



# Annual Review 2011

**peacebrigadesinternational**

Promoting nonviolence and protecting  
human rights since 1981

# Dear friends

**P**BI celebrated 30 years of defending human rights in 2011. Our work was awarded the prestigious Jaime Brunet Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights.

**In 2011 PBI worked with more than 350 inspirational women and men prepared to put their lives at risk to defend the rights of others. These courageous individuals are the motivation for all of our work.**

In addition to our established field work in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Nepal we carried out exploratory work in Kenya, Honduras and Indonesia. We advocated in global capitals and ensured the voices of defenders were heard – including at a series of international conferences to mark our 30th anniversary.

We know, sadly, that human rights will continue to be violated and vulnerable

communities will carry on bearing the brunt of the negative impacts of globalisation. In 2012 PBI will work as hard as ever in support of people struggling for fundamental human rights. For this we will rely on the commitment of our volunteers and of hundreds of dedicated supporters throughout the world. With ever increasing pressures on our sources of income, we will continue to make every donation count and will need your support more than ever this year.

In peace,



**Neena Acharya**  
PBI President



Peace Brigades International (PBI) envisions a world in which people address conflicts nonviolently, where human rights are universally upheld and social justice and respect for other cultures have become a reality. We believe that enduring peace and lasting solutions to conflicts cannot be achieved by violent means.

PBI works in countries where communities experience violent conflict, intimidation or repression. We always work at the request of defenders and in response to their needs. We are convinced that lasting transformation of conflicts cannot come from outside, but must be based on the capacity and desires of local people. We avoid imposing, interfering or getting directly involved in the work of the people we accompany. We don't provide financial support or development aid to the organisations we work with. Our work is effective because we take an integrated approach, combining a presence on the ground alongside human rights defenders with an extensive network of international support.

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### THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE SERVED ON PBI'S INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL IN 2011:

Steven Molnar (President), William Payne (Vice president), Neena Acharya (Secretary), Ellen Kaas (Treasurer), Cristina Barbeito, Owen Campbell, Annette Fingscheidt, Lisa Kunkel, Elisa Maracani, Gary Ockenden, Deborah Smith (resigned July 2011), Esther Vink. The PBI General Assembly in October 2011 approved

changes to PBI's structure separating international governance and operational responsibilities. The following people were appointed by the General Assembly to serve on the International Council: Neena Acharya (President), John Carlarne (Vice president), Michael Bluett (Secretary), Ellen Kaas (Treasurer), Juliana Cano Nieto, Paola Carmagnani, Annette Fingscheidt, Diane Hendrik, Guro Nilsen, Gary Ockenden.

### COVER PHOTO

Participants at an event in Guatemala marking 30 years of PBI



# What we do

**H**uman rights defenders – courageous people who stand up for the rights and dignity of their communities because they believe in peace and justice for all – are at the heart of all we do at PBI.

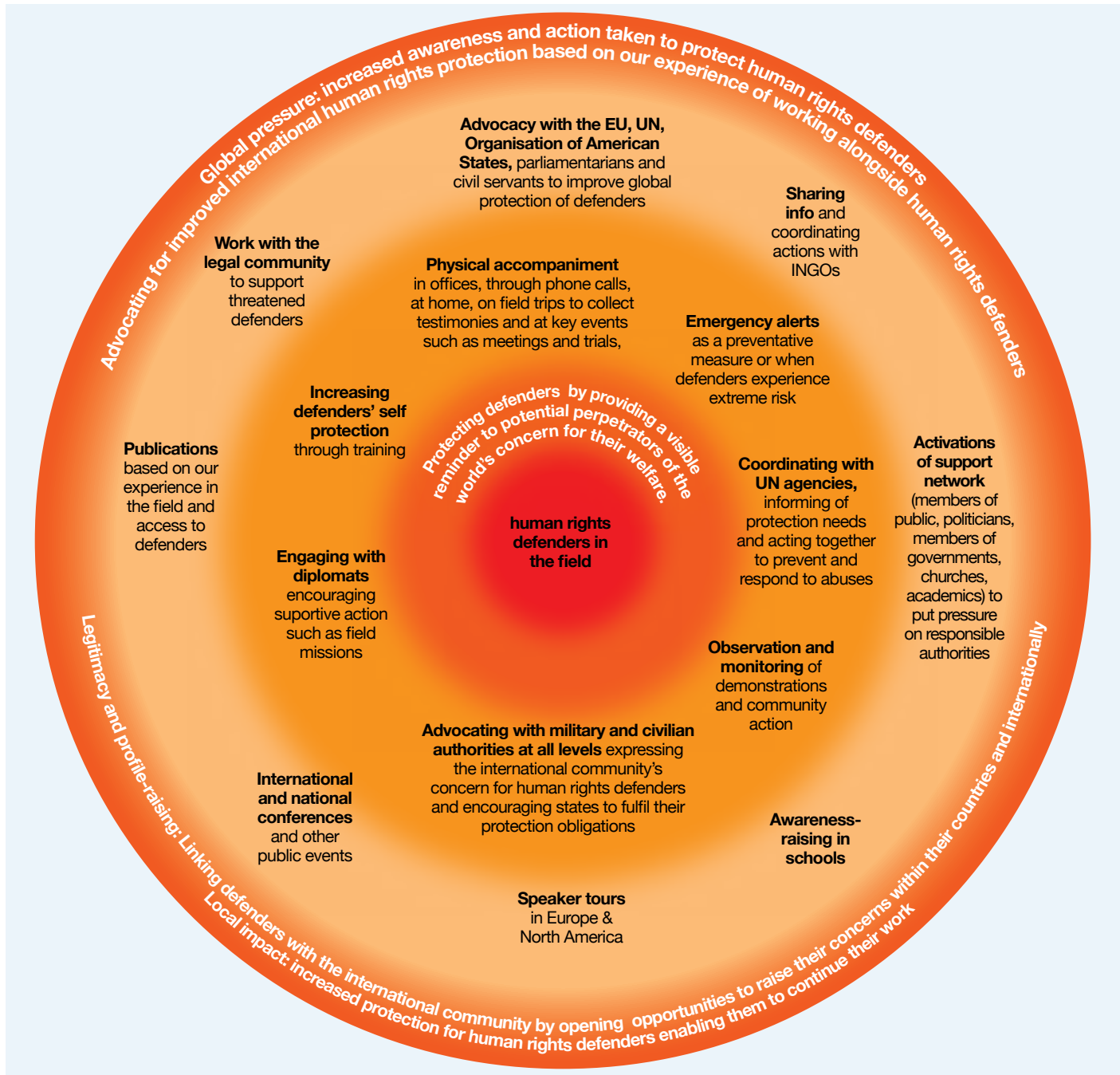
We provide protection, support and recognition to local human rights defenders who work in areas of repression and conflict and have requested our support. We help

human rights defenders make links with others and raise awareness of the issues they face.

We advocate at all levels – from the soldier at a local check point to national governments and international bodies such as the UN – for international human rights accountability. Our international volunteers send a powerful message that the world is watching and prepared to act.

Our colleagues from PBI have a particular and very special commitment to Human Rights. I am attending this event to raise my voice to support the work they do with such incredible commitment.

**Alberto Brunori**, UN OHCHR representative, at PBI Spanish State round table on criminalisation, October 2011



# 2011 in numbers

In 2011 PBI provided protection and support to **170 women and 202 men** human rights defenders from **46 organisations**. Between them, these organisations supported thousands of women, men and children who have been denied their basic rights – from being forcibly evicted from their land, to seeing family members “disappeared”, to suffering torture and rape at the hands of the armed forces.

PBI provided **2,156 days of physical accompaniment** to human rights defenders in 2011.

## PHYSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

### ALBA CRUZ AND CÓDIGO DH, MEXICO

Alba Cruz, a human rights lawyer, and other members of the Mexican human rights organisation Código DH, requested PBI accompaniment regularly in 2011. Despite serious threats, Código DH was able to open a new office and expand its legal defence work. PBI accompaniment enabled Alba to take on new cases of human rights abuses despite the increased risks involved with this. We provided 30 days accompaniment to Código DH in 2011.

We **visited accompanied organisations and individuals 2,284 times** during 2011. These visits and meetings provide moral support and practical advice and range from checking on defenders’ wellbeing to providing help with responses to specific security incidents.

We also made **hundreds of phone calls to defenders** to check on their whereabouts and safety.

We **monitored 72 demonstrations** providing a peaceful international presence and helping participants feel more confident about exercising their right to protest peacefully and reducing the potential for violence.

On request from human rights organisations, we ran or hosted **48 workshops attended by over 600 defenders**, providing security training and enabling them to cope with constant stress and psychological pressure.



PBI volunteers accompany Código DH members in Oaxaca, Mexico

We expressed our concern for human rights defenders in **450 meetings with local, national and regional authorities**, urging officials to uphold their commitments to protect human rights in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Nepal.

We released **at least 40 information bulletins and videos** featuring interviews, news updates and background information on the defenders we work with and the issues they are tackling. This included a comprehensive report on 11 years of PBI’s work with human rights defenders in

Indonesia and research on the situation of human rights defenders in Honduras. We also sent detailed information on the human rights situation to members of our support network each month. Our unique access to information, our rigorous analysis and our objectivity are key elements in the effectiveness of the protection we provide.

We **activated our emergency support networks six times** in response to the most pressing and serious issues being faced by the defenders we accompany.



PBI volunteer observes a demonstration in Guatemala City

## EMERGENCY ACTIVATION

### DAVID RAVELO, THE REGIONAL CORPORATION FOR THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CREDHOS), COLOMBIA

David Ravelo Crespo, a prominent Colombian human rights defender, has been a vocal critic of alleged violations committed by paramilitaries and state agents in the Magdalena Medio region and the impunity that continues to surround them. In September 2010, David was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit a crime and aggravated homicide. He has submitted himself to investigation voluntarily, and his lawyers have provided evidence to refute the charges against him, which include the allegation that he was a member of the FARC guerrilla group. Many national and international human rights organisations believe that this prosecution is part of a sustained attempt to stigmatise David and silence his criticism of the paramilitaries



David Ravelo

and their collusion with the authorities. PBI provided detailed information about David's situation to key audiences including diplomatic staff,

parliamentarians, activists and authorities throughout 2011. As a result, David's case has garnered international attention, including the presence of various embassy representatives at the hearings. In addition, a delegation of national and international organisations visited David in jail as part of a conference about the criminalisation of human rights defenders. David's case has been cited as an emblematic case of targeted prosecutions against human rights defenders, including the annual report of the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Human Rights Federation. David has also expressed his appreciation to PBI for the emotional support provided via regular visits to him in jail. As long as David remains imprisoned we will continue to urge our support networks to put pressure on the Colombian Government to ensure due process in his case.

## WORKSHOPS

### TRAINING FOR WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NEPAL

We trained 118 women human rights defenders (WHRDs) in Nepal in 2011. Through participatory workshops we shared our risk analysis tools and provided practical help and advice on protection mechanisms. The majority of workshop participants were from marginalised communities. Our workshops provided a forum for them to share experiences and ask members of the international community for support.



Women human rights defenders participate in a human rights workshop in Dhanusha district, Nepal

We organised **over 900 meetings with the diplomatic corps, UN and other international agencies and local, national and international organisations and coalitions** to raise concerns about the safety of human rights defenders, provide information on the effectiveness of protection and preventative measures and propose ways in which policy and practice could be improved.

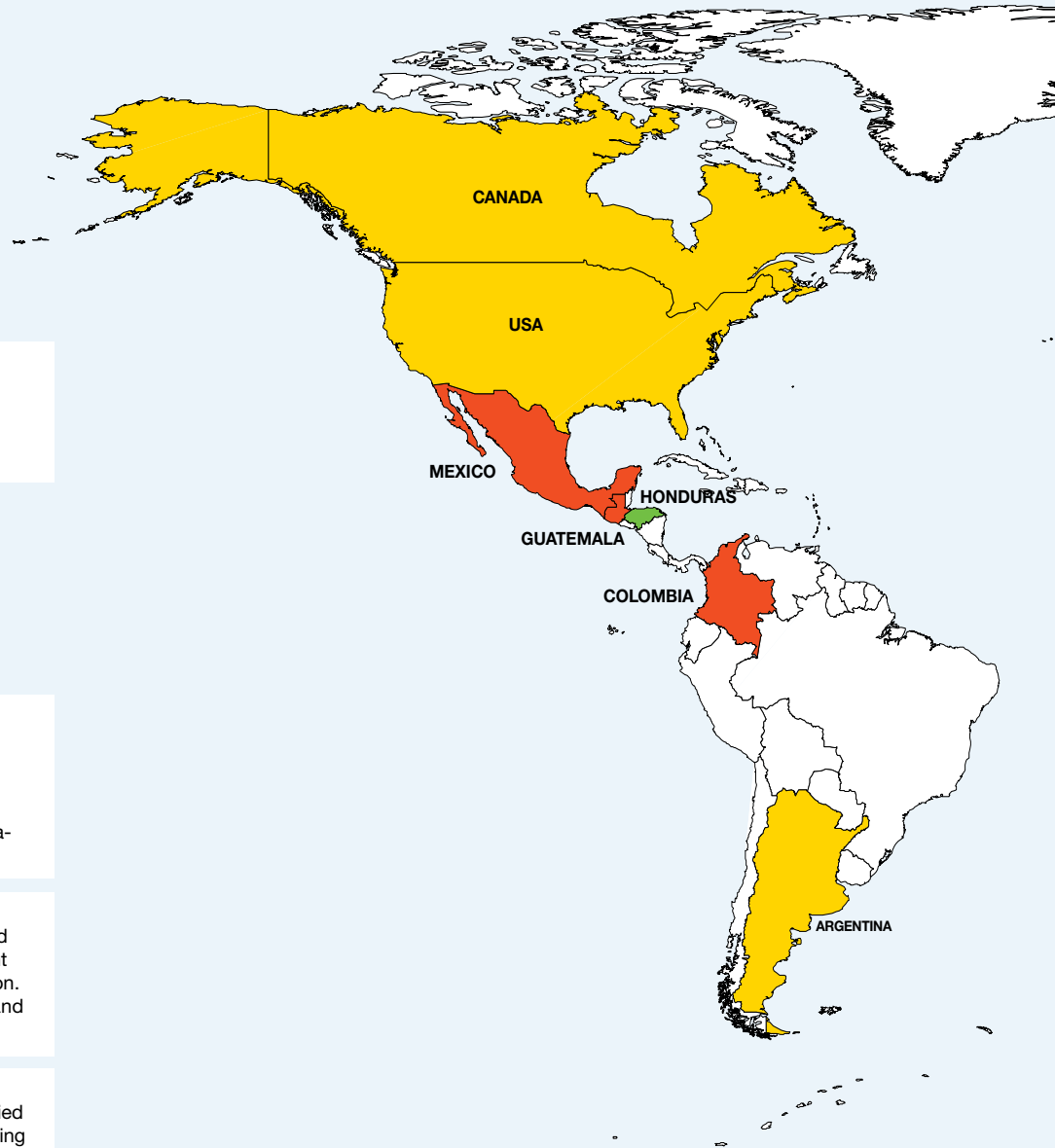
We organised **speaker tours for eight women and 17 men human rights defenders**, enabling them to travel to Europe and North America to raise international awareness about, and support for, their important work. These tours empowered defenders to develop and build relationships with key allies ranging from parliamentarians to grassroots activists, and gain much needed political, moral and financial support.

## SPEAKER TOUR

### YAN CHRISTIAN WARINUSSY, PAPUA, INDONESIA

Yan Christian Warinussy, a lawyer and Director of the Institute for Research, Investigation and Development of Legal Aid (LP3BH), has worked to shed light on gross human rights violations and defend people whose rights have been ignored in West Papua for over fifteen years. Although PBI was unable to carry out field work in Papua in 2011, we worked hard to ensure the voices of human rights defenders in this troubled region were heard. With support from PBI, Yan travelled to Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France in October. He participated in our 30th anniversary conferences in Germany and France and met with NGOs, parliamentarians, government and European Commission officials as well as lawyers' associations. He was also featured in the local press. The Third Papuan People's Congress had just been dissolved by force by the Indonesian military and Yan was able to voice his concerns (and his desire for PBI to return to Indonesia) to a receptive international audience. Yan's trip raised awareness of the situation facing human rights defenders in Papua at a crucial moment and enabled him to create important links with international human rights NGOs and sympathetic lobby groups such as the Parliamentary Group of Friends of Indonesia in the French Senate.

# Where we work



## KEY TO MAP

- Field Projects
- Exploration work
- Country Groups

## Field projects

### ■ COLOMBIA

Thirty eight international volunteers accompanied 209 defenders working on a range of issues from natural resource protection to forced disappearances. Volunteers are based in Bogotá, Barranquilla, Urabá and Cali.

### ■ GUATEMALA

Ten international volunteers accompanied 59 defenders working on the environment and land rights, impunity and globalisation. Volunteers are based in Guatemala city and travel to other areas of the country.

### ■ MEXICO

Eleven international volunteers accompanied 65 defenders working on impunity, upholding indigenous rights and environmental protection. Volunteers are based in Mexico City and Oaxaca. There will be a limited field presence in Guerrero and exploration in other states in 2012.

### ■ NEPAL

Ten international volunteers accompanied 39 defenders working on women's rights, impunity and promoting the rule of law. Volunteers are based in Kathmandu and Gulariya, in the mid-west of the lowland Terai region, and travel to many remote areas in Nepal. They work with isolated defenders and provide a range of support in addition to accompaniment, including training, field consultations and round table events.

## Exploration work

### ■ HONDURAS

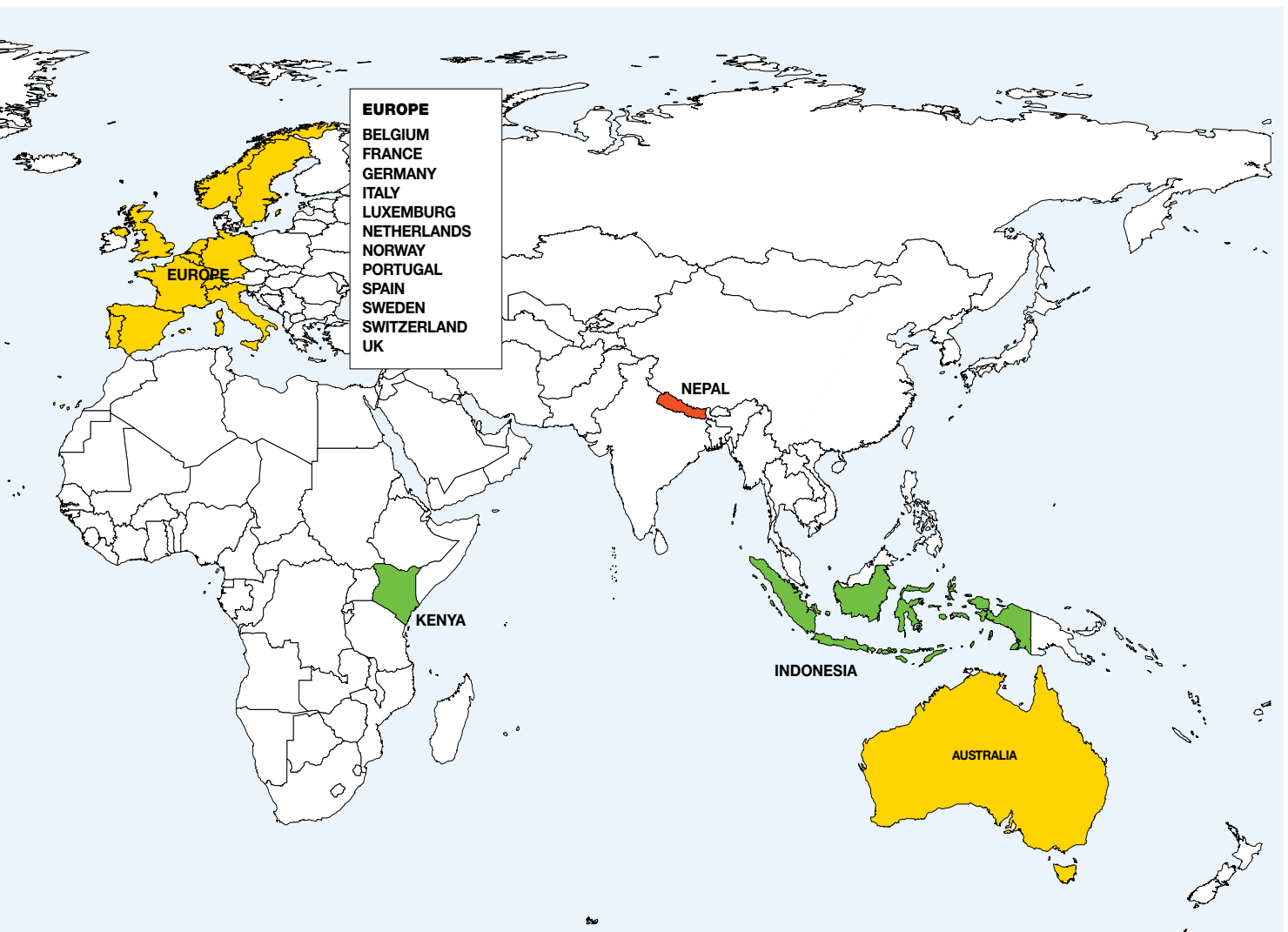
In 2011, in response to a request from the Honduran Human Rights Platform, PBI undertook field research and produced a report on the situation for human rights defenders. In 2012, PBI plans to conduct further research and explore the possibility of opening a field presence in the country.

### ■ INDONESIA

PBI monitored the situation for human rights defenders in Indonesia, particularly Papua, in 2011. We also conducted initial research into the feasibility of returning to Indonesia. Our exploratory work in Indonesia will continue in 2012.

### ■ KENYA

PBI carried out an in-depth assessment of the situation for human rights defenders to determine whether we should establish a field project in Kenya. In 2012 we will publish a public report on our findings and decide whether it is feasible to establish the first PBI field presence in Africa.



## Country groups

### PBI COUNTRY GROUPS

Without country groups, PBI would be unable to offer international protective accompaniment to human rights defenders and would have limited international support or impact. Country groups find, train and support our international volunteers. They raise funds for our field projects. They develop links with elected officials, embassy staff, lawyers, judges, academics, NGOs, community groups and individuals to support human rights defenders. Country groups raise awareness of human rights abuses and advocate for action by the international community.

■ ARGENTINA	■ NETHERLANDS
■ AUSTRALIA	■ NORWAY
■ BELGIUM	■ PORTUGAL
■ CANADA	■ SPAIN
■ FRANCE	■ SWITZERLAND
■ GERMANY	■ SWEDEN
■ ITALY	■ UK
■ LUXEMBURG	■ USA

# Who we work with

In 2011, we worked with 372 human rights defenders in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico and Nepal.

In all of these countries, human rights defenders were threatened, intimidated, harassed, arrested, detained, persecuted, tortured or killed because of their beliefs and actions. Defending rights remained

a highly dangerous activity and human rights defenders continued to request PBI's international protective accompaniment to help them confront the challenges they face.

The defenders featured in these pages are some of the courageous people we worked with.

Many of the human rights defenders PBI protects are working to support subsistence farming and indigenous communities whose rights are threatened by the interests of large scale extractive, agribusiness and infrastructure projects.

## BERENICE CELEYTA, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH (NOMADESC), COLOMBIA

Berenice Celeyta has worked as a human rights advocate and forensic anthropologist for over 20 years and founded NOMADESC in 1999. NOMADESC provides advice and support to indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups, small-scale farmers organisations, and trade unions in south west Colombia. In this resource-rich region, NOMADESC works with communities such as the Afro-Colombian inhabitants of Suárez, who are demanding answers from the Colombian Government about the activities of multinational corporations including South Africa's AngloGold Ashanti and the Canadian company Cosigo Resources. According to the people of Suárez, these multinationals have tried to evict them from the area and steal the wealth of their territory.

Investigating powerful multinational corporations and supporting vulnerable communities in their struggles to defend their rights is extremely dangerous. Carrying out this work leaves Berenice Celeyta and her colleagues very vulnerable – they have received death threats, sensitive material has been stolen and their phones have been illegally tapped.

PBI has accompanied Berenice Celeyta since 1999. In 2011, PBI conducted in-depth research into opening a field office in Cali following requests from defenders in the Cauca region where NOMADESC is based. This exploration enabled PBI to offer more extensive support to Berenice and open a formal partnership with NOMADESC.

In 2010, NOMADESC received 12 death threats on eight separate occasions. In 2011, when PBI had established a field presence in the Cauca region, NOMADESC only received three threats. However, members of the organisation regularly reported unknown

individuals keeping watch outside their offices throughout the year and their risk levels remained high.

In 2011, PBI provided 63 days of physical accompaniment to Berenice and two of her colleagues Olga Araujo and Natalia Castro, who run NOMADESC's education and investigation programmes respectively. PBI volunteers

accompanied these inspirational women during their visits to rural areas in Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño providing protection while they carried out their most vital and dangerous work, including human rights training for indigenous communities. In addition, PBI accompaniment enabled NOMADESC to participate in a National Congress on Land Rights in the town of Cajamarca in the centre of the country. PBI volunteers visited NOMADESC's office in Cali twice a week and took part in 18 meetings with the organisation, helping them develop a strategy for prevention and long term protection. NOMADESC's work with the mining community of Suárez was featured in PBI Colombia's thematic publication on mining in November 2011.

PBI's international accompaniment is the most effective form of protection NOMADESC could hope for.

Berenice Celeyta



Berenice Celeyta

Photo courtesy of Julian Montori



## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: DEFINITION

A human rights defender is anyone who works nonviolently to promote and protect the human rights of others. Basing its definition on the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the EU defines human rights defenders as "... those individuals, groups and organs of society that promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders seek the promotion

and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection and realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. Human rights defenders also promote and protect the rights of members of groups such as indigenous communities. The definition does not include those individuals or groups who commit or propagate violence". EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, updated version, 2008

It is a beautiful thing to feel international solidarity so that the government knows we are not alone, that there are eyes watching; and finally, this solidarity is visible through letters, through urgent action or through presence on the ground, such as that of Peace Brigades International.

Padre Uvi

## PADRE UVI, FOUNDER OF THE "BARTOLOME CARRASCO BRISENO" REGIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (BARCA-DH), MEXICO

Padre Wilfrido Mayrén Peláez (better known as Padre Uvi), a Catholic Priest, founded Barca-DH in 1992 to support indigenous and farming communities in the highlands of Oaxaca, southern Mexico. He was shocked by the injustice and suffering he encountered. Barca-DH empowers communities by giving them the tools and resources they need to defend their rights. The organisation provides legal support and human rights training to communities whose livelihoods are threatened by powerful local interests and the exploitation of natural resources through mining.

Barca-DH has taken on legal cases on behalf of community members, including the forced disappearance of ten members of the Ecotourist Cooperative "Zapotengo Pacheco" allegedly by the federal investigation agency. On 29 November 2011, as a result of Barca-DH's work, the Inter American Court issued precautionary measures in the Zapotengo Pacheco case. Barca-DH also organised a very successful conference attended by grassroots human rights organisations from across Mexico. Participants shared their experiences of defending the rights of indigenous communities and issued a joint statement stressing the importance of the right to free, prior and informed consent.

Barca-DH's work puts Father Uvi and his colleagues at real risk. Father Uvi has received death threats, been intimidated and shot at. In recent years, attempts to silence Barca-DH have also focused on discrediting the organisation in the media, through smear campaigns and

through unfounded legal action. This situation led Barca-DH to request PBI's support in 2010.

PBI has accompanied Barca-DH since October 2010. We support Nora Minerva Martínez Lázaro, Barca-DH's coordinator and Padre Martín Octavio García Ortiz as well as Padre Uvi. In 2011, we provided 18 days of physical accompaniment to Barca-DH and visited the organisation on 21 different occasions. Ten Barca-DH members took part in our security training programme and we undertook two in-depth meetings focusing on risk assessment and security support. We

work in response to human rights defenders' needs and Barca-DH felt the best way we could provide support would be through raising awareness of their vital work and the challenges they face. We featured Barca-DH on our website, in our print publications (such as the one focussed on mining) and in our contact with authorities and supporters at all levels. We organised speaker tours for Nora Martínez to Spain in August and Padre Uvi to various European countries in November. Padre Uvi participated in PBI's anniversary conferences in Germany and the UK.



Padre Uvi

# Who we work with

**P** BI is a member of the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition, and provides protection and support to many women

defenders – who can be targeted simply for who they are as well as the work that they do. Women defenders, through their very existence, often challenge accepted socio-

cultural norms, traditions, perceptions and stereotypes about femininity, sexual orientation, and the role and status of women in society.

## BIMALA B K, DALIT FEMINIST UPLIFT ORGANISATION (DAFUO), NEPAL

Bimala B K is a low caste Dalit woman from the rural Bardiya district of Midwestern Nepal. Dalit women face acute discrimination because of both their low social status and their gender. Rape, sexual abuse and harassment are commonplace and it is virtually impossible for victims even to file a complaint at a police station, let alone achieve justice – especially when perpetrators are upper caste or come from influential local families.

After finishing school, Bimala started volunteering with DAFUO (Dalit Feminist Uplift Organization), a local NGO established by and for Dalit women in 1997. DAFUO provides legal support to Dalit women as well as running a counselling and mediation service and various outreach and awareness-raising activities. Since Bimala joined DAFUO, she has been a vocal advocate of Dalit women's rights. She is currently DAFUO's Chairperson and has succeeded in filing many cases on behalf of victims of rape, domestic violence and caste discrimination.

Bimala is frequently subjected to threats and intimidation from community members, political leaders and authorities as a result of her attempts to achieve justice for Dalit women. Local police are often reluctant to file complaints related to domestic violence and caste issues; they are susceptible to pressure from local politicians and tend to share the negative opinions many community members hold about Dalit women. The negative attitude and obstruction from local police officers presents additional challenges for Bimala and her colleagues.

PBI has supported Bimala and DAFUO since 2009. In March 2011, Bimala filed a case against Army personnel who were involved in the killing of three Dalit women in Bardiya National Park. PBI volunteers provided protective accompaniment to



Bimala B K

Bimala and the victims' families while they filed the case. PBI volunteers also observed a rally that Bimala organised to raise awareness and seek justice for this case and have regularly visited the victims' families at their request.

In 2011, Bimala asked PBI to develop a security and risk analysis workshop for

DAFUO staff. Twenty DAFUO staff members attended. Feedback from the training was very positive, and a number of ideas about how DAFUO could develop and improve their security strategies and policies were generated. We also organised a "do no harm" workshop in partnership with the UN in Nepalgunj in which DAFUO, along with another six local organisations, participated.

PBI worked hard to raise awareness of the issues faced by Bimala and DAFUO, as well as women human rights defenders generally. We invited DAFUO to share their experiences with other Nepali women defenders as part of a series of field trips to reach out to women defenders in remote regions. We featured Bimala in our publications.

**PBI is an organization that helps defenders in their work and PBI helps us. I feel that we are stronger when PBI is with us. When we share our difficulties and our challenges with PBI then PBI can help us.**

**Bimala B K**

**P**BI provides protective accompaniment to many lawyers and others who provide legal advice and support alongside other work.

In North America and Western Europe a lawyer can represent an individual or group challenging public institutions or powerful interests without feeling personally at risk.

This is not the case in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico or Nepal where threats and intimidation are an everyday reality for human rights lawyers.

#### EDGAR PÉREZ, HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER, GUATEMALA

Forty-one year old Edgar Pérez is an exceptionally brave man. He is a leading human rights lawyer in Guatemala, one of the few who is prepared to take on emblematic legal cases in which high level officials are implicated. Since 1997 Edgar has given legal advice and represented families seeking justice for the thousands of victims of Guatemala's 36 year armed conflict. Against a background of entrenched impunity and political violence, Edgar has achieved some remarkable victories, including in 2009 the first successful case condemning forced disappearance, and in 2011 the conviction of four soldiers for their role in the notorious 1982 Dos Erres massacre in which more than 250 villagers were murdered in cold blood by a specialist army unit. He is currently litigating in the first ever genocide case to be heard in a Latin American courtroom, against former President Efraín Ríos Montt and leading military commanders.

Due to his efforts to hold the Guatemalan state accountable for grave human rights violations, Edgar has suffered multiple attacks including intimidating phone calls, blackmail attempts, death threats and tampering with the brakes on his car. Edgar's security situation continues to remain precarious in spite of support he receives from PBI and other international human rights organisations.

Edgar asked for PBI's help and has received support since August 2010. Throughout 2011 PBI volunteers and staff from around the world helped to keep Edgar safe, increased awareness and provided vital



moral and practical support. PBI volunteers visited his office every week in 2011, and provided 52 days of physical accompaniment on various occasions, from visits to rural communities to court hearings. In this way, PBI volunteers served as the physical embodiment of the international community's interest in Edgar's ground-breaking human rights work and its concern for his safety. We worked closely with Edgar, sharing our risk assessment tools and supporting him to develop safety measures and improve his security through quarterly, in-depth meetings. PBI volunteers and staff provided timely, detailed information to the international community about Edgar's work and security situation, harnessing the interest and commitment of a wide range of concerned people including government officials, fellow lawyers, embassy staff and grassroots activists

through our country groups. In August we issued an emergency alert expressing our concern about the security situation of people challenging impunity and involved in emblematic cases in Guatemala. We met with national authorities and key international institutions both in Guatemala and elsewhere.

A key area of PBI's work is to raise the profile of the people we support, and the issues they work on. We featured Edgar's work in our publications and online in 2011. We supported Edgar to travel to Belgium, the UK and Ireland in September 2011 where he met with a range of key contacts. In 2011, the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission nominated Edgar for the American Bar Association's International Human Rights Lawyer Award.

**STOP PRESS**  
We have just found out that Edgar won this award!

# 30 years of defending human rights

In October and November, PBI organised a series of conferences and other events to mark our 30th anniversary. Our aim was to contribute to the global movement for Human Rights and Peace by amplifying the voices of the brave people we work with.

PBI Germany, PBI Spanish State, PBI Switzerland and PBI UK organized conferences which brought together defenders and other activists accompanied by PBI, decision-makers, academics, UN officials, lawyers and the public. The PBI UK conference (A Dangerous Business: The human cost of advocating against environmental degradation and land rights violations) focused on transnational corporations and redress for human rights abuses they may be associated with. The conference was timed to coincide with the creation of the new UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. The German and Swiss events focused on evaluating the effectiveness of existing protection frameworks and mechanisms such as the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and the UN Declaration on HRDs, while the PBI Spanish State event focused on strategies to address the criminalisation of defenders.

A Guatemala celebration took the form of round tables that brought together defenders, activists, lawyers and community members accompanied by PBI, representatives of the UN and international organisations.

...these brave men and women often operate at great risk to their safety and that of their families. They suffer harm, face threats and attacks to their life, liberty, security. Often their independence and credibility is questioned by State and non-State actors who attempt to deter them from their valuable work.

**Margaret Sekagya,**  
PBI Germany conference



## Giving a voice to defenders and the problems they face

The PBI UK conference focused on business and human rights but all the events covered this pressing issue in some way. Participants spoke of how companies frequently fail to honour international obligations to ensure indigenous or other traditional communities give "free, prior and informed consent" to projects that might affect their way of life. This violates cultural rights but also establishes an asymmetrical relationship between the community and the company.

The conferences highlighted the different effects of violations on gender and cultural identity: how women are victimized in different ways to men, and how indigenous, African-American and small-farming communities are frequently engaged in a struggle to protect their ancestral lands and their culture. They looked at the ways in which women defenders and activists, for example, may have to struggle so that their own communities recognise their rights. The conferences discussed the situation in remote regions where the state is weak, corrupt or both and where "non-state actors" frequently violate their rights with impunity.

The conferences discussed how the term "non-state actor", though useful, can be unhelpful. The term applies to legal organizations such as companies or commercial and religious organizations but also to illegal groups including paramilitaries, private security

firms and drugs traffickers. At times these groups may work together: a company, private individual or even a state body employing non-state actors to do the work they cannot do. For example intimidating, attacking or killing those who exercise their right to freedom of expression and continue to question the effects of economic projects.

The conferences also examined ways in which stigmatisation and defamation make the work of defenders and activists harder and more dangerous. Defenders spoke of how some authorities accuse them of subversion, of being anti-patriotic or enemies of progress. They explained how this increases their vulnerability, encouraging state and non-state actors to attack them. They also described the way the legal system is frequently used against them, by criminalizing their activities, or prioritizing individual property over their health, education or culture, or forcing community leaders to defend themselves against spurious and malicious cases. The round tables in Guatemala provided many examples of communities becoming embroiled in cases brought by the companies with which they are in dispute while cases they themselves bring about intimidation and murder appear to be left to languish. Participants in the German conference stressed how communities that are seeking to protect their economic, social and cultural rights feel particularly vulnerable as every aspect of their lives is threatened, often by extremely powerful transnational interests.

### The way forward

All the events PBI organised to celebrate its 30th Anniversary produced recommendations to improve the security of human rights defenders and activists. Many built on or echoed recommendations that have been made before by PBI, by other NGOs, by UN bodies and the Inter-American Human Rights System as well – crucially – as by defenders and activists themselves.

### On existing government mechanisms for the protection of HRDs:

- EU and other governments that have produced guidelines on Human Rights Defenders should ensure that diplomats and officials understand their contents and are expected to follow them;
- Governments should ensure that Human Rights in general and the protection of

Human Rights Defenders in particular are taken into account in all foreign policy and commercial decisions. For example, human rights articles should be included in commercial contracts, local human rights strategies should be developed in consultation with defenders, and human rights dialogues should be encouraged;

- In the case of the EU, member states should not reduce their active commitment to the protection of Human Rights and Human Rights Defenders on the grounds that the EU Delegation has overall responsibility for these areas.

### On Business and Human Rights:

- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights should be used to assess the human rights records of states under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in order to ensure business and human rights

I am here principally because I am looking for international support.

**Blanca Velázquez**, Mexican HRD, speaking at the PBI Spanish State event

issues are incorporated into the wider human rights agenda;

- Host states should amend or pass new legislation to make domiciled businesses and their citizens involved in abuses abroad liable for their actions;
- Home states should promote improved access to domestic judicial mechanisms enabling aggrieved communities to seek justice where companies are domiciled;
- Companies should be accountable to independently verified, enforceable, codes of conduct.



**Michael Mansfield, QC**, speaking at PBI UK's conference

# Our volunteers and supporters

Without hundreds of dedicated individuals and organisations who support us with their time, energy and financial contributions our human rights work would not be possible.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to PBI.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

107 international volunteers provided protection to 372 human rights defenders in the field in 2011.

Volunteers came from:



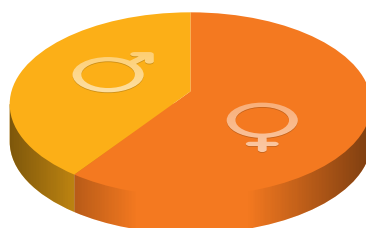
PBI was also supported by **over 200 volunteers** in 16 country groups in Europe, North America, Latin America and Australia.

## OUR SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank the many organisations and individuals who made generous contributions to our work in 2011, including: Agencia Catalana de Cooperación y Desarrollo, Ayuntamiento de Camargo, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID), Ayuntamiento de Santander, Ayuntamiento de Pamplona, Ayuntamiento de Valladolid, Basilian Fathers, Berti Wicke Foundation, Broederlijk Delen, Christian Aid, City of Nyon, Civil Peace Service (Germany), Colegio de Abogados de Bizcaia, Diakonisches Werk, European Union – European Instrument

for Democracy and Human Rights, Fair Share Foundation, Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Fondo Cantabria Cooperera, Fribourg Solidarity, Fund for Nonviolence, Hartstra Foundation, ICCO, Intermon-Oxfam, Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst, International Solidarity Service – Switzerland Canton Geneva, Irish Aid – Civil Society Fund, Kerkinactie, l'Agence Française de Développement, Mensen met een Missie, Misereor, Municipality Juxtens-Mézery, Municipality Vevey, Municipality Wallisellen, Non Violence XXI, Ontario Public Services Employees Union (OPSEU), Oxfam Solidarité/Solidariteit, Philamonic Trust, Protestant

Church Muri-Gümligen, Protestant Church St.Gallen-Tablat, Protestant Church Wallisellen, Swedish Diakonia, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland Canton Basel-City, Switzerland Canton Luzern, Switzerland Canton Vaud, Switzerland Lottery fund Canton Bern, The British Embassies in Mexico and Nepal/Foreign and Commonwealth Office, The Canadian Embassy in Mexico, The Congregation of St. Basil Human Development Fund, The Foreign Ministry of Norway, The Funding Network, The Law Society Charity (UK), The Overbrook Foundation, The Philamonic Trust, Trocaire, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, weltwaerts, zivik.



## GENDER

Female	65	(61%)
Male	42	(39%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>107</b>	

Being a field volunteer is really rewarding, I feel real solidarity with the defenders we work with and get to see – in a very immediate way – how PBI empowers them and helps them to do their work.

It's difficult to describe a typical day as no two days are the same – which is a really good thing! Today I've got to analyse news from last week and put it all in a summary for our weekly meeting tomorrow, as well as being "on duty" answering the phone, being on skype, responding to emails, making sure water is delivered to our tank. We do at least one or two physical accompaniments each week, which is the main thing people hear about. But there are so many other things we do too. We have meetings with defenders just to talk to them and deepen our knowledge of what's going on for them, we provide regular assessments and advice on security issues and run security workshops when requested (roughly once a month). We do a lot of publications work. We meet with the authorities regularly – this is crucial. The visibility we give to very brave people is the most important thing we do, and the legitimacy we give them before the authorities is a key part of that.

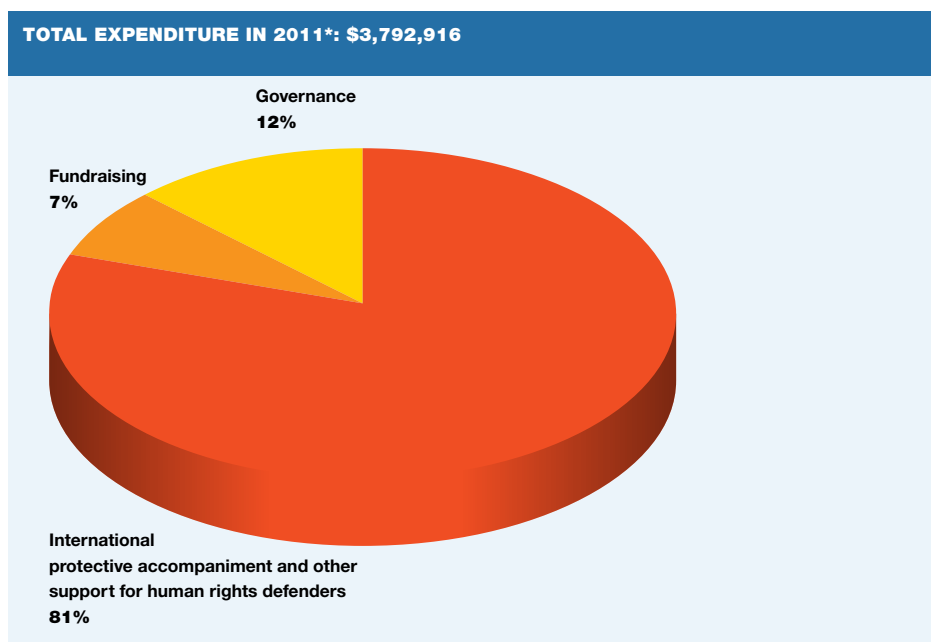
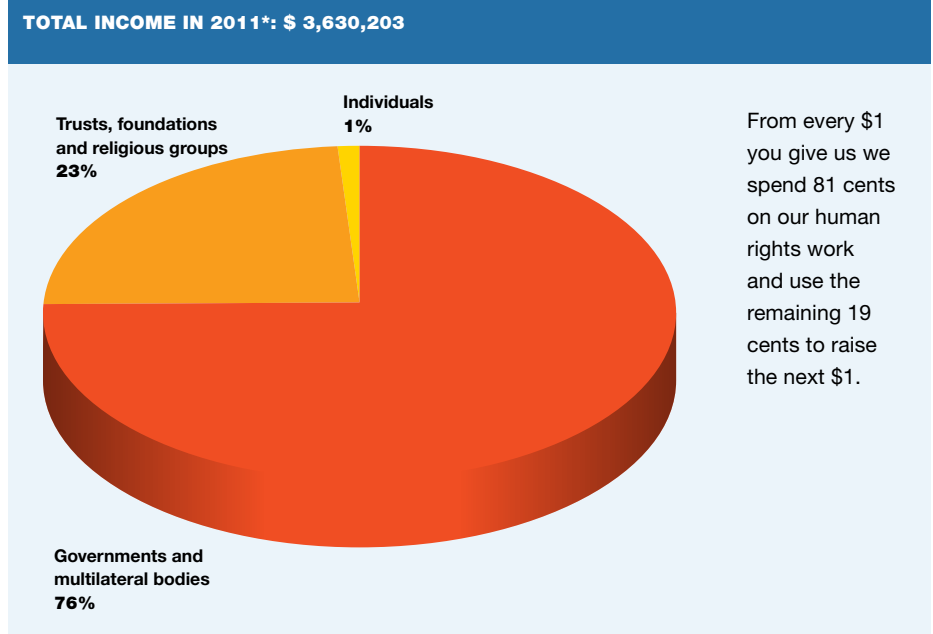
PBI runs on pure commitment. Everybody at PBI is in it because it's in us, we all work really hard giving everything we've got. PBI doesn't have huge financial resources but we do have a prolonged and dedicated commitment to Human Rights.

**Dan Cloney**, PBI field volunteer, Mexico

### Who funds PBI

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

Most of our income is raised by country groups who work closely with donors in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, the UK and the USA.



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

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