

JULY 2014



BULLETIN

PBI HONDURAS



INDEX

5	EDITORIAL
6	NEWS ON OUR WORK
8	DEVELOPMENTS IN PROTECTION MECHANISMS
10	FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN HONDURAS: AT WHAT COST?
	DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS: ENSURING INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM
	OBSTACLES TO FREE COMMUNICATIONS
	LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION
16	CEHPRODEC: DEFENCE OF TERRITORY, LAND AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD
	THE GAP BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
	THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A HIGH-RISK ACTIVITY

EDITORIAL

BULLETIN PBI HONDURAS

Field Team: Sarah Fritsch, Pablo Stock, Valdivia Moutawali and Valerie Elsig.

Drafting, revising and editing: Maria José Vera Valdivieso.

Coordinator: Giovanna Tejjido Vázquez

Translation: Joanne Hutchinson

Graphic and Design: Matteo Motta (matmot.eu)

Photos: PBI

July 2014

This publication was produced with the financial support of Sigrid Rausing Trust, ZFD (German Civil Peace Service), COSUDE (Coopeación Suiza), Iglesia Valdes (PBI Italy), Misereor, Trocaire, CARITAS France, Bread for the World, UNIFOR and OPSEU.

We are very happy to present the first PBI Honduras newsletter.

After nearly a year since our accompaniment project was opened in this Central American country, we bring you this publication, as part of our international information work.

PBI Honduras is a project which is small and very recent when compared to its sister projects, but that does not mean the situation of human rights in Honduras is cause for less concern. We have already discussed this in our reports published in 2011 and 2012, after the short-term missions in which we witnessed the deterioration of situation after the June 2009 coup d'état. That is why we received a request to provide protective accompaniment or human rights workers, and that is why since October 2013 we have maintained a permanent team in Honduras in response to that request.

We have spent the past months resolving the challenges inherent in any project start-up. Even though we may be relative beginners with little experience, we are highly determined and have a strong belief in what we are working towards, and so we keep moving forward with steady footsteps. We say the same thing as our colleagues in PBI Guatemala, PBI Mexico or PBI Colombia when they celebrate their anniversaries: "we wish we did not have to celebrate anniversaries, as this would mean we were no longer in the country as our presence was no longer needed". This is the same feeling we have in PBI Honduras, a mixture of enthusiasm for the new project and confidence in its positive impact, and frustration, because each and every one of us wishes that PBI was not necessary.

Nevertheless, we are here, and this is our first publication, in which we discuss the worrying situation of freedom of expression and present the work of CEHPRODEC; one of our accompanied organisations. This newsletter will be followed by others, in which we will continue to emphasize the extraordinary work of defenders in Honduras, and the daily risks they face. We hope that this newsletter will serve as an awareness-raising tool and, above all, will contribute to protecting the defence of human rights.

Welcome to our publications and we hope you enjoy reading them!

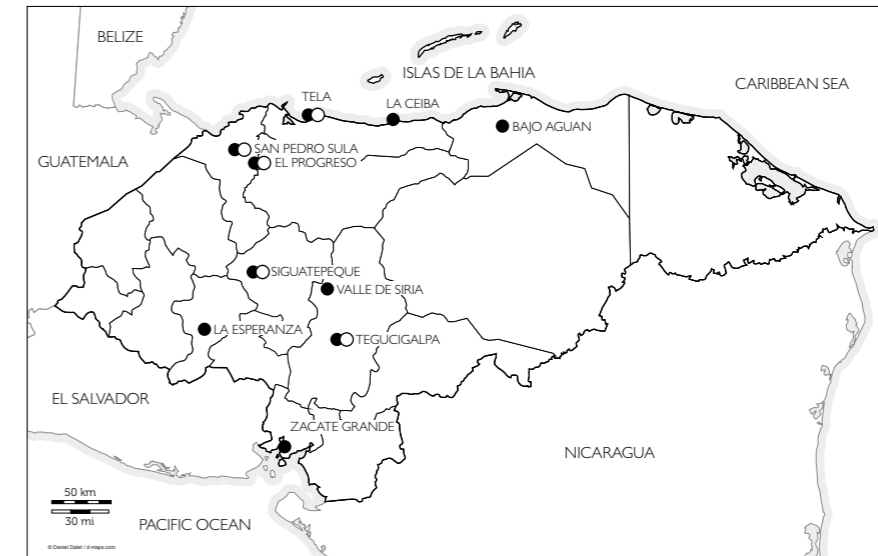
NEWS ON OUR WORK

INTERNATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT AND OBSERVATION

For PBI's work to be effective, the different sectors involved need to understand our objectives and working methods. For that reason, in the first half of 2014 PBI gave presentations on international accompaniment as a protective tool for those threatened because of their work defending human rights. During this period 55 such meetings were held with Honduran civil society organisations, half of them during exploratory visits to the departments of La Paz, Intibucá, Santa Bárbara, Cortés, Yoro, Atlántida and Colón. Meetings were also held with representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization; the Human Rights Prosecutors' Office; the Armed Forces Human Rights Office; the National Human Rights Commission (CONADEH) and the National Police. Furthermore, in order to discourage the use of violence during events considered risky by Honduran organisations, PBI's international observers attended several events, one of them being the inauguration of Juan Orlando Hernández as President of Honduras. As a result of this work PBI received five requests for international support from Honduran human rights organisations, and two requests for training on physical security and computer



PBI accompaniment, Nahuaterique, May 2014. Photo: PBI



MAP OF PBI VISITS TO HONDURAS

● May 2011
○ September / October 2012

security. In May 2014, PBI Honduras began accompanying the Honduran Promotion Centre for Community Development (Centro Hondureño de Promoción al Desarrollo Comunitario - CEHPRODEC) and journalist Dina Meza.

STRENGTHENING THE SUPPORT NETWORK

Our presence in over 17 countries in 4 continents has enabled us to build a support network for the Honduras Project that can be activated in situations of risk for defenders. This network can be mobilized to put pressure on governments and request that they meet their international commitments regarding the protection of human rights. In order to continue strengthening the Project Network, a total of 10 meetings were held with the diplomatic corps in Honduras⁰¹, Guatemala⁰² and Mexico⁰³, and 21 meetings were held with international organisations. Outside of Honduras, as a result of joint work with PBI country groups, the Honduras Project participated in events and bilateral meetings with representatives of civil society and national authorities in Italy⁰⁴, UK⁰⁵, Canada⁰⁶, Switzerland, France, Germany⁰⁷ and the Netherlands⁰⁸.

01. Delegation of the European Union, German Embassy, French Embassy, Chilean Consulate, Dutch Consulate, and visit of the Swiss Embassy.
02. Norwegian Embassy and Dutch Embassy.
03. Australian Embassy, Finnish Embassy and Irish Embassy.
04. PBI Italy bilateral meeting with the officer for Central America and Mexico of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Marco Giomini, June 13, Rome, Italy.
05. Bilateral meetings with Ms. Celia Anthony, Desk Officer Honduras, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Meeting with members of the Latin America sub-group of BOND - Christian Aid and with the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, May 12 and 13, 2014, London, UK.
06. Participation of PBI Canada in the meeting of the Americas Policy Group with a delegation from Honduras, and Ms. Karla Eugenia Cueva, Deputy Secretary of Human Rights, Justice and Governance of the Honduran government, June 2014, Ottawa, Canada.
07. Participation of PBI Germany in the civil society consultation organised by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Participants included: Dr. Lotz, Vice-Director for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean; Ms. Beutin, officer for Guatemala and Honduras; Mr. Rohland from the United Nations Department and a representative from the Ministry of International Cooperation, June 17, Berlin, Germany.
08. Bilateral meeting with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Marieke Holzapfel (Regional Coordinator Latin America) & Frank Huisingh (Policy Officer, Human Rights Defenders), May 21, 2014, The Hague, Netherlands.

DEVELOPMENTS IN PROTECTION MECHANISMS

It is essential to monitor the social situation in Honduras and policies for the protection of defenders, in order to achieve effective results in our international accompaniment work.

One such initiative is the Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Communicators and Justice Operators⁰⁹. The Decree for the creation of this law was approved on 4 June in the Honduran Congress. Back in 2012, human rights organisations had shared the draft version of this Law with PBI during our exploratory mission. PBI hopes that the application of this Law will be effective and will really help to reduce levels of violence against these groups.

Speaking of protection mechanisms, it is also important to refer to the European Union (EU) "Guidelines for the protection of human rights defenders"¹⁰. Despite several initiatives to raise awareness of the guidelines, there continues to be a wide-ranging lack of knowledge about them among Honduran human rights organisations. PBI has been able to corroborate this fact during the preparation of our report "Ten years since the adoption of the EU guidelines: an evaluation from the field"¹¹, based on interviews conducted with accompanied people and the diplomatic corps. Some of the interviewees reported that the locations of embassies and the geographic scope of their actions limit the effective application of this tool. In fact, when compared to the actions of the embassies in Guatemala, the differences are notable. Moreover, during the EU Delegation's consultation with civil society on 16 June in Tegucigalpa, it was observed that most of those who took part came from the capital city, except for a few representatives of organisations from Mosquitia, La Paz and the south of Honduras.

It is also important to emphasise that at the end of 2013, the "Swiss Guidelines for the protection of human rights defenders" were published. PBI participated in a consultation event organized by the Centre for the Promotion of Peace (KOFF, for its acronym in German) on June 12 in Bern. The workshop was attended by representatives of civil society organisations working in Guatemala and Honduras, activists from these two countries, and representatives of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the event was to develop recommendations for the proper implementation of these Guidelines.

09. "Ley de protección para periodistas en Honduras, paso de avance para derrotar la violencia", Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, June 6, 2014.

10. "Guaranteeing Protection: European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders", adopted by the European Union Council in 2004 and updated in 2008.

11. "Ten years since the adoption of the EU guidelines: an evaluation from the field", PBI, July 2014.

During the ordinary sessions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), held in April 2014, it was reported that some of the beneficiaries of precautionary protection measures had been killed. While the number of measures granted increased exponentially after the 2009 coup d'état, civil society organisations denounced that there has been no monitoring process for their effective implementation. At the end of April the government of Juan Orlando Hernández requested that the IACHR suspend a number of precautionary measures already granted, arguing that the context that gave rise to them had completely changed and that the political crisis of 2009 had been overcome; the proof being the elections held in November 2013. Although at the time of writing this newsletter, there has been no official response from the Commission to this request from the government, PBI wishes to express concern about the possible removal of this protection mechanism from some people, since this could expose them to greater risks.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN HONDURAS: AT WHAT COST?

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has once again included Honduras in its 2013 report, in the chapter dedicated to countries where massive, gross and systematic human rights violations occur. The IACHR notes "with concern the problem of security, lack of independence of the judiciary and other State branches, as well as impunity. The organism also warns about the situation of human rights defenders, freedom of expression and indigenous peoples"¹². The IACHR also state that the human rights situation has worsened since the coup of 2009.

This concern is supported by statistics compiled by various human rights organisations. According to the National Human Rights Commissioner (Comisionado Nacional de Derechos Humanos - CONADEH) in little more than ten years there have been 41 violent deaths of journalists and social communicators, raising alarms about the vulnerability of this sector¹³. In 2013 alone, 191 attacks and 11 murders were reported against people exercising their right to free speech, according to the 2013 Report from the organisation C-Libre on freedom of expression. During the first half of 2014 the murders of journalist Hernán Cruz Barnica¹⁴ and a contributor to Radio Progreso, Carlos Mejía Orellana¹⁵, were reported. The organisation Freedom House found that Honduras and Mexico are two of the most dangerous countries to be a journalist¹⁶.

THE MURDER OF CARLOS MEJÍA ORELLANA

Carlos Mejía Orellana, marketing manager of Radio Progreso, was stabbed to death on the afternoon of April 11, 2014 at his home in El Progreso. At the time of writing this report, more than two months after the fact, there has been no progress in the investigation into his killing. The murder of Carlos, who had been granted precautionary measures from the IACHR, was reported by an online media source as a crime of passion, before the investigations even began. This and

12. "CIDH mantiene a Honduras en lista negra", El Heraldo, April 23, 2014 (our translation).
13. "Predomina impunidad en muertes de periodistas en Honduras", La Prensa, May 3, 2014.
14. "Another journalist murdered in Honduras, no end to violence in sight", Reporters without Borders (RWB), May 30, 2014.
15. "Radio Progreso employee murdered after receiving threats", Reporters without Borders (RWB), April 14, 2014.
16. "Freedom of the press 2013: Honduras", Freedom House: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2013/honduras#USloSXXKkVSo>

other situations raised concerns at several levels: on April 15 U.S. members of Congress James P. McGovern, Sam Farr, and Janice D. Schakowsky released a public statement on the matter¹⁷.

These figures reflect the lack of protection which has affected those who work for freedom of expression in Honduras since 2010. These murders and assaults are perhaps the most visible of the effects on journalists and media workers; however, they also faced daily pressures, instability, threats and obstacles to their work.

REPORTS OF THREATS

Journalist Alex Sabillón, who works for the Multicanal television channel in the department of Cortés, reported in May 2014 that an individual was taking pictures of his house¹⁸. The journalist, who has been granted precautionary measures by the Human Rights Prosecutor's office, has been receiving threats since the year 2010. Another important example is the case of journalist Mario Argeñal, brother of murdered journalist Juan Carlos Argeñal. He has been subjected to intimidation and harassment after making statements related to his brother's case and demanding that the authorities investigate the crime, according to reports from human rights organisations¹⁹.



Dina Meza is a renowned journalist and human rights defender in Honduras. PBI Honduras accompanies her since May 2014.

17. "Statement by Reps. McGovern, Farr, and Schakowsky on the murder in Honduras of Carlos Mejía Orellana", <http://mcgovern.house.gov/>, April 15, 2014.
18. "Another journalist murdered in Honduras, no end to violence in sight", Reporters without Borders (RWB), May 30, 2014.
19. "Honduras: brother of killed journalist at risk", Amnesty International, March 4, 2014

DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS: ENSURING INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM

One of the difficulties for journalism in Honduras lies in the working conditions available to journalists.

There is permanent instability for the profession which, as reported by journalist and university professor Patricia Murillo, is aggravated in the case of critical journalism: "We run the risk of losing our job because if you go looking for the news, you look for the source of the information and so you might touch on the interests of a friend of a media boss or an advertiser who pays for lots of advertising, because now the advertisers control audiences and control media content, so journalists might lose their job if they do that kind of work"²⁰.

We can therefore ascertain that in addition to violence and aggression, working conditions in the sector also have negative effects by creating obstacles to freedom of expression and hampering possibilities for critical journalism.

OBSTACLES TO FREE COMMUNICATIONS

"We have a real fight on our hands, we can no longer say things because drug dealers are out to get us, the owners of the media are out to get us, the entrepreneurs who sell advertising are after us. (...) For the most part, journalism is not fulfilling its social function"²¹. This telling statement, made by journalist Roberto Arturo Caballero for Radio Progreso, reveals the plight of communication professionals, immersed in an environment with pressures that threaten the free exercise of their work.

These barriers have multiple sources, some of which have already been mentioned. Hector Becerra, director of C-Libre, reports that the origins of these pressures are found in "the government (which) has a strategy to control Honduran society and in that context (they put pressure on) the media (...) so that they go along with their communications strategy"²².

This strategy of pressure which Hector Becerra is alluding to, was denounced after statements were made by the former commander of the Xatruch Joint Task Force, Germán Alfaro Escalante, in a press conference in February 2013, in which he accused several people, including journalists, of tarnishing the image of the armed forces and the Honduran nation. Reporters without Borders warned of the danger posed by such statements, given that they stigmatize journalism and threaten workers in this sector²³.

On the other hand, attention has also been drawn to the restrictions imposed on community radio stations to express political opinions. This has been reported by the National Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Asociación Nacional de Radios Comunitarias), which accuses the government of

20. "En Honduras celebran al periodista y asesinan al comunicador", radioprogreso.net, May 23, 2014

21. Ibid 20.

22. Ibid 20.

23. "Journalists and human rights defenders stigmatized for covering land conflicts", Reporters without Borders (RWB), February 22, 2013.



Radio Faluma Bimetu (Coco Dulce) - Comunidad Garifuna Triunfo de la Cruz. Community radio stations play an important journalistic role, to keep communities informed. Photo: PBI

violating free speech by controlling the content of their broadcasts. "They are passing regulations which impose restrictions on freedom of expression and control media content, the Internet and personal electronic IDs", noted Felix Molina, deputy coordinator of the National Association of Community Radio Broadcasters.²⁴

On January 13, 2014 the National Congress of Honduras approved the Law on Official Secrets and the Declassification of Public Information, which gives discretion to the government to determine the classification of certain information of public interest, which was formerly carried out exclusively by the Institute for Access to Public Information. Organisations such as Reporters without Borders have criticized this legislation, because of the broad powers it grants to the government to impose secrecy on certain documents, without being held to account²⁵. According to Dina Meza the "secrecy" hanging over any information held by the State prevents, for example, public access to case files on killings of journalists²⁶.

24. "Radios comunitarias denuncian violaciones a la libre expresión", Tiempo, May 3, 2014.

25. "Honduras: Secrecy law deals major blow to public's right to be informed", Reporters without Borders, January 16, 2014.

26. "Dina Meza: El violento oficio de escribir en Honduras", International PEN, May 2, 2014.

According to the PEN International 2013 report that journalists "writing about sensitive subjects such as the environment, minerals, natural resources or land conflicts are far more likely to be targeted than 'traditional' print journalists working for mainstream publications and reporting on non-controversial subjects"

LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY EXTREMELY CONCERN DUE TO HIGH LEVELS OF IMPUNITY

"Impunity still reigns in Honduras in cases of threats, harassment and violence against journalists and human rights defenders". These statements were made in April 2014 by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Margaret Sekagya. According to these officials, "neither the precautionary measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, nor the repeated recommendations by UN experts, have been enough so that Honduras takes firm action to protect journalists and human rights defenders"²⁷.

The high level of impunity is an important element when assessing the vulnerability of the sector. According to statements made by journalist Dina Meza to Radio Progreso, of the 35 journalists killed in Honduras since 2009, progress has been made in just 10% of cases, related to establishing the responsibilities of those who carried out the killings, but not those who planned them²⁸.

In response to this situation, in 2013 the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Life was established, to investigate and punish the perpetrators of crimes against journalists. According to published information, the results have been limited so far: 91% of the cases in the last 11 years are in complete impunity, as only two sentences have been passed to date²⁹.

The high rate of impunity is alarming, since it encourages further impunity; as does the denial of the real motive for the attacks. According to a number of journalists, the State does not accept that crimes against journalists are committed as because of the informative work they do. This was demonstrated in statements made by Rolando Argueta, Director of Public Prosecutions, who spoke on behalf of the State of Honduras at a hearing before the IACHR, stating that "murders of journalists are committed for personal reasons and not because of their work. Of the cases prosecuted to date it appears that these killings are the result of common crime and organized crime, and we have not determined as a motive the opinions expressed by these journalists, or intervention by State agents"³⁰.

In relation to this, we echo the recommendations made by the IACHR to the State of Honduras in its Annual Report 2013, including the specific recommendation to "carry out diligent, impartial, and effective investigations of the murders, attacks, threats, and acts of intimidation committed against journalists and media workers"³¹.

Without freedom of expression and information, a democracy can not advance.

27. "La impunidad perpetúa la violencia contra periodistas y defensores de derechos humanos en Honduras", UNHCHR, April 17, 2014 (our translation).

28. "Ejercicio periodístico se realiza en suelo movedizo y en total indefensión", Radio Progreso, April 25, 2014.

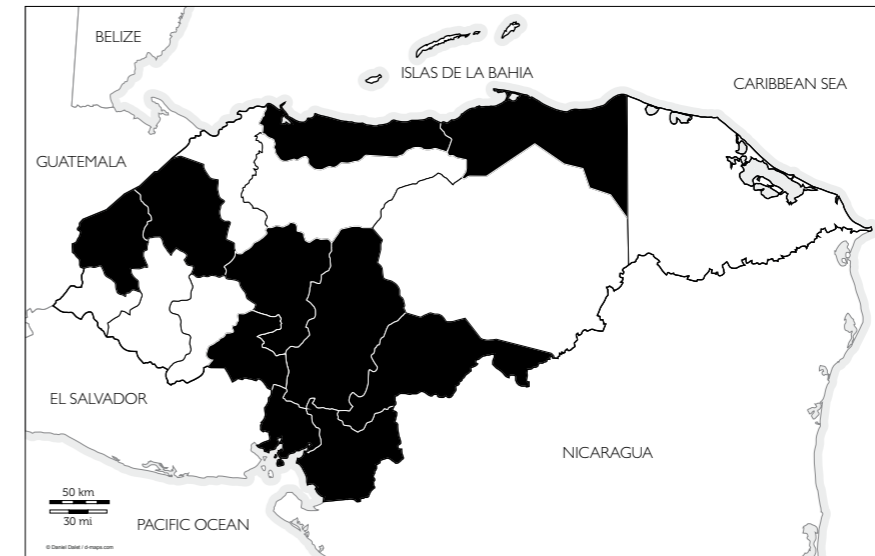
29. "Predomina impunidad en muertes de periodistas en Honduras", La Prensa, May 3, 2014.

30. "Ejercicio periodístico se realiza en suelo movedizo y en total indefensión", Radio Progreso, April 25, 2014 (our translation).

31. Annual Report 2013, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

CEHPRODEC: DEFENCE OF TERRITORY, LAND AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD

Members of CEHPRODEC, 2014.
Photo: PBI



◀ CEHPRODEC IS CURRENTLY PRESENT IN 10 OUT OF THE 18 DEPARTMENTS IN HONDURAS

Over 20 years ago, at a crucial moment in Central American history, the Honduran Promotion Centre for Community Development (Centro Hondureño de Promoción para el Desarrollo Comunitario - CEHPRODEC) was founded. Its executive director, José Luís Espinoza, recalls that “the Esquipulas Peace Agreements were being signed, and armed conflicts were coming to an end in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Many people began to return from exile and we decided we had to be part of the civilian struggle and maintain contact with the population. One possible way was to form a non-governmental organisation that was close to the people”. That is how CEHPRODEC was born.

Since then, in order to make the very people whose right to food is being violated the protagonists in identifying problems and finding solutions, the organisation has been developing a variety of training, organisational, productive and legal projects. The organisation also carries out legal advocacy work for criminalized people, representing indigenous people facing prosecution for their defence of their land and territory.

The following are some of the cases that they are monitoring:

Palo Blanco, Nahuaterique: due to the border location of this area and its strategic importance during the Central American conflicts of the 1980s, sections of the population continue to report that they are being stigmatised as violent, and of having fought with the guerrilla. Peaceful struggles for territory are thus being delegitimized, as in the case of the Lenca indigenous people of Nahuaterique, who are demanding to be consulted on the use of land and resources, and calling upon the authorities to respect international treaties. CEHPRODEC provides legal and technical support to Nahuaterique communities via regional indigenous councils, grouped together in the Lenca Independent Movement of La Paz (Movimiento Independiente Lenca de La Paz - MILPAH).

In the **municipality of San José** the Aurora I hydroelectric dam was built without consultation with affected communities³². CEHPRODEC and MILPAH have brought an administrative complaint before the ethnic prosecutor claiming the right to prior consultation has been violated and another complaint before the anti-corruption prosecutor for an administrative law violation.

Although the population in the **municipality of Santa Elena** opposes the construction of a hydroelectric dam and a mine in the area, according to Julio Gonzales, member of the Social Forum for Human Integral Development (Foro Social para el Desarrollo Humano e Integral), the concession has already been granted. The population is showing their opposition because they fear that this project will cause land dispossession and displacement, as well as heavy pollution, according to experiences in areas where other such projects are being implemented in Honduras³³.

PBI Honduras accompanies CEHPRODEC in Nahuaterique, May 2014.
Photo: PBI



32. "Denuncia el COPINH graves violaciones a los derechos individuales y colectivos del Pueblo Lenca", COPINH, May 14, 2012.

33. "Honduras, la maldición del oro", La Vía Campesina, November 24, 2012.



Honduras has one of the highest rates of inequality in the world. Like many of its neighbours, there is a high concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few people, leading to high levels of impoverishment among the rural population.
Photo: PBI

THE GAP BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

CEHPRODEC is accompanying indigenous and small-farming struggles in defence of land via training, organisational and protection processes, in order to guarantee the rights of people affected by extractive economic models.

As part of the 149th period of sessions of the IACHR, in late 2013, CEHPRODEC and others exposed the negative effects of mining and mega projects, highlighting the multiple environmental and social effects, such as displacement and the repression of people who are leading social protests³⁴.

ILO CONVENTION 169

Indigenous peoples are made particularly vulnerable by resource extraction projects. Land and territory are not only their livelihood and sustenance, but also the basis of their existence as identifiable territorial communities. There are several international instruments establishing the State's duty to guarantee the right to collective ownership, one of the most important being ILO Convention 169³⁵, ratified by Honduras in 1995. This refers to the right to own land traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples, recognition of their social and religious values, and the right to free, prior, and informed consultation on any project to be carried out in their territory.

GUIDELINES ON FORCED EVICTION

All evictions should rigorously respect the "Basic principles and guidelines on evictions and displacement caused by development" which establish that, in consultation with stakeholders, all possibilities to minimize or avoid the need to use force must be studied, the affected individuals must have full access to legal remedies and, when it is considered that evictions are justified, the authorities must devise appropriate plans for relocation and compensation for the affected group.

The IACHR expressed concern in its annual report 2013³⁶, about the persistent threat to indigenous peoples from the implementation of projects such as mining and timber farms, hydroelectric dams, large tourist complexes, and the areas known as "model cities"³⁷. The report also highlights aggression towards indigenous leaders for reasons related to the defence of their territories, making explicit reference to the case of Berta Cáceres from the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígena de Honduras -COPINH)³⁸, and expresses alarm at the excessive use of force against protests and military involvement in public safety activities.

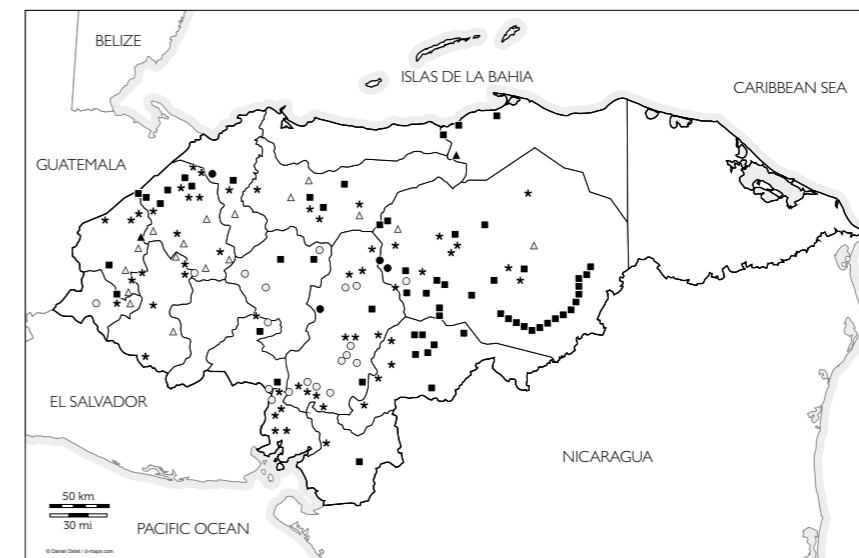
34. Thematic hearing on prior consultation and megaprojects in Honduras, IACHR, October 28, 2013.

35. "Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries", ILO, 1989.

36. Annual Report 2013, IACHR.

37. Employment and Economic Development Zones (Zonas de Empleo y Desarrollo Económico - ZEDE), better known as "model cities (ciudades modelo).

38. "Honduras: Dictan auto de prisión a Berta Cáceres coordinadora del COPINH", La Vía Campesina, September 24, 2013.



MAP OF MINING CONCESSIONS

△ Antimony
● Iron
▲ Mercury
■ Gold
○ Silver
★ Polymetallic

MINING CONCESSIONS

Honduras has great mineral wealth: gold, silver, iron, zinc, copper, lead, and polymetallics - clusters of three or four minerals. Pedro Landa, a member of CEHPRODEC and coordinator of the National Coalition of Environmental Networks Against Open Pit Mining in Honduras (Coalición Nacional de Redes Ambientales contra la Minería a Cielo Abierto en Honduras), reports that, as of June 2013, 91 metal mining concession projects have been authorized in perpetuity in the country, with the only condition being that the companies pay \$ 3.50 per year per hectare. There are also 320 new applications waiting to be approved. To this, can be added nonmetallic concessions: 193 approved and 233 awaiting decision. In total, the 284 concessions already granted cover over one million hectares, or 9.53% of the national territory. If the remaining 553 are granted, the percentage would represent 13.23% of the territory and in the case of some departments such as Santa Barbara, 28% of its territory³⁹.

THE MINING LAW

The Mining Law, approved in early 2013, was designed to guarantee legal security for investments, even when these come into direct conflict with human rights that the Honduran State is obliged to protect, as reported by various organisations before the IACHR during the thematic hearing on prior consultation and megaprojects⁴¹. According to these organisations, among the troubling aspects of the Law are, the indefinite terms granted in concessions, guaranteed confidentiality contrary to the rule of transparency, and the definition of "exclusion zones", according to which 90% of the country's protected areas are not included in this legal provision⁴².

THE DEFENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: A HIGH-RISK ACTIVITY

Members of CEHPRODEC face the same problems as other people and organisations defending human rights in Honduras; namely insecurity and vulnerability to attacks. PBI Honduras received a request from the organisation and has been accompanying its members since May 2014, with the objective of providing protection so that they can continue doing their jobs safely and freely.

39. "Análisis estadístico del inventario de concesiones mineras proporcionado por INGEOMIN", CEHPRODEC, December 2013.

L1. "Informe presentado ante la Ilustre Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos en el marco de la audiencia temática sobre consulta previa y megaproyectos en Honduras", MADJ, CEHPRODEC, CIPRO-DEH, COPINH, CDH y ERIC-SJ, October 28, 2013

L2. La Política extractivista del Estado de Honduras", CEHPRODEC, May 2014

PRESENTATION

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a non-governmental organisation that promotes the protection of human rights and conflict transformation through nonviolent means. Via international accompaniment, PBI provides protection for individuals, organisations and communities who carry out actions to promote and defend human rights, always at their request and in response to their needs. In this way, PBI helps to protect the space for human rights, social justice and peace initiatives. PBI currently has projects in Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Kenya, Nepal, Indonesia and Honduras, and 16 active national groups in Europe, North America and Australia.

PBI'S MANDATE IN HONDURAS

PBI Honduras seeks to contribute to improving the human rights situation and the development of participatory processes in the country, through an international presence that offers support to protect and extend the workspace of individuals, organisations and other social initiatives that face repression for their work defending human rights.

INTERNATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Our international accompaniment and observation work is based on three principles:

NON VIOLENCE – we accompany individuals, organisations and other social initiatives that peacefully defend human rights.

NON PARTISANSHIP – PBI is independent of political and economic powers. We maintain working relationships with the different parties involved in the conflict, such as social organisations and public authorities.

NON INTERFERENCE – we respect the autonomy of organisations. We accompany human rights defenders without interfering in their decision-making processes.


INTERNATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS CARRIED OUT THROUGH:

PHYSICAL PRESENCE – we visit the headquarters of accompanied organisations and communities – we also attend public events and meetings when they request it.

MEETINGS WITH AUTHORITIES – we explain our work to local, district, national and international authorities. We express concern over attacks against the individuals, organisations and social initiatives that we accompany.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION – we send information to our support network within and outside the country, in order to raise awareness on the reality for human rights defenders.

pb honduras
abriendo espacios para la paz

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

trócaire

MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK

zfd Ziviler Friedensdienst

 OPSEU
SEFPO

SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

Brot
für die Welt

 Caritas
France
Secours Catholique

 UNIFOR
theUnion | lesyndicat

otto
per
8mille
CHIESA VALDESE
UNIONE DELLE CHIESE METODISTE E VALDESE