accompanied human rights defenders based mainly in the state of Guerrero, and using his field experience, he became part of the Strategic Committee and the Training Committee. Since then he has taken part in 10 training sessions for new volunteers.

## How does the selection and training process work?

We open the period for applications during the year and review all of the candidates profiles and carry out a first round of selection. Those candidates selected in the first round are interviewed by phone so that we get to know them better and give them the opportunity to learn more about the Mexico Project. Based on these interviews, the Committee chooses who to invite to a one-week training. Study material about Mexico are given to the candidates, which includes subjects like the history of PBI, non violent theory, and others. If they successfully complete this part of the process, they come to the training in Lisbon. The training is a week long and includes both theory, and participation and role-plays. At the conclusion of the training week, the Committee decides who will be able to join the project.

## What has changed in the selection process since you became involved with the Training Committee? In what aspect has it improved, and how?

In the beginning, most of the documents and the role-plays were inspired by the Colombia Project. Over the years, those have been developed and adapted to the reality of Mexico. The work is very similar in both projects, but each one has its own context and needs a different approach. On the other hand, now it's much more dynamic, we include more 'social dramas', we encourage participation of the candidates during the training; the theory input was much greater when we started; now it is close to a half. The training intends to produce a great deal of participation; we want to see the candidates in action.



Karim Jah (left) observes candidates during a role-play activity during volunteer training in Lisbon  
© PBI Mexico

## What about candidates profiles, how have they changed?

In the beginning, the applicants were mostly activists or participants in social movements. Most of them came from Spain, the Basque Country, and Germany; people who were involved in the movements for peace, or who were just sympathetic with the struggle in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. Now we have more people for whom being part of the team is a valuable experience for a future career. Most of the candidates are skilled individuals and have previous experience as volunteers in other countries. That is somehow related to the fact that PBI's image and work are different: it is now a human rights organization, while it used to be a solidarity organization.

## What do you find most fulfilling about this work?

One thing I like is to continue to contribute something to the Mexico Project, because my heart is still with the project. I also enjoy meeting interesting people from all over the world. The third part is that I get along very well with the team. We work

using consensus decision making, we use it responsibly, and that is very motivating. It has to do with the group dynamics being result-driven, we work with that in mind. Always taking care of others and trying to be effective. I like that very much, but we also work with our hearts.

## Why are you still a member of PBI after all these years?

Human rights and participation in social movements have always been something very important in my life. I have another job, but I also want to make the world better somehow –taking small steps– because we know we cannot change it all at once. I still have this objective, and PBI is a vehicle, a tool to achieve it.

## PBI Mexico Team Members in 2012

**General Coordinators**

Lisa Maracani (Italia)

Maik Müller (Germany)

**European Representative**

Susana Nistal (Spain)

Marianne Bertrand (France)

**Finance Manager**

David Avila (Portugal)

**Grant Management**

Caroline Hay (Scotland)

Jamie Wick (USA)

**MEXICO CITY OFFICE:**
**Public Relations Coordinator**

Ben Leather (UK)

**Field Team Coordinator**

Sierra Schraff-Thomas (USA)

**Security Programme Coordinator**

Carla Cavarretta (Italy)

**Publications and Communications Coordinator**

Graciela Martinez Gonzalez (Spain)

**Administration and Accounting**

Lilia Diaz (Mexico)

**GUERRERO TEAM/EXPLORATORY MISSION:**

Celine Monnier (Switzerland), Clara Arroyave (Colombia)

Ivi Oliveira (Brazil), Lisa Pattison (UK), Luis Miguel

Garcia (Spain), Rubens da Silva (Portugal)

**OAXACA TEAM:**

Daniel Cloney (Ireland), Delphine Verheyde (France),

Emilie DeWolf (Belgium), Irene Hernandez (Spain),

Juan Luis de la Rosa (Spain), Laura Papasergio (Italy),

Nicola Manniello (Italy), Pilar Sanmartin (Spain), To-

bias Wallusch (Germany)

**TRAINING COMMITTEE:**

Karim Jah (Germany), Liselot Petry (Germany), Maik

Müller (Germany), Sandra Camacho (Spain), Sergi

Sendra (Spain), Silvia Carballo (Spain)

**STRATEGIC COMMITTEE:**

Marianne Bertrand (France), Marielle Tonossi (Swit-

zerland), Sandra Caluori (Switzerland), Sandra Froide-

vaux (Switzerland), William Payne (Canada)

## PBI Mexico Activities in 2012

PHYSICAL PRESENCE		
ORGANISATIONS AND DEFENDERS ACCOMPANIED BY PBI	ACCOMPANIMENTS	MEETINGS
Association of Relatives of the Detained Disappeared, and Victims of Human Rights Abuses in Mexico (AFADEM)	2	2
"Tlachinollan" Human Rights Centre	4	6
Centre for Human Rights and Legal Advice for Indigenous Peoples (CEDHAPI)	4	3
Cerezo Committee	4	5
Committee for the Integral Defence of Human Rights "Gobixha" (Codigo-DH)	22	15
Civil Monitor of the Police and Security Forces of Montaña de Guerrero Region (Mocipol)	0	2
Organization of Women Ecologists of the Sierra de Petatlán (OMESP)	3	3
Organisation of the Indigenous Me'phaa People (OPIM)	2	1
Father Alejandro Solalinde and staff of the Migrant Shelter "Hermanos en el Camino"	9	1
"Bartolomé Carrasco Briseño" Regional Human Rights Centre (Barca-DH)	7	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53</b>
Other organisations (public, national and international)		126
EXPLORATORY MISSION		
	NGOS	AUTHORITIES
Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Estado de México, Puebla y Tlaxcala	62	25
ADVOCACY		
MEETINGS WITH AUTHORITIES	-	MEETINGS
Guerrero Municipal and State-level authorities	-	10
Oaxaca Municipal and State-level authorities	-	30
Federal Authorities	-	59
Diplomatic corps and Embassies	-	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>154</b>
PUBLICATIONS		
	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Bulletins	1	1
Special Publications	1	1
Information Pack	12	12
Annual Report	1	1
News (Webpage)	60	64
Audiovisual	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>
TOURS		
	NUM. OF TOURS	BENEFICIARIES
Europe	4	6
North America	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
SECURITY AND PROTECTION TRAINING		
WORKSHOPS	NUM. OF WORKSHOPS	BENEFICIARIES
	10	63

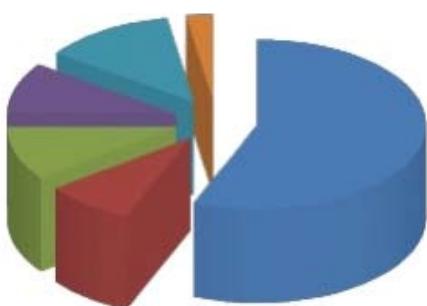
## 2012 Financial Report

The economic setting resulting from the current economic crisis in Europe has continues over the last few years, making fundraising more difficult, and also making it more challenging to produce a good annual activity plan. During the year, public funds were not as readily available from countries with large clusters of donors, and budget cuts were reflected on the amount donated to PBI. In one extreme case, the donor could not fulfil the accorded amount, which was already included in the Financial Plan for the Mexico Project after signing the contract. This has produced a significant adjustment in the final expenditure presented. The adjustment is stated in the table format but was not included in the graphics to avoid biasing the weight of each area in the overall picture.

The fact that fundraising is increasingly based on "budgets based on activities" and that financial support is directed to specific programmes or subjects has made fund management more complex. There are less and less multiannual programmes, increasing the trend for short term projects with more targeted support. Because of this, PBI's work, which seeks sustainable, long term changes, is more difficult to finance. Thanks to the continued support of a large number of donors, and to great effort from Mexico Project members and our partners in national PBI groups, it was possible to maintain and even increase the budget, performing all planned activities.

The financial data in this report is provisional and will be subject to an audit. All of the income and expenditure are given in USD.

### GRAPHIC: INCOME



- Public state funding
- Public local or regional funding
- Embassies in Mexico
- Faith based organizations
- Private funding
- PBI own funds

### PBI Mexico income in 2012

DONORS	Current Income USD
<b>CANADA</b>	
Basilian Human Development Fund	3.210
Canadian Embassy in Mexico	5.345
<b>FRANCE</b>	
Non Violence XXI	3.871
<b>GERMANY</b>	
Brot für die Welt	29.940
Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa), Zivik Programme (Civil Conflict Resolution)	164.610
Misereor	2.560
Civil Peace Service	82.668
<b>ITALY</b>	
PBI Italy	3.720
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	
Dutch Embassy	5.550
Hartstra Stichting	3.069
<b>NORWAY</b>	
Norwegian Embassy	3.085
<b>SPAIN</b>	
Biscay Lawyers Bar	9.567
Catalan Agency for Cooperation and Development (ACCD)	66.074
Santander Municipality	12.242
Valladolid Municipality	6.917
Valladolid Provincial Council	15.263
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	
Amnesty International Switzerland	1.024
City of Renens	3.376
Catholic Church Pieterlen-Lengnau	454
Fedevaco Trust	11.130
Maya Behn-Eschenburg Foundation	7.420
International Solidarity	4.240
Protestant Church Köniz	1.632
Protestant Church SG-Tablat	1.855
Protestant Church Wallisellen	3.710
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	
British Embassy in Mexico	31.106
Sigrid Rausing Trust	9.401
The Fundraising Network	4.670
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	
Overbrook Foundation	4.000
Bank Interests	88
Other programmes	2.195
Personal Donations	2.277
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>506.269</b>

## PBI Mexico expenditure in 2012

BUDGET LINES		Budget USD	Expenditure USD
FIELD PRESENCE	Mexico DF Team	63.434	61.650
	Oaxaca Team	56.135	59.876
	Security Workshops	11.760	9.098
STRATEGIC PRESENCE	Volunteers Selection and Training	14.022	13.797
ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH	Team and Public Relations Coordination in Mexico DF	68.379	80.709
	European Representation	44.967	43.797
	Publications	6.827	6.277
GENERAL COORDINATION AND STRATEGY	Tours of human rights defenders	9.236	11.635
	Project Coordination Office	50.572	52.315
	Project Committee Meetings	22.615	19.509
FUNDRAISING, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	Fundraising and Administration	26.084	25.825
	Administration	13.802	14.594
GOVERNANCE	Governance and International PBI Coordination	35.200	30.175
	Project Audit and Global Audit	5.150	5.346
OTROS	Adjustment for defaults	0	66.074
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		428.183	500.677

## GRAPHIC: EXPENDITURE



- Accompaniment to HR's Defenders & Field Presence (31%)
- Strategic Presence & Public Relations in Mexico (19%)
- Security & Protection Workshops Program (2%)
- Outreach & International Advocacy (14%)
- General Coordination & Strategy (17%)
- Fundraising, Finance & Administration (9%)
- Governance (7%)
- Audits and others (1%)



PBI Mexico is not responsible for the statements and opinions of others in this publication.

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Backpage photo: PBI volunteers during the 17th birthday of CRAC – Community Police in San Luis Acatlan (Guerrero) © PBI Mexico

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**Peace Brigades International (PBI)** is a nongovernmental organization with 30 years of experience in international accompaniment and has been present in Mexico since 1999. International accompaniment is a conflict transformation tool and PBI's goal is to protect the political space for people and organizations that promote human rights in a non-violent manner and who suffer repression for their legitimate work.

PBI only works at the request of local organizations and does not replace efforts by Mexican human rights defenders to promote respect for human rights. Rather, it merely seeks to support their initiatives by standing next to them.

PBI regularly visits conflict areas, distributes information, and dialogues with civil and military authorities, as well as with human rights organizations and other civil society actors in Mexico. To promote international attention to the Mexican situation, and to help create the necessary conditions for human rights defenders to continue with their work, PBI also maintains a dialogue with the international community and international organizations such as the United Nations, disseminates information, and generates support from abroad in order to ensure the safety of Mexican defenders.

More information about PBI's work in Mexico can be found on our web site: [www.pbi-mexico.org](http://www.pbi-mexico.org)