

Peace Brigades International

PBI UK Annual Review 2002



PROMOTING NON-VIOLENCE AND DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS SINCE 1981



Mission Statement

Pace Brigades International is a unique grassroots organisation that works to open a space for peace in which conflicts can be addressed in a non-violent way. PBI applies a strategy of international presence and concern that supports local initiatives and contributes to developing a culture of peace and justice. We act on the request of local organisations and groups working for human rights, social change and development of civil society which use non-violent means in regions where there is oppression and conflict.

The aim of PBI's international presence is to accompany both political and social processes through a joint strategy of deterring violence and promoting active non-violence. Our international teams of volunteers use methods such as protective accompaniment, peace education, independent observation and analysis of the conflict situation. In addition, PBI learns about, develops and models forms of non-violent intervention. Where possible, PBI initiates contacts with all the parties to a conflict in order to establish and inform of our presence. This work is supported through a broad, international network of organisations and individuals. Our identity is built upon non-hierarchical structures and consensual processes.

Adopted at PBI General Assembly, Sweden, July 1998

PBI Country Groups

Aotearoa/New Zealand
Australia
Belgium
Canada
France
Germany
India
Italy
Luxemburg
Netherlands
Norway
Spanish State
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
United States

Associate Groups

Austria
Portugal
Romania
Tunisia

Current PBI Projects

Colombia (founded in 1994)
Indonesia (founded 1999)
Mexico (founded 1999)
Guatemala (re-founded 2002)

Past PBI Projects

Balkans (Coalition partner in Balkans Peace Teams from 1994-2001)
El Salvador (1987-1992)
Guatemala (1983-1999, re-initiated in 2002)
Haiti (1995-2000)
North America (1992-1999)
Sri Lanka (1989-1998)

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Cover Photos (top to bottom)

- Spanish volunteer with a member of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, Colombia
- An accompaniment to the airport for a member of women's rights group Flower Aceh, Indonesia.
Photo: Dorina Sedoeboen
- Mexico City: Families of the disappeared on a march seeking justice

Introduction

As was said in our last annual report, the aftermath of September 11, 2001, has had a profound effect upon the world. The “war against terrorism” continues, recalling the old saying that violence only begets more violence.

In this climate of global uncertainty, PBI UK initially struggled hard in 2002 to attract the levels of funding that it needed to carry out its planned activities for the year. Thankfully, however, by adjusting to the times, and redoubling our efforts, we were able to get ourselves back on track again. We did this by raising our profile through increased awareness-raising activities and networking amongst potential funders, the media, supporters and other NGOs - activities which consolidated our donor and membership base, as well as our ties with like-minded organisations.

While a lot of work went into our fundraising and outreach/publicity activities (see Activities in 2002, page 2/3), PBI UK also organised two successful Orientation Weekends for potential PBI project volunteers. Thirteen people served in the field with PBI’s Colombia, Indonesia and Mexico projects and ten more were preparing for deployment, including to PBI’s new project in Guatemala (see the Projects, page 8-11).

PBI UK also developed, maintained, and mobilised its Emergency Support Networks (ESN). The ESN was activated and successfully used on four occasions in 2002, twice for both the Colombia and



PBI UK's co-ordinator Susi Bascón has taken a sabbatical year to volunteer for the Mexico Project.

Indonesia projects (see the ESN case study page 12).

None of our activities would have achieved the levels of success that they did without the co-ordination, guidance and continued hard work of PBI UK's Co-ordinator, Susi Bascon. Susi, in conjunction with the team of dedicated volunteers that she has nurtured in the past couple

of years, has played a vital role in making PBI UK's plans achievable. In 2003, Susi will be taking a sabbatical so that she can serve on the PBI Mexico Project. We wish Susi well in her new venture with PBI!

Stepping into Susi's role as PBI UK Coordinator during 2003 Laura Clarke, a recently returned volunteer from PBI's Colombia Project. Laura was offered the job following an intense recruitment process, which included over 80 applicants. We believe Laura brings with her invaluable experiences from the field as well as knowledge of the PBI UK office where she volunteered before going to Colombia.

PBI UK Management Committee

Laura Clarke, pictured here accompanying a member of the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Medellin, has stepped into Susi's shoes for 2003. Photo:Julien Menghini



Activities of PBI UK

In 2002, the UK section continued to work hard in support of PBI's field projects around the world. We are a small organisation in Britain but, thanks to the quiet beavering of many dedicated volunteers, we have continued to raise our profile and reach. Highlights of our work include:

Fundraising

PBI UK carried out important fundraising work in 2002. During the year, grants totalling more than £46,000 were received and we are particularly

grateful for the continuing support of the Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation and the Network Foundation/ Network for Social Change, as well as the contributions of individual donors and members. We also carried out a number of fundraising events. In December, for example, we joined forces with Europe's leading flamenco company **Alma Flamenco** to celebrate International Human Rights Day! The London event, which raised more than £860, featured a vibrant flamenco performance with Felipe de Algeciras as principal dancer and choreographer.

Field Volunteer Recruitment

Speaking Tours

Returned volunteers from Colombia and Indonesia gave public presentations at events all over the country, including the Amnesty International Conference on South East Asia, the film festival at SOAS university, and War Resisters International.

Stalls

PBI UK also ran stalls publicising its work at the Voluntary Service Overseas Fair in London, Manchester and Edinburgh; the Quaker conference - One World Week in Shetland; and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights Day event.



Europe's leading flamenco company Alma Flamenco helped us to raise funds on International Human Rights Day



Orientation Weekends

Two orientation weekends were run by PBI UK's co-ordinator and returned field volunteers in May and September. The weekends had a total of 40 participants, 10 of whom continued the training process for placement overseas. A number of them did some work for PBI UK before going out to the field.

Political Support Networks

PBI UK has developed, maintained and mobilised its network of international support – its Emergency Support Network. The network is made up of individuals, NGOs and parliamentarians. Activated four times in 2002, it now counts more than 50 MPs, MEPs and Lords among its members.

Media work

PBI volunteers have continued to get the vital work of PBI publicised in the media. Stories on volunteers appeared in a number of newspapers including the Islington Gazette, Western Daily Press, The Yorkshire Post and the South Shropshire Journal. Articles on the work of PBI featured in other publications such as the Peace News Magazine and Bradford University's Peace, Development and Conflict Magazine.

Volunteers also continued to improve and update PBI UK's publicity materials, as well as producing the 2001 Annual Review and two newsletters, including a special 20th anniversary edition. Our anniversary exhibition was displayed at various venues.

Some activities planned for 2003

- Returned volunteer talks at various Amnesty Student Groups, universities and aid agencies to help spread awareness of the work we do
- PBI stalls at a number of fairs and other events, including VSO-organised Volunteering World and Central America Week
- Visit of PBI-accompanied Colombian human rights defender, as part of his European speaking tour
- Two orientation weekends, in May and September
- Training for Trainers Day - to train up returned field volunteers as trainers for orientation weekends
- Mobile photo exhibition, to be launched in June at the House of Commons
- Sky-diving and auction to raise funds

Impressions of PBI UK field volunteers



James accompanying human rights defender Berenice Celeyta

James Savage / Colombia

Having been involved with PBI for seven years working with both PBI UK and the PBI International Office, I decided it was time to go and see why this fascinating organisation really existed. I spent most of 2002 with PBI in Bogotá, Colombia, accompanying human rights defenders whose lives are at risk for their legitimate and courageous work.

Alirio Uribe Muñoz, President of the “*José Alvear Restrepo*” *Lawyers Collective* and Vice-President of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), faces a level of threat that requires daily accompaniment by PBI. Wherever Alirio travels, be it from home to work, to court, or to meetings around the city, he moves in a bullet-proof car, wears a bullet-proof jacket and

has a constant PBI presence at his side.

Accompanying Alirio throughout this year has been a privilege and yet a sobering experience for me. One day we parked in the underground car park of the 30-storey building in which his office is located. “Do you mind if we

walk up rather than take the lift?” he asked. “It’s just that I never get any exercise these days - it’s simply too risky for me to go to the gym or the park”.

Richard Bennett / Mexico

The thing that motivated me to join the organisation was my interest in Mexico and in Mexican politics and working for PBI promised a privileged position on the inside from which to observe Mexico up close. PBI has delivered on all of those things and on many more. PBI, of course, is not only about observing, but about creating a social and political space in which local human rights defenders can carry out their work. It’s been a challenging year in many ways but my overall impression in this, my penultimate month, is of having learned a huge amount.

Richard Bennett (second from the right) and a colleague at a meeting with the Guerrero state Attorney General’s office, presenting the work of PBI and expressing their concern for the safety of Enedina Cervantes whose husband was abducted and disappeared.



Stuart Bowman / Indonesia

I joined the PBI Indonesia Project in June, 2002, and it has been great.

I spent four months working in the Jakarta office mostly building up and sustaining our political networks in the Indonesian capital. This means us getting our best clothes on and meeting embassy officials, representatives of the Indonesian government, security forces and local NGOs. It can be fascinating work, picking the brains of people who have a real inside knowledge of what goes on in Indonesia. It is also really varied. One minute you are drinking wine at an embassy

reception and the next welcoming a group of Papuan human-rights activists into the PBI house. It can also be challenging convincing sceptics that "unarmed bodyguards" can really have an impact in a place like Aceh.

One of my best moments in my four months in Aceh was a recent field trip we did to a small village with one of our clients, Women's Volunteer Team For Humanity (RpuK), to the closing ceremony of one of their trauma counselling programmes.



UK volunteer Ruth Halstead with members of PB-HAM Langsa office, Indonesia

PBI accompanied RpuK to this village about 18 months ago, four days after many of the houses had been burnt down following a clash between government soldiers and GAM (The Free Aceh Movement), an armed group who have been fighting for Acehnese independence.

At that point, RpuK did not feel safe enough to go to the village alone and PBI subsequently went back with them when they began the trauma counselling programme for local children. However, over the next 11 months RpuK gained in confidence and visited the village independently.

Going back for the closing ceremony gave us a great opportunity to see how conditions in the village had improved and how the initial presence of PBI had really opened up space allowing RpuK to work there.



Stuart Bowman

What others say

PBI is getting stronger every year and receives increasing support from around the world. The organisations and individuals it accompanies often claim they owe their lives to PBI. Here is what some of those we accompany and high-profile international figures have said:



Aura Elena Farfan of
FAMDEGUA

“International accompaniment is very important because powerful interests will think twice before trying to attack us. There are always people on the street corners spying on us to watch our movements. So when they see that internationals are physically entering our offices, this helps us tremendously.”

Aura Elena Farfán, Guatemalan Families of the Disappeared, Guatemala City (Guatemala)

“It is important to recognise that the accompaniment work of PBI has been carried out permanently, unconditionally, and in solidarity. At the same time it has the transparency and neutrality demanded of humanitarian work in the middle of the war that we live through in Colombia.”

Yolanda Becerra, Popular Women’s Organisation, Barrancabermeja (Colombia)

“If PBI is not here we won’t be able to go into the field and PBI’s presence also makes a difference when we have to deal with the military or police. We feel safer.”

Ephie, Flower Aceh, Aceh (Indonesia)

“The Special Representative takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the work done by international NGOs in Colombia, in particular PBI whose courageous members help to save the lives of human rights defenders.”

Hina Jilani, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on human rights defenders

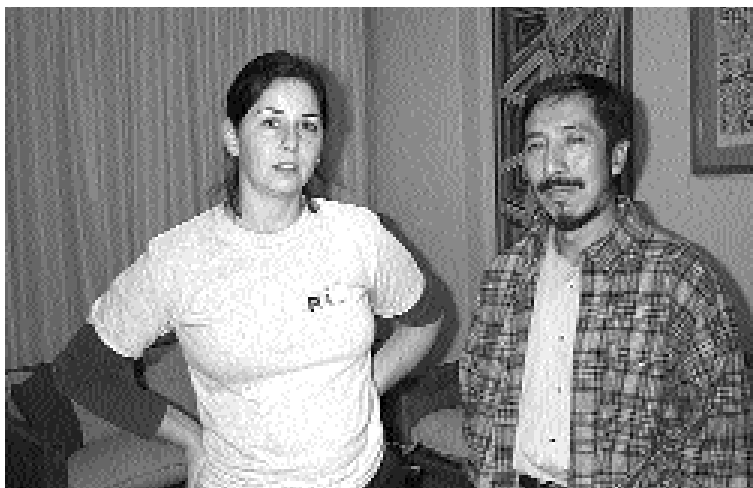
“In Mexico, the human rights situation is awful. There are systematic and selective violations which, to some degree, can be stopped by the international pressure provided by organisations such as PBI. This is very important in preventing further aggression against human rights defenders.”

Emiliana Cerezo, Mexico City (Mexico)

“We are convinced that the presence of PBI is important, and so we are demonstrating to the government, NGOs, and society in general, the viability of this other form of accompaniment. Our decision was based on the fact that PBI's presence could ensure an adequate level of security for us.”

Edgar Cortéz, Director of the Centre for Human Rights Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (PROdh), Mexico City (Mexico)

Edgar Cortez
of PRODH
with a PBI
volunteer



“The majority of PBI's members have a profound humanitarian vocation. Our great respect and admiration for their altruistic work, as well as our enormous gratitude links us with PBI. I can say with certainty that if we are still alive, it is mainly because of PBI's work.”

Luis Guillermo Pérez Casas, member of the Lawyers' Collective “José Alvear Restrepo”, Bogotá (Colombia)

“By [its] long-term approach, PBI is, as one of the very few international NGOs present in Aceh, instrumental in creating the environment that may lead to a peaceful solution to Aceh's problems.”

Luk Darras, Belgian Ambassador to Indonesia, Jakarta

Colombia Project



A Spanish PBI volunteer reads a human rights report while present at the Medellín office of the Association of Relatives of the Detained and Disappeared (ASFADDES). Photo: Julien Menghini.

Overview: Colombia's deteriorating civil conflict currently takes the lives of roughly 20 people a day, according to Amnesty International. The civilian population, including human rights defenders and other civil society leaders, continues to live in fear of falling victim to increasing political violence. Hundreds of thousands were displaced from their homes and land, fleeing the warring factions and adding themselves to the ranks of over two million individuals displaced in the last decade. This situation has worsened following the February breakdown of the four-year old peace process between the government and the largest guerrilla group, the FARC.

Presenting the fourth report on the human rights situation in Colombia, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs Mary Robinson, called on the Colombian Government to step up efforts to protect human rights defenders and to comply urgently with the relevant United Nations Declarations. As Álvaro Uribe took presidential office in

August, human right organisations expressed concerns that measures to strengthen security could exacerbate the human rights crisis.

The PBI-Colombia Project has an average of 38 volunteers in the country, working in four locations: Bogotá, Medellín, the Magdalena Medio region and Urabá. Nine of those volunteering in 2002 were recruited through the PBI UK office. Their work includes protective accompaniment of human rights defenders and displaced communities, regular visits to conflict zones, dialoguing with civil and military authorities, and carrying out public relations and lobbying work to encourage international support. The project, founded in 1994, regularly issues publications on the situation of human rights and human rights defenders in Colombia. It also provides mental health workshops for local human rights groups.

A Canadian volunteer accompanying a member of CREDHOS

Some of the organisations accompanied by PBI

- *Lawyers Collective "José Alvear Restrepo" (CAJAR):* Promotes and protects human rights. Provides legal advice and representation.

- *Association for the Promotion of Social Alternatives (MINGA):* Provides legal advice to people and organisations affected by political repression. Offers human rights education and assistance to displaced people.

- *Regional Corporation for Human Rights (CREDHOS):* Documents human rights violations in the Magdalena Medio Region

- *People's Training Institute (IPC):* Based in Medellín, the IPC carries out research, training and documentation in the areas of human rights, development, peace and conflict.



Indonesia Project



Accompanying RpuK in West Aceh distributing food packages for displaced people. Photo: Dorina Sedoeboen

Overview: While the first half of 2002 saw killings increase in Aceh, PBI saw threats decrease against the groups it helps protect in the province. The bombing of a nightclub in Bali on October 11 threw the world spotlight on Indonesia. Despite fears of foreigners being targeted, PBI volunteers working in Aceh and Jakarta were not affected and the tragedy had no direct political or security implications for the team in Indonesia.

On December 9, the Indonesian government and GAM (Free Aceh Movement) signed a cease-fire agreement, offering hope to the Acehnese people. However, human rights violations are still being reported by local and international non-governmental organisations in the province as well as in other regions of the archipelago.

Journalists were expelled from Aceh on several occasions during the year, and two

foreign women were detained on charges of visa violations.

In response to requests made by numerous Indonesian non-governmental organisations, PBI opened a new office in Lhokseumawe in North Aceh.

The PBI-Indonesia Project. At the end of 2002 PBI had seven volunteers in Banda Aceh and four in its new North Aceh office. Another team in Jakarta maintains various contacts with Indonesian government officials, the diplomatic community and local and international NGOs. Founded in 1999, the project also provides peace education workshops in Aceh and other parts of Indonesia. Stuart Bowman and Ruth Halstead were among those in the field in 2002.

Some of the organisations accompanied by PBI

- *Association of Human Rights Abuse Victims (SPKP HAM):* Province-wide network of torture survivors, their work includes assistance for health care, accompaniment to legal aid foundations, and lobbying the Indonesia government for survivors' rights.
- *Women's Volunteer Team for Humanity (RPUK):* Works with women and children members of internally displaced populations.
- *Legal Aid Foundation (LBH):* Provides civil rights and legal advocacy, aiming to remove social, political, and cultural inequality as an obstacle to political transition.



Mexico Project

Overview: In the wake of the assassination of Digna Ochoa, the general feeling of insecurity has increased for human rights defenders in Mexico.

President Fox has stated that respect for human rights is a priority for his government. But organisations such as Amnesty International continue to express concern for the authorities' inability to adequately address frequent human rights violations in the country. Amnesty

pointed to the many cases of illegal detention, abuse and torture carried out by the police force as well as the campaign of harassment against human rights defenders and political violence carried out by armed groups acting with apparent complicity from local authorities.

Guerrero is increasingly becoming an international focus with, among others, the representative of the UN Secretary General for displaced communities, Francis Deng, visiting the area.

The PBI-Mexico Project, founded in 1999, focuses on protective accompaniment, information distribution and workshops on protection and security for human rights defenders. The teams, based in Mexico City and Chilpancingo, Guerrero, averaged 10 volunteers in 2002, and included Richard Bennett and Vanessa Van der Vagh from the UK.

Some of the organisations accompanied by PBI

- *National Human Rights Network "All Rights for All" (RED)*: Connects over 40 human rights organisations throughout Mexico. PBI accompanies its staff in Mexico City.
- *Enedina Cervantes*: Wife of "disappeared" man from Tlapa, Guerrero. Accompanied at the request of various human rights groups providing legal support for the case.
- *Centre for Human Rights Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (PROdh)*: Provides legal defence in cases of human rights violations. PBI accompanies its legal teams both in Mexico City and in Chilpancingo, Guerrero.
- *Regional Human Rights Centre "Jose María Morelos y Pabón"*. Offers legal advice and human rights education to mainly indigenous communities in Guerrero.



A French volunteer accompanying Juan Antonio Vega from the National Human Rights Network "All Rights for All"

Guatemala Project



Eve Scarfe, pictured here in Colombia, is currently doing the groundwork for re-establishment of a field team in Guatemala

Organisations which have requested PBI's presence include:

- *Myrna Mack Foundation*: Fights in favor of accountability using legal cases against presumed intellectual authors of human rights atrocities.
- *National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA)*: Advocates reparations for communities affected by the civil conflict and struggles against discrimination.
- *Centre for Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences (CAFCA)*: Carries out exhumations of clandestine cemeteries and documents evidence of atrocities committed in the 1980s.

Overview: A rise in human rights violations in Guatemala led to PBI returning to the country in the summer of 2002 to lay the groundwork for re-establishment of a field team. PBI returned at the request of local non-governmental organisations that were under threat. Many of these requests were from groups that PBI accompanied during its 16-year presence in Guatemala between 1983 and 1999. PBI withdrew from Guatemala in 1999 when the country became relatively stable – three years after the Peace Accords were signed. The peace agreement formally

ended the civil war that had gripped Guatemala for 36 years. Recent high profile killings include individuals linked to the Committee of Campesino Unity (CUC) and the Rigoberta Menchu Foundation.

“Returning to Guatemala after a three-year absence, I was very shocked to find out how much the situation had deteriorated and how much anxiety had once again become part of the daily lives of people working for human rights and social justice.” Eve Scarfe of the PBI Guatemala Project Committee.

The PBI-Guatemala Project

has been working to establish an advance team in Guatemala City to evaluate requests for accompaniment and determine the direction of PBI's work in the country's changing environment. PBI pioneered protective accompaniment in the mid-1980s in Guatemala as an innovative methodology for the protection of human rights.



Guatemalan human rights defender Rosalina Tuyuc conducting a workshop on reparations for human rights violations of the indigenous

Emergency Support Network



A happy return for some members of the displaced community of Cacarica. PBI accompanied them during the return. Photo: Julien Menghini.

Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace, as well as against “the internationals” that provide them with accompaniment.

PBI immediately activated its Emergency Support Network. Politicians, governments, embassies and other influential figures and bodies around the world were asked to contact the Colombian government and army to protest about the threats against the Cacarica communities and those working with them, and to urge them to take measures to guarantee their safety.

Case study of an activation of PBI’s Emergency Support Network

On 7 February 2002, two farm labourers from the recently-returned internally displaced community settlements of *Nueva Vida* and *Esperanza en Dios*, located on the Cacarica River in the north-western Colombian province of Chocó, were detained by paramilitary troops whilst working on nearby communal crops. One of them was released after several hours’ interrogation, the other the next day - when another community member, Ramiro Vásquez, was killed. PBI volunteers in Cacarica heard helicopters flying overhead at this time, and the army confirmed that military operations were being undertaken in the area. Other community members were

subsequently detained and tortured, the paramilitaries then threatening to attack within two weeks in order to drive the settlers away. Threatening comments were also made against the community’s Colombian advisers, the

The international response played an important part in bringing about the release of community detainees and preventing a paramilitary incursion of the settlements. Justice and Peace was also able to continue its work.

Portuguese volunteer speaking on a satellite phone from Cacarica



Financial Year

Summary income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 December 2002

	2002	2001
	£	£
Total income		
Grants receivable from Trusts and Companies	46,278	16,656
Other operating income	<u>15,619</u>	<u>7,547</u>
	61,897	24,203
Total expenditure		
Operating expenses	(38,575)	(36,674)
Allocations to PBI projects/International Office	<u>(6,672)</u>	<u>(9,288)</u>
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for year	16,650	(21,759)
Reserves brought forward	<u>15,285</u>	<u>37,044</u>
Reserves carried forward	<u><u>31,935</u></u>	<u><u>15,285</u></u>

Summary balance sheet as at 31st December 2002

	2002	2001
	£	£
Fixed Assets	<u>980</u>	<u>713</u>
Current Assets	33,662	16,401
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(2,707)</u>	<u>(1,829)</u>
Net current assets	<u>30,955</u>	<u>14,572</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u><u>31,935</u></u>	<u><u>15,285</u></u>
Represented by:		
Restricted funds	8,250	0
Unrestricted funds	<u>23,685</u>	<u>15,285</u>
	<u><u>31,935</u></u>	<u><u>15,285</u></u>

The above represents provisional summarised accounts only and a fuller understanding of the financial affairs will be available from the full unaudited annual accounts which, after approval by the management committee, will be filed at Companies House for this organisation (Registered number 3912587).



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Laura Clarke
Paula Garivaldi
Andrea Ingham
Libby Kerr
Colin McNaughton
Teresa Murray
James Savage
David Troupe

Mexico Project:

Richard Bennett
Vanessa Van der Vagh

Indonesia Project:

Stuart Bowman
Ruth Halstead

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volunteers who worked for us
in the UK, including:**

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