

ONE BY ONE-PERU

Helping victims of political violence in Latin America

Human Rights Watch recently reported in Washington that the findings of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission underscored the need to prosecute the perpetrators of gross human rights abuses in Peru. (Human Rights Watch Press Release of August 23, 2003 at <http://hrw.org/press/2003/08/peru082803.htm>.) Prosecution alone however will not alleviate the suffering, pain and trauma experienced by thousands of victims of torture, massacres and disappearances that characterized the "dirty war" against the "Shining Path." This was one of the most brutal and terrorist movements ever encountered in Latin America.

More than 60,000 people died or "disappeared" in the guerrilla war that ravaged Peru during the 1980s and 1990s. These numbers "reveal the utter brutality of the insurgency in Peru, as well as the repressive measures that were taken to contain it." (Human Rights Watch Press Release of August 23, 2003 at <http://hrw.org/press/2003/08/peru082803.htm>.) Shining Path, a Maoist guerrilla group, killed about half the victims, and roughly one-third died at the hands of government security forces. The Truth commission attributed some of the other slayings to a smaller guerrilla group and local militias. The violence peaked in 1983 and 1984 in Ayacucho, one of Peru's poorest provinces. Other provinces were also deeply affected. Both guerrillas and security forces massacred civilians indiscriminately. Three-quarters of the victims named in the report were Quechua-speaking Indians, the poorest and most exploited sector of Peruvian society.

Former Peruvian President Valentín Paniagua formed the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation in June 2001. Its mandate was three-fold: to provide an official record of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed between May 1980 and November 2000; to analyze their causes, and to recommend measures to strengthen human rights and democracy. The commission collected 17,000 testimonies and interviewed political leaders, legislators, army generals and former guerrilla

leaders now in prison. It also held public hearings in regions of the country most affected by the conflict. The report identified more than 1,000 sites thought to contain victims' bodies. It urged the government to provide more resources to enable the prosecutor's office to exhume and identify remains. It also recommended that assistance and treatment be provided for the numerous victims of the political violence in Peru, many of whom suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

One By One, Inc. is a non-profit human rights organization that was founded ten years ago. A central focus of One By One is to create Dialogue Groups that promote intense and authentic dialogue between victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust as well as their descendents. The dialogue group experiences has been transforming for many of the participants. Following the Dialogue Groups a number of the participants became more involved in social action, writing, speaking, and creating art and music on behalf of One By One and their communities.

Responding to the reality faced by many Latin America countries, One By One Inc. has decided to extend its reach to the victims of political violence in Peru. One By One Inc. has created a new chapter, One By One Peru. One by One's Peruvian representative Eng. Elisa de Rocha, will be working with members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru as well as representatives of international Organizations to follow up on the recommendation made by the Commission's final report. One by One's focus will be to work with people who suffer from PTSD as a result of their experiences during the Peruvian civil war.

We need your financial support to launch the Peruvian office, and fund ongoing services for the Peruvian people who survived the violence of war. The creation of Dialogue Groups for national reconciliation is an initiative that goes beyond mere Human Rights advocacy and attempts to address a very real human need: the need to resolve the trauma caused by political violence.

One By One's mission is to continue to help those who suffer from war, genocide, torture and conflicts worldwide using the techniques they have

developed and published. These techniques are based on theories of trauma and recovery, the work of Dr. Victor Frankl (transforming suffering by giving it meaning), the work of Martin Buber (authentic, honest dialogue), the philosophical writings of Primo Levi as well as group theory.

GOALS

In the first year of operation, it will be essential to investigate any and all threats to the safety of the victims (individuals of the first and second generation) who are willing to openly discuss their civil war experiences. Once the safety for these individuals is secure, we will contact them and schedule interviews with them. As part of the interview process, we will ask them if they would like to meet and share their experiences with other individuals like themselves. If there is interest in meeting, which we believe there will be, we will create ongoing homogeneous dialogue groups fashioned after the One By One Dialogue Group Model.

During the second year of operation, One By One Peru staff members will concentrate on contacting perpetrators involved in the civil war and their children. We will use the model of One By One Berlin (which has been working with Nazi perpetrators and descendents of perpetrators since 1993) and help them to openly and honestly speak about their past. Again we will conduct individual interviews and hopefully establish ongoing homogeneous groups with perpetrators and their descendents.

Also during the second year of operation we hope to host/co-sponsor a conference in collaboration with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru, the International Organization on Human Rights. The Conference would address areas such as trauma, torture, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and methods of recovery.

During the third year, the focus will be on creating an official "Dialogue for National Reconciliation" for combined groups (victims and perpetrators) based on the One By One model and other successful models.

FUTURE PLANS

One By One Peru hopes to create a "Program for Survivors of Torture" in Peru and other parts of Latin America. The program will provide a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment and rehabilitation of survivors of political torture and their families.

Torture (See Bellevue/NYU Program of Survivors of torture of Marrch, 16,2004 at <http://www.survivorsof torture.org/survivors/index.html>

The definition of torture has been taken from Bellevue/NYU Program of Torture) is a devastating violation of human rights that directly opposes the principles of democracy and individual freedom.

Torture was used during the Peruvian Civil war and continues to be used in many parts of the world.

One By One Peru, will attempt to provide victims with an increased understanding of the effects of torture through education (books, films, documents, teaching) to help individuals overcome the effects of torture. There is an urgent need to care for these people and to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of trauma.

We hope to be able to collaborate with local and international professionals and organizations, in order to provide the best care possible for the people of Peru.