

**WANT TO HELP OUT? WE ARE SEEKING:**

**Translators**

from Spanish to French or English, and from French to English. Write us!

**Members for the urgent action network** to resend model letters that put pressure on Colombian authorities when the security of accompanied communities is threatened. Sign up on-line on our website!

**Accompanists.** Training and thorough preparation is mandatory, minimum trip length of three months. Visit our website to find the selection and training process!



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Project  
Accompaniment  
and Solidarity  
Colombia

Who We Are and What We Do

# To know more...

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### Colombian media

Anarcol [www.nodo50.org/anarcol](http://www.nodo50.org/anarcol)  
Centro de Estudios libertarios ( CEL)  
[www.centrodeestudioslibertarios.org](http://www.centrodeestudioslibertarios.org)  
Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular ( CINEP)  
[www.nocheyniebla.org/](http://www.nocheyniebla.org/)  
Centros de Medios Independientes de Colombia  
[colombia.indymedia.org](http://colombia.indymedia.org)  
Comision de Justicia y Paz  
[es.geocities.com/justiciaypazcolombia](http://es.geocities.com/justiciaypazcolombia)  
Desde los Margenes, Javier Giraldo  
[www.javiergiraldo.org](http://www.javiergiraldo.org)  
Movimiento Nacional de Victimas de Crimenes de Estado  
[www.movimientodevictimas.org](http://www.movimientodevictimas.org)  
Prensa rural [prensarural.org](http://prensarural.org)  
Red colombiana de Accion frente al libre comercio y el ALCA  
[www.recalca.org.co](http://www.recalca.org.co)  
Red de Defensores no Institucionalizados  
[www.dhcolombia.info](http://www.dhcolombia.info)  
Tribunal Permanente de los Pueblos, capitulo Colombia  
[tpp.revolt.org](http://tpp.revolt.org)

### Solidarity media

Colombian Solidarity Campaign  
[www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk](http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk)  
Human rights in latin america committee  
[www.ccdhal.org](http://www.ccdhal.org)  
International Peace Observatory  
[www.peaceobservatory.org](http://www.peaceobservatory.org)  
Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia  
[/www.redcolombia.org](http://www.redcolombia.org)

### ... and visit the "Colombia" section at...

Amnesty International [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)  
Interamerican human rights commission of the OEA  
[www.cidh.org](http://www.cidh.org)  
High commissioner for human rights and the UN  
[www.hchr.org.co](http://www.hchr.org.co)  
Human Right Watch [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)  
Le Monde diplomatique [www.monde-diplomatique.fr](http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr)  
Nacla Report [www.nacla.org](http://www.nacla.org)  
Peace Brigades International [www.pbi-colombia.org](http://www.pbi-colombia.org)

# Invite PASC!

*Contact us to obtain copies or organize an event.*

## **PASC's publications**

- La Piedra en el Zapato* (French) and *Stone in the Shoe* (English) journals
- Pamphlets (French, English, Spanish)
- Accompanist's journal: *Mémoires de guerre, mémoires de vies, mémoires de résistance!!!* (French)
- *storie Et si c'était vous...*

## **Distributed by the PASC**

- *Histoires des afrocolombiens, Nouveaux cahiers colombiens no. 2* (2007),
- *Ville et guerre sociale en Colombie, Nouveaux cahiers colombiens no. 3* (2007),
- Groupe de solidarité Colombie Genève
- *Somos tierra de esta tierra, comunidades del Cacarica*
- *El grito libertario*, Political prisoners journal

## **Photo exhibits**

*Tales of Struggle and Self-Determination* (2008)

## **Theater**

*Rugissement de terre sur conscience en lutte*, original creation, 2008. Written by two returning accompanists. Text available in French.

## **Video**

- The Palm Empire: State Crimes and Civil Resistance in Colombia*, 20 min and 56 min, produced by PASC from interviews in the Jiguamiando communities in 2004 and 2005 (English, French, Spanish)
- PASC also has many documentaries in Spanish on different community issues in Colombia

## **Music**

- PASC compilation (1 and 2)
- Renacentes (music of CAVIDA, a resistance community of Cacarica): *Oyeme Choco* and *A nuestros martires*

## **Workshops**

- (*French, English, Spanish*)
- "Bio" diesel
- Communities in resistance
- Food sovereignty
- Direct solidarity, principles and actions
- Impunity and terrorism in Colombia
- Free Trade Agreements
- Plan Colombia 1 and 2
- Plan Puebla Panama, continental and hemispheric militarization

PASC is a collective based in Quebec that works to create a direct solidarity network with Colombian organizations and communities that struggle for Life, Dignity and Autonomy.

We are a member of the **Peoples Global Action** (PGA) bloc-Montreal, confronting capitalism, colonization, and imperialism inside Canadian borders. This network is working cross-Canada, notably against the Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010, where land theft, environmental destruction, corporate invasion, and repression of the poor, the marginalized, and the aboriginal are on-going realities.

If you would like to stay informed about our activities, please visit our web site regularly, and/or subscribe to our email list through our website.

[www.PASC.ca](http://www.PASC.ca)

# Our Methods of Action

## ★ Accompaniment of threatened communities ★

International accompaniment on the ground represents an important support for communities who affirm their rights as civilians living within an armed conflict. It is a source of protection against the threat of armed actors and promotes greater visibility of their situation nationally and internationally.

## ★ Information and awareness ★

Through the web site, publications, the film *Palm Empire: State Crimes and Civil Resistance in Colombia*, the list serve and community events, PASC diffuses alternative information concerning State terrorism, Colombian resistance processes as well as economic interests hidden behind the systematic violation of human rights.

## ★ Denunciations and Political Pressure ★

Through our urgent action network, PASC publishes news reports exposing the threats and violations of human rights that the communities and organizations that we accompany wish to denounce to the international community. These reports on the situation are accompanied by model letters that can be endorsed before being sent to the authorities concerned.

## ★ Invite PASC for a visit! ★

We will visit you in your work place, school, community center, church, or union. You can also help us distribute our many publications. We have used many mediums: photo exhibits, video reporting, musical compilations, and theatre. See the "Invite PASC" section.

## Building awareness of political prisoners

In North America we work to address the problem of state terrorism and ultra-security. Under the rubric of the 'political prisoner' concept, recognized by international law, we hope to create links between situations in Canada and Colombia, from Canadian security certificates, to repression and the criminalization of political action.

## Visiting Colombian prisoners and their families

In Colombia, we foster opportunities for exchange with political prisoners and demonstrate to the penitentiary administration that they have international support. We work to stop the social marginalization of families and denounce the threats and persecution they face.



## Correspondence with political prisoner groups

The majority of political prisoners are social activists who, suddenly one day, find themselves cut off from the world, without information and without the possibility to participate in social organizations. Correspondence with the outside helps to break their isolation.



## Distributing political prisoners' writings and supporting their demands

In our journal, *La Piedra en el Zapato*, on our website ([www.pasc.ca](http://www.pasc.ca)) and in our brochures we regularly publish texts, essays, art and poetic writings of Colombia's political prisoners.

## Supporting the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (FCSP)

The FCSP is a Colombian organization founded in 1973 to defend and promote the human rights of those detained on political grounds, through social-psychological accompaniment and judicial support.

# Beyond Bars

## Permanent solidarity campaign with political prisoners

Colombia currently detains 7200 people on political grounds. Considered by the state to be the enemy inside the prison, their condition is even more vulnerable. Piled like livestock in the dun-

geons of power, these men and women who, with their voices, their fists, and their writing refused to be silent, are erased from social reality, muzzled at the hands of history. Invisible among their own people, their ability to be human removed under the discourse of democratic security which hangs above the state like a halo.



By organizing a solidarity campaign with Colombian political prisoners, we hope to bring to the forefront the ideological characteristic of our supposedly democratic countries that, beyond

resorting to armed and economic violence, manipulate laws and rights in order to exterminate popular experiences that propose alternatives to societal injustices.

The revitalization of the concept of 'political crime' erodes the rights of conscientious objection and

rebellion in a world where the anti-terrorist crusade criminalizes all opposition to the dominant order, in Colombia, Canada and beyond.

# Colombia's dirty war

## Government and international responsibility

During the mid 1940's, the political violence stimulated by the conservative party left Colombia with over 300,000 dead without investigation, thousands displaced, a nation submitted to inequality and misery, and an armed uprising in rural sectors against the establishment. Colombia then proclaimed a strategy of National Security which allowed the military to create, with the help of U.S. military forces and foreign economic interests, a true paramilitary structure, still in place today, which is responsible for 14,700 cases of homicides and disappearances between 1988 and 2002, and close to 4000 since. This armed strategy, besides silencing social protest, aims at imposing a unique model of development which yields land and natural resources to international business interests. This explains the more than three million internal refugees who have lost their land due to forced displacement. Studies made by

human rights organizations within the country have published accounts of many crimes against humanity committed by the state, including: extra-judicial executions (65,000 homicides were reported since 1965), detentions and/or disappearances (more than 10,000 cases), torture, rape, forced displacement, massive arrests and arbitrary detentions.

Numerous trials and investigations have brought to light extensive evidence that demonstrate the link between the paramilitary groups and elected civil servants, including the federal cabinet and the presidential family. We demand that not only the Colombian government take responsibility for the paramilitary phenomenon but also the Colombian economic sector, Western countries and transnational corporations take responsibility for their reprehensible support of this violent system.

# Direct solidarity

Direct solidarity takes a critical look at international aid, considering that international development subscribes to the dominant ethos of world economics which, while enriching private sectors in investing countries, increases the dependency of the global South to the benefit of transnational firms and international financial institutions. Moreover, the help that is allocated, often sporadic and lacking a long-term vision, is defined by the agendas of NGOs

in rich countries and is harmful to the construction of autonomous local communities. Direct solidarity proposes instead to build egalitarian relations between social groups who hold different positions in the world hierarchy in order to eventually transfer the privileges from one group towards another (access to information, media, contacts and networks, etc.) and to share the stories of resistance to a transnational community.



PASC doesn't believe in conventional international co-operation. It does not provide humanitarian aid and doesn't subscribe to international development.

## **Concretely, PASC practices direct solidarity in the following ways:**

- Providing a physical presence in order to transfer the privileges of Canadian citizenship to communities who fight daily against military-economic violence.
- Broadcasting the messages of marginalized communities through independent media.
- Sharing experiences and fostering equality within relationships.
- Using a feminist approach, employing popular education and giving organizational support.
- Supervising Canada's role, researching Canadian government policy and Canadian corporations in Colombia.

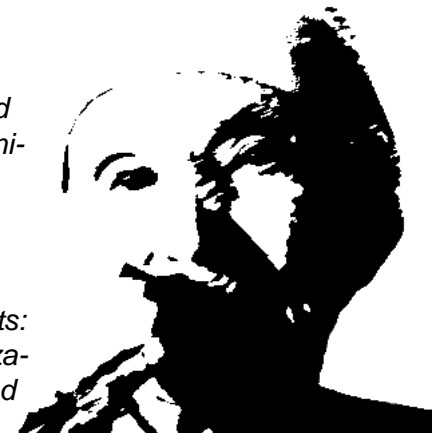
⇒ state and its paramilitary allies in our region is designed to empty Catatumbo of its population in order to allow a clean slate for exploitation of natural resources by foreign investment.

As peasants, indigenous Bari, women's associations, youth, farmers, merchants, and cooperatives, we united under the Social

Integration Committee of Catatumbo (CISCA) in 2004 in order to elaborate a collective proposal to defend the territory and life within the territory. This is what we call our Life Plan, which touches on many aspects including food sovereignty, womens organizations, community communications, education, medicinal plants, and more.

Since January 2007, PASC accompanies communities of Catatumbo to support the organizational process of CISCA (communications, working with womens groups, popular political education, food sovereignty) producing reports on the human rights situation and launching investigations on the behavior of Canadian mining companies present in the territory.

*"Our communities have a long tradition of organization which has allowed us to improve our living conditions. After the destruction of our social organizations by the army and the paramilitary (2002), we have risen once again in order to plant the seed watered by the blood of our community leaders who have either disappeared or been assassinated, and now it has germinated... this gave birth to CISCA (2004), a regional organization of peasants for peasants: one step on our long path of organization and resistance in order to defend our territory and community"*



-Edilma, Catatumbo peasant

# CATATUMBO

## An oil and mining zone ... but also a region of resistance and peasant organization

*Excerpt from an interview with a CISCA leader (Nov. 2007)*

Our region is situated on the Colombia-Venezuela border and it represents a highly strategic land for various armed groups. It is rich in coal and oil, full of biodiversity and fertile land, and its important network of basins and fresh water sources is coveted by multinational corporations interested in water privatization.



We share this territory between peasant communities and the indigenous Bari people, who have protected and defended it for centuries.

The only state presence in our region has been as an armed actor. Without any public support, we have built our own schools, health centres, and roads.

Since the arrival of military and paramilitary troops in 2002, our territory has been stricken with deaths and disappearances, our social organizations persecuted and our social fabric destroyed. Furthermore, the bombing operations and aerial fumigations, which still continue, impoverish the soil, contaminate the water and wreck our cultures, forcing us to leave our land in order to survive.

Without a doubt, the strategy of massacre, forced displacement and threats deployed by the ↪

# RedHer



The *Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia* (the Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia - RedHer) is an organizational space for coordination among independent Colombian organizations and transnational organizations and collec-

tives working in Colombia with shared principles of international political solidarity. The RedHer facilitates mutual aid and enrichment of resistance experiences for groups from Europe, North America, and Colombia.

RedHer is committed to a negotiated political solution to the social, armed conflict that rages in Colombia. RedHer operates on two thematic axes:

- **Fighting against impunity and repression** and defending natural resources, with the goal of complete justice
- **Respect of sovereignty and of culture**

Many efforts have been made to create a communications network to share information from popular organizations on the ground, spread the truth and develop popular education.

PASC has been a member of RedHer since 2006. Within the national RedHer network, PASC works with CISCA (see page 9) and the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (p. 11).

# Forced Displacement and Land Theft in Para-militarized Colombia

The 90's represented a time when the paramilitary strategy of the state reached its peak in barbarity. With the complicity of the Colombian authorities, many paramilitary blocs began massive repression tactics throughout the country against those who dared to defend their rights. The privileged strategy was massacre and

forced displacement to destroy forms of popular organization and to free the fertile lands in order to impose a unique model of development that served private investment and the deployment of world capital. The phenomenon was nothing but a new wave of colonialism.

## Civil Resistance and Humanitarian Zones

In rural regions, the main victims of the illegal strategy are the African-Colombian, Indigenous, and peasant communities. These persecuted communities sought ways to defend their lifestyle and protect their ancestral land. It is within this context that humanitarian zones appeared. Humanitarian zones are the peasant communities' response to the paramilitary re-deployment

in Colombia. Enshrining the principles of protection and distinction of civilian populations living amidst an armed conflict, these enclaves of civil resistance called on international humanitarian rights as well as on national and international accompaniment in order to allow communities to organize in the defense of their land and life projects.

## The African-Colombian and metisse communities of Jiguamiando and Curvarado

were massively displaced during Operación Genesis in 1997. Military airplanes bombarded their territories, while on the ground, the National Army jointly led operations with paramilitary troops, attacking villages, pillaging, torching, and massacring the civil population. More than 4,000 survivors were forced to leave their land under the military and paramilitary threat.



Once the communities were displaced, an intense development of the land began on their territories, supported by the Colombian

government, foreign capital investment and paramilitary protection. The land, once the most biodiverse region in the country, was partially covered in a vast mono-culture of African palm trees whose production of palm oil is destined for the world market of vegetable oil and biodiesel. Standing up to the threats of the armed actors, the peasants began to organize. With the support of the Comisión de Justicia Y Paz, a Colombian NGO, the people returned to their territory and began pursuing legal action in order to regain their property and denounce the violation of their rights. As African-Colombians, these communities received title to their collective property on their ancestral land, conforming to Law 70 and the national constitution from 1991.

In 2004, three humanitarian zones were created in the Jiguamiando river basin, and in 2006, the community of Curvarado created two more, one situated in the center of the palm mono-culture. Since 2006, natural reserve and biodiversity zones were created as spaces for subsistence agriculture and to protect tropical rainforest. At the request of the communities, PASC has been present in the region since 2004 to ensure an international presence in the humanitarian zones and to support civil resistance..