



PBI Alliance for Lawyers at Risk

Alliance for Lawyers at Risk

In this country lawyers can challenge public institutions or powerful vested interests in the courts without putting themselves or their families at risk. Sadly, in some countries this is no longer true.

In such places lawyers are regularly subjected to threats, physical attacks, and even abduction and “forced disappearance,” simply for doing their professional duty. In Colombia alone, 25 lawyers are killed each year.¹

Founded in 1981, Peace Brigades International (PBI) provides unarmed protection for lawyers and human rights defenders working in countries where their lives and safety are at risk.

PBI’s 50 volunteers in Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Nepal and Mexico protect threatened lawyers by accompanying them wherever they go. PBI also develops support networks through its many diplomatic and international connections.

The Alliance for Lawyers at Risk was launched in November 2010. It is now a vibrant network of lawyers, firms, chambers and other legal bodies, united by their commitment to help lawyers and human rights defenders whose work to end impunity and promote the rule of law puts their own lives at risk.

In this country Alliance members have hosted round tables in support of threatened lawyers, arranged meetings at the UK Supreme Court, and provided specialist training in topics such as the

“ Our families, who live with a permanent anxiety that one day we may not return home, are less worried knowing that we are accompanied by PBI. ”



**Lawyer EDUARDO CARREÑO, José Alvear Restrepo
Lawyers’ Collective (CCAJAR),
Colombia**

adversarial system (recently adopted in Colombia), and economic, social and cultural rights.

Members have also visited Colombia and Mexico on fact-finding delegations, written letters of concern to heads of state and judicial bodies about specific cases and lawyers’ security, submitted amicus curiae briefs on emblematic court cases, and produced briefings on rule of law issues for UN bodies.

Alliance members are making a real difference, not only to the lawyers who receive their support, but also to their many clients. These include displaced communities, victims of human rights violations, and seekers of truth and justice following armed conflict.

I want to say a big “thank you” to all who have generously donated their time, resources and other forms of support to the Alliance since its inception.

I hope that many more will join us now in our efforts to support and protect those who risk their lives to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

Sir Henry Brooke CMG

¹ “[B]etween 2002 and 2012, the Prosecutor General’s office recorded over 5,200 instances of attacks on lawyers, ranging from threats to physical attacks and homicides...24 lawyers were killed or disappeared in 2011 and four lawyers were killed between January 1 and February 7, 2012.” Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada, “LRWC delegates join 40 jurists on 3rd annual international visit to scrutinize attacks and murders of Colombian human rights lawyers,” 5 Oct 2012: <http://www.lrwc.org/lrwc-joins-40-jurists-on-3rd-annual-international-visit-to-scrutinize-attacks-and-murders-of-colombian-human-rights-lawyers/>

Members

In addition to our legal patrons and the members of the PBI UK Lawyers' Advisory Committee (please see back of booklet), the following individuals and organisations have become members of the Alliance:

Individuals

Katy Ayres
The Hon Michael Beloff QC
Sir Geoffrey Bindman
Lionel Blackman (Chair,
Solicitors' International Human
Rights Group)
Henry Blaxland QC
Diane Burleigh (Chief Executive,
Institute of Legal Executives)
Lord Carlile of Berriew QC
Jamie Burton
Dr David James Cantor (School of
Advanced Study – University of
London)
The Rt Hon Lord Justice Carnwath
Shami Chakrabarti CBE
David Cheyne (former Senior
Partner, Linklaters)
Professor Christine Chinkin
Jonathan Cooper OBE
The Hon Sir Peter Cresswell
Jonathan Crow QC
Malcolm Davis-White QC (Chairman,
Chancery Bar Association)
Caroline Dawson
Baroness Deech (Chair of the
Bar Standards Board)
Jeremy Dein QC
David Dickinson (Senior
Partner, Simmons & Simmons)
James Dingemans QC
Richard Drabble QC
Timothy Dutton QC
Michael Ellman (past chair,
Solicitors' International Human
Rights Group)
Tony Fisher (Chair, Law Society Human
Rights Committee)

Richard de Friend (Director, College of
Law Bloomsbury Centre)
Nicholas Green QC (Chairman of the
Bar Council)
Nichola Higgins
Jonathan Hirst QC
Stephen Hockman QC
Zoe Johnson QC
Richard Keen QC (Dean of Faculty)
The Rt Hon Sir David Keene
Sir Sydney Kentridge QC
Christopher Kinch QC
(Chairman, Criminal Bar Association)
Robin Knowles CBE QC
Jonathan Laidlaw QC
Paul Lasok QC
Linda Lee (President of the
Law Society)
Stephen Leslie QC
Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC
Sir Jeremy Lever QC
Richard Lissack QC
Dorian Lovell-Pank QC
Michael Mansfield QC
Shanta Martin
Paul Medelle QC
David Morley (Senior Partner,
Allen & Overy)
Mark Muller QC (Chair, Bar Human
Rights Committee)
The Rt Hon Sir Brian Neill
Tim Otty QC
Lord Pannick QC
Andrew Phillips (Lord Phillips
of Sudbury)
Nigel Fleming QC
Stuart Popham (Senior Partner,
Clifford Chance)
The Rt Hon Sir Mark Potter

Tom Price QC
Geoffrey Robertson QC
Professor Sir Nigel Rodley
Dinah Rose QC
Murray Rosen QC (Herbert Smith)
The Hon Mr Justice Sales
The Rt Hon Baroness Scotland
of Asthal QC
Lucy Scott-Moncrieff (Partner Scott-
Moncrieff, Harbour and Sinclair)
Smita Shah
Phil Shiner
Rabinder Singh QC
Rock Tansey QC
Michael Todd QC
The Hon Mr Justice Vos
Anesta Weekes QC
Sue Willman
John Wotton (Vice-President of
the Law Society)
The Rt Hon Lord Woolf of Barnes

Organisations

Bar Council
The Bar Human Rights Committee
Colombian Caravana UK Lawyers Group
Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh
Fisher Meredith
Hansen Palomares
Hodge Jones & Allen LLP
International Bar Association
The Law Society
The Law Society of Scotland
Leigh Day & Co
Linklaters
Reed Smith LLP
Tuckers
Solicitors International Human Rights
Group

David Ravelo Crespo

CASE STUDY **COLOMBIA**

ROLE Secretary of the board of the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS), based in Barrancabermeja, Santander

NATURE OF WORK CREDHOS documents human rights violations; provides legal and technical assistance to victims; provides training in human rights and international humanitarian law; publishes regional human rights reports

Ravelo's lawyers from the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (CCAJAR) – who PBI also accompanies – have been the targets of surveillance, false accusations and death threats in relation to this case and others.

David Ravelo was detained on 14 September 2010 and on 5 December 2012 he was sentenced to 18 years in prison for aggravated murder. International human rights organisations and lawyers have denounced the conviction as politically motivated, highlighting procedural irregularities during the trial. They point out that the conviction is based principally on the statements of a demobilised paramilitary agent and former guerrilla, who testified under Justice and Peace Law (JPL) 975 of 2005, a widely criticised law that offers reduced sentences in return for information.¹

A charismatic social leader and key member of the Barrancabermeja human rights movement, David Ravelo received continuous death threats prior to his arrest. His arrest and subsequent sentencing are seen as further tactics in a campaign of persecution and stigmatisation against him and CREDHOS, as well as a warning to the wider social movement of which they are part. Amnesty International, Christian Aid, ABColombia and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, have all expressed concern for Ravelo's

safety. Ravelo is a finalist for Frontline's 2013 Award for Defenders at Risk.

Alliance members can help by:

- Raising awareness in the legal sector of David Ravelo's case in the context of the trend towards stigmatisation and "criminalisation" of human rights defenders in Colombia
- Lobbying UK and Colombian governments to send the message that legal experts around the world are following the case and to ensure that due process is followed
- Visiting or writing to David Ravelo in prison to support him during the appeal process
- Carrying out political advocacy at the international level to raise awareness of this case
- Signing amicus curiae briefs to support the appeal against the sentence



David Ravelo Crespo

¹ Human Rights First, 'Unreliable nature of witnesses receiving reintegration benefits', Baseless Prosecutions of Human Rights Defenders in Colombia, Section II-A, February 2009. <http://humanrightsfirst.biz/defenders/reports/report.aspx?s=eng&p=index>

Mandira Sharma

CASE STUDY **NEPAL**

ROLE Lawyer Mandira Sharma is chairperson and co-founder of Advocacy Forum (AF), Nepal's leading organisation of human rights lawyers

NATURE OF WORK AF was founded in 2001 to address cases of human rights violations for victims of Nepal's civil war (1996-2006). Many of its cases are against high-ranking security personnel and its lawyers routinely face threats and obstructions to their work



Mandira Sharma

The Peace Accords that ended the civil war between government forces and Maoist rebels were signed on 21 November 2006. Despite positive steps taken in establishing a democracy, none of the perpetrators of human rights violations committed by either side during the conflict have been brought to justice and a pervasive culture of impunity hinders the transition process. Even in high-profile cases, institutional bodies often refuse to respect court orders.

Much of Advocacy Forum's work at regional and national level is in challenging this culture of impunity and its lawyers are vulnerable to harassment, abuse and non-cooperation from both state and non-state actors.

On 3 January 2013, UK authorities arrested Colonel Kumar Lama of the Nepal Army and charged him with two counts of torture under Universal Jurisdiction Law. Due to their work relating to the case, Mandira and her colleagues were called traitors in the media in Nepal, elements of which also incited violence against them. The District Administration Office also informed AF of an investigation into its activities.¹

PBI has worked to protect AF's lawyers since 2006.

Alliance members can help by:

- Reviewing national justice policy in relation to International norms - adding weight to the arguments and recommendations made by AF
- Preparing amicus curiae briefs to support AF's efforts to challenge elements of the justice system that encourage impunity
- Responding to urgent alerts about lawyers' security at times of heightened risk, through letter writing or public statements
- Facilitating links between AF and international pro bono lawyers

¹ Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, letter to the Prime Minister of Nepal, 12 March 2013: http://www.peacebrigades.org.uk/fileadmin/user_files/groups/uk/files/Alliance_documents/1303BHRletter_of_concern_nepal.pdf

Edgar Pérez Archila

CASE STUDY **GUATEMALA**

ROLE Edgar Pérez is a leading human rights lawyer in Guatemala, and one of the few who are brave enough to take on emblematic cases in which high level officials are implicated in crimes against humanity

NATURE OF WORK Since 1997 Edgar has advised 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 Pérez has dedicated himself to working on behalf of victims and survivors of human rights violations in Guatemala, often taking on the country's military, political and elite in the process. He has achieved some remarkable victories. These include, in 2009, the first sentence issued by a national court for forced disappearance during the internal armed conflict, and in August 2011 and February 2012, the conviction and sentencing of four Kaibil Special Forces agents to a symbolic 6,060 years for their role in the notorious 1982 Dos Erres massacre, in which more than 250 villagers were slaughtered.

With his firm, the Guatemalan Human Rights Law Office, Edgar is representing victims in the first ever genocide case to be heard in a Latin American courtroom, against former President Efraín Ríos Montt and other 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 attempts to sabotage his car. His security situation continues to be precarious in spite of support he receives from PBI and other international human rights organisations.

Edgar received the American Bar Association's International Human Rights Lawyer Award for 2011-12.



Edgar Pérez Archila

Alliance members can help by:

- Writing to the Guatemalan judiciary to express support for advancing cases that seek to address impunity around conflict era cases
- Writing to the Guatemalan state to urge that human rights lawyers and the victims they represent receive adequate protection measures
- Researching and preparing amicus briefs to support litigation in key transitional justice cases
- Providing legal advice and training on issues of international law

Alba Cruz Ramos

CASE STUDY **MEXICO**

ROLE Alba Cruz is a human rights lawyer and the legal coordinator of Codigo-DH in Oaxaca, one of Mexico's most deprived states

NATURE OF WORK Codigo-DH was founded in January 2011. It offers legal aid, psychological support and medical attention to victims of human rights violations, as well as promoting access to justice and challenging impunity

In spite of national and international recognition of her work, Alba Cruz faces regular threats and harassment in connection with the cases she represents. She has been the target of physical and verbal attacks, and her car has been tampered with several times. She has received protective accompaniment from PBI since 2009.

One of Alba's cases concerns the town of San Dionisio del Mar, where Codigo-DH represents indigenous community leaders opposed to a wind farm project planned for the area. Alba is concerned that this mega-project – which will be one of the largest wind farms in Latin America – has not complied with regulations, especially those related to prior consultation of affected communities. It is feared that the construction of five mooring ports will cause the depletion of stocks of marine species in the lagoon; these constitute the communities' staple diet and primary income source. "The communities will lose their source of food and work if the wind farm is installed there."¹

Community members publicly opposed to the project have been victims of police aggression, arbitrary detention, attacks, threats, defamation and criminalisation,² and on 3 April 2013 Codigo-DH's offices were raided by unidentified assailants.



Alba Cruz Ramos

Alliance members can help by:

- Facilitating links between Alba Cruz and international and environmental pro bono lawyers
- Monitoring the security situation of lawyers like Alba and responding to urgent alerts about lawyers' security at times of heightened risk, through letter writing or public statements
- Lobbying UK and Mexican governments to send the message that legal experts around the world are following this case and other cases relating to indigenous peoples' rights
- Participating in a delegation of lawyers to Oaxaca to monitor the environmental impact of mega-projects and the risks faced by lawyers defending affected communities

¹ PBI México, Entrevistas, No. I/2013, 25 March 2013

² Codigo-DH, Informe: La situación de los derechos humanos en Oaxaca, 2012; http://www.codigodh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Informe2012_interiores.pdf

Joining the Alliance

The Alliance draws on the expertise and resources of the British legal profession to link with lawyers at risk abroad, helping to protect them and promote their work. Members can give their support in various ways:

- Establishing a direct link with individual lawyers or legal organisations in need of protection
- Participating in fact-finding delegations to affected countries
- Voicing concerns in specific cases of danger
- Assisting in the preparation of submissions to governments and amicus curiae briefs
- Advising on the review of codes and legislation to ensure their compliance with international legal standards
- Helping with the training of local lawyers, including producing training manuals or helping them to access local support
- Providing financial support for PBI's protection work
- Publicly endorsing the objectives of the Alliance

By joining the Alliance, whether as an individual lawyer or through your firm, chambers or other organisation, you will be expressing your support for these efforts and your willingness to play a part in protecting threatened lawyers. You will learn about the cases in which PBI is involved and how you may be able to help, whether in particular cases or more generally.

"The Alliance for Lawyers at Risk is a crucial point of contact for lawyers and human rights defenders under threat. The human rights violations frequently occur in jurisdictions where the rule of law is not strong enough to offer the necessary protection. ALR respectfully but strongly intervenes through letter writing, amicus curiae briefs and raising awareness; shining a light through the grubby darkness of intimidation and impunity."

Kirsty Brimelow QC, Member of PBI's Lawyers Advisory Committee and Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales

"I was profoundly moved by the courage of lawyers I met during an Alliance visit to Colombia. Witnessing the ways in which the campesino, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities work to protect themselves and the environment against displacement and destruction, I am convinced that the support of Alliance members for lawyers mounting legal challenges is vital. Without support for human rights lawyers there is no justice for marginalised and poor communities, and international pressure protects lives, as we were told by a prominent Colombian human rights lawyer during our visit."

Professor Sara Chandler, Chair of the Law Society Human Rights Committee

"It is very easy for lawyers in this country to overlook the immense challenges facing human rights defenders in more troubled parts of the globe. Every day human rights defenders face the risk of violence, death and persecution because of their extraordinary efforts to improve the lives of others and uphold the rule of law. Engagement with the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk allows us to support and to stand in solidarity with these great human rights defenders"

Richard Hermer QC, Matrix Chambers

"PBI's Alliance for Lawyers at Risk was amongst the first and most effective organisations to pioneer a pool of willing and sympathetic lawyers to take the initiative to intervene and shadow those at risk. At one and the same time this provides solidarity, raises the profile of the endangered, reduces the risk, and gets governments to listen."

Michael Mansfield QC, Took's Chambers

"Having visited Colombia and met the courageous lawyers and human rights defenders working there, I wanted to do something pro-active to support their work when I returned to London. The Alliance for Lawyers at Risk gives me – and my chambers – that very opportunity. I have been able to lead a team of barristers on an amicus brief before the Colombian Supreme Court in the notorious Peace Community Massacre case of 2005 ... While we can never bring back those killed in the massacre, we can in our own modest way assist the community and their lawyers to seek justice, stand up for human rights and combat impunity."

Smita Shah, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers



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PBI UK Patrons Lord Avebury, Sir Henry Brooke CMG, Sir Robert Carnwath, Julie Christie, Lord Joffe, Sir Jeffrey Jowell KCMG QC, Professor Jenny Pearce, Sir Nigel Rodley KBE, Sir Peter Roth, Baroness Frances D'Souza, Juliet Stevenson CBE, Samuel West

PBI UK Lawyers' Advisory Committee
Sir Henry Brooke CMG (Honorary President), Courtenay Barklem, Silvia Borelli, Kirsty Brimelow QC, Michael Brindle QC, Sara Chandler, Mark Cunningham QC, Ole Hansen, Charlotte Haworth Hird, Richard Hermer QC, David Hughes, Nicole Kar, Maya Lester, Sir Peter Roth, Ben Silverstone, Rock Tansey QC, Peter Weiss

Cover image shows some of the lawyers PBI works to protect. From left to right: Alba Cruz (Mexico), Edgar Pérez (Guatemala), Santiago Aguirre (Mexico), Mandira Sharma (Nepal), Alirio Uribe (Colombia)

// The launch of the Alliance marks an opportunity for lawyers in the UK, individually and through their firms and chambers, to fulfil our commitment to the protection of human rights around the world, and help our fellow professionals. //

Sir Henry Brooke

JOIN THE ALLIANCE FOR LAWYERS AT RISK

Connecting lawyers at home with threatened lawyers overseas

Members receive a biannual newsletter, information about UK speaking tours by threatened lawyers, and the chance to contribute their specialised skills and knowledge to help protect lawyers and other human rights defenders working on legal cases, whose lives are at risk because of their work defending human rights and the rule of law.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE ALLIANCE

NAME

ADDRESS FOR
CORRESPONDENCE

POST CODE

TEL

EMAIL

I am a:

- Judge Academic lawyer Barrister/Scottish advocate in private practice
 Solicitor in private practice In-house lawyer Legal executive Pupil/trainee
 Other (please specify):

Please let us know if there are any particular areas or themes that you would like to be involved with (e.g. countries, regions or issues)

Please let us know if you would be willing to contribute any special skills to the Alliance (e.g. language skills, area of professional expertise)

Are you able to offer some time to Alliance activities? Yes No

If yes, please indicate how much may be possible for you

1-2 hours a week 3-4 hours a week 1 day a month Other:

Please consider donating to the Alliance for Lawyers at Risk – your donation could help PBI to:

■ Offer lawyers security training so they can protect themselves and their clients in the future – e.g. **£125 would pay for lawyers from Advocacy Forum in Nepal to receive training to develop security strategies to protect themselves from danger**

■ Bring a lawyer whose life is in danger to Europe to increase their safety through meetings and events with international lawyers – e.g. **£500 would pay for a lawyer from Codigo-DH in Mexico to travel to the UK** to raise awareness of threats being made against them and to appeal to the UK legal community to ensure his protection

■ Carry out research to advocate on behalf of a lawyer at risk – e.g. **£40 pays for a day of research on threats against CCAJAR lawyers in Colombia**, for PBI to carry out advocacy with authorities to ensure their safety

FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO DONATE, PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF 



YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT LAWYERS AT RISK BY MAKING A DONATION

You can help by making a one-off donation or giving to PBI on a regular basis. Please let us know what kind of donation you would like to make by filling in the information below.

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION OF £

Cheques or Charity Aid Foundation Vouchers should be made payable to "PBI UK Section"



I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A REGULAR DONATION OF £

PAID EVERY

STARTING ON / /

TO THE MANAGER BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

ADDRESS

POST CODE

NAME(S) OF ACCOUNT HOLDER

SORT CODE

ACCOUNT NUMBER

Please pay PBI UK Section (Account Number 50070611, Sort Code 08 90 61 The Cooperative Bank Plc. 62-64 Southampton Row, London WC1) the amounts indicated above

SIGNATURE

DATE

Please tick all that apply:

- I would like to Gift Aid this donation**
- I would like to Gift Aid all future donations until further notice**
- I would like to Gift Aid all previous donations for the charity's current financial period and the previous four**

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after April 2008 (28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008). **(Please note, in order for your gift to be eligible for gift aid, please provide a home address in the box below.)**

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

POST CODE

TEL

EMAIL



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