



the JUST word

Martín-Baró Initiative for Wellbeing & Human Rights at Grassroots International

A Partner of Boston College Center for Human Rights & International Justice

Decades Later, Justice for the Jesuits is Found

*Tugce Tumer and Grace Cavanagh**

On September 11, 2020, in a hopeful victory for transitional justice and the fight against impunity, the National Court of Spain sentenced Coronel Inocente Orlando Montano, a retired Salvadoran military colonel, to 133 years in prison for his role in the assassination of six Jesuit priests, a university housekeeper, and her daughter in San Salvador in 1989. One of these priests was Ignacio Martín-Baró, our honored namesake whose work and teachings inspired the creation of the Martín-Baró Initiative for Wellbeing and Human Rights. Ignacio Martín-Baró, or “Nacho” as known lovingly by his friends and family, worked as a professor at the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador during the longstanding conflict between the military-led junta government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, or FMLN. Martín-Baró and the other five Jesuit priests hoped to broker a deal between these two warring parties and end the conflict to save the lives of many Salvadorans. The assassination of these priests, which was

carried out in the name of the FMLN but ordered by members of the military government, was intended to stop these peaceful proceedings and represented one of many attacks against progressive leaders in El Salvador during this tumultuous time.

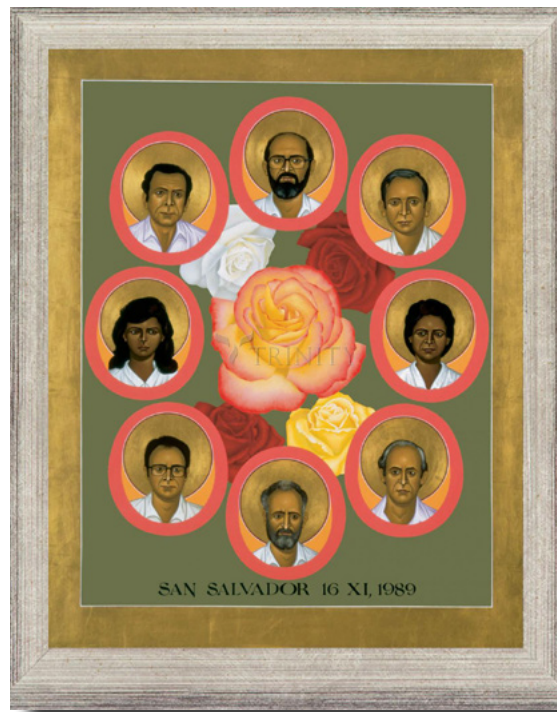


Image by Br. Robert Lentz OFM

Now, more than thirty years after this atrocity occurred, the victims’ friends and families can reclaim some semblance of justice. Spain’s ruling, which found Col. Montano “guilty ... of five counts of murder of a terrorist nature” represents not only a win for those closest to the victims, but to all those affected by the war and committed to the fight against impunity. The tribunal, carried out by the National Court of Spain over three months and presided over by judge José Antonio Mora Alarcón, demonstrates the power of “universal jurisdiction” as a means of showing solidarity and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions across international borders.

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Our Mission & Values

Through grant-making and education, the Martín-Baró Initiative fosters psychological well-being, social consciousness, active resistance, and progressive social change in communities affected by institutional violence, repression, and social injustice.

OUR VALUES

- ◆ We believe that the scars of such experiences are deeply seated both in the individual and in society.
- ◆ We believe in the power of the community collectively to heal these wounds, to move forward, and to create change.
- ◆ We believe in the importance of developing education and critical awareness about the oppressive policies and practices of the United States and of multinational corporations.

OUR GOALS

- ◆ To support innovative grassroots projects that explore the power of the community to foster healing within individuals and communities that are trying to recover from experiences of institutional violence, repression, and social injustice.
- ◆ To promote education and critical awareness about the psychosocial consequences of structural violence, repression, and social injustice on individuals and communities, while educating ourselves and the wider community about the community-based responses of grantees in their pursuit of social reparation and a more just and equitable world.
- ◆ To build collaborative relationships among the Initiative, its grantees, and its contributors for mutual education and social change.

Decades Later, Justice for the Jesuits is Found

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In the 12 years of litigation that occurred between Spain's initial filing of the complaint in 2008 and the beginning of the trial in 2020, countless witnesses, experts, and investigators testified to provide greater detail on the specifics of the case and the situation in El Salvador at that time. Almudena Bernabeu, renowned international attorney and a key member of the prosecution, and invited speaker at this year's MBI@GRI December event commemorating the assassinations, explained that the extended timeframe assisted the prosecution's efforts in some ways as it occurred simultaneously with a recent change in perspective towards greater respect for human rights among those judicial departments assisting in these efforts. In 2017, the United States extradited Montano to Spain in a crucial move that ensured there would be a defendant present at the tribunal, a requirement of these legal proceedings. While Montano was only one of the culpable parties in these atrocities, his presence and conviction symbolize the many human rights violations that occurred at the hands of Salvadoran military leadership during the civil war.

As emphasized by Bernabeu, this trial hinged on the perseverance and collaboration of all parties involved in the fight for accountability. Bernabeu highlighted the transnational aspect of this endeavor, specifically mentioning the collective efforts of the United States, Spain, and El Salvador. Additionally, Bernabeu commended the witnesses at the trial for their commitment to justice and their willingness to contribute to the litigation process, as well as the efforts of the researchers, investigators, and academics that were indispensable in formulating the argument against Montano.

Though this outcome ensured the conviction of just one perpetrator of these mass killings, it will have a lasting positive impact on the struggle for transitional justice and the assurance of human rights. At long last, one guilty party has been held responsible for his crimes against these eight innocent victims. This verdict is a victory for accountability everywhere and a furtherance of the legacy of Martín-Baró, whose memory we wish to honor each and every day with our own commitment to helping facilitate wellbeing and healing in communities affected by injustices throughout the world. We hope that this triumph will serve as further inspiration for those engaging in the work of Martín-Baró and a reminder of the importance of fighting against injustice everywhere.

*The GRI Blog by Carol Schachet and Christina M. Schiavoni as well as reporting by Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Archives informed this article, as did Almudena Bernabeu's September 30, 2020 online presentation hosted by the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), University of California, Berkeley, "The Jesuits Massacre Trial: A Return to Accountability for Human Rights Violations."

Editors: Nicole Rodriguez-Rowe and Tugce Tumer. **Contributing authors and editors:** Grace Cavanagh, Sarah Engelberg-Nolan, Pat Goudvis, Meredith Hawkins, Timothy Karcz, Joan Liem, M. Brinton Lykes, Mary Noal, and Carol Schachet. **PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK.** Contributions can be made on-line at: grassrootsonline.org/mbi-gift or by check made out to **Grassroots International**, noting on the memo line that it is for the **Martín-Baró Initiative** and sent to **Grassroots International, 179 Boylston Street, 4th floor, Boston, MA 02130**. Checks payable to Grassroots International are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by the IRS code. For questions or comments, please email us at info@martinbarofund.org.

MBI@GRI Volunteers and Grantees reflect on the Impact of COVID-19

Grace Cavanagh and Nicole Rodriguez-Rowe



As with many across the globe volunteers and grantees at the Martín-Baró Initiative (MBI) for Wellbeing and Human Rights have been juggling multiple challenges as we develop new procedures and strengthen multiple relationships with staff at Grassroots International (GRI). GRI Director of Planning and Special Initiatives, Carol Schachet, has been accompanying the MBI in this transition and notes that with a long term commitment to the wellbeing and liberation of the earth and all its peoples, Grassroots International provides a perfect home for the MBI. As part of the overall grantmaking program, the MBI complements and expands support for global movements and community-led groups promoting sustainability, equity, and dignity.

Fortunately, the pandemic has not had a major impact on our new Grantmaking Advisory Committee as we have been able to continue meeting online. We all miss the warmth and companionship of meeting together in person though and hope we can do so again in 2021.

In contrast, COPERMA, one of our 2020 grantees, wrote to us about the unique difficulties presented by COVID-19, including increased feelings of isolation and fear among the vulnerable populations they serve. However, the organization has continued to hold small, socially-distanced sessions for the women it serves, providing a space to reflect on these new difficulties and continue their work to support women survivors of sexual violence.

Thus, the effects of the pandemic on present and future grantees have contributed to multiple discussions in the Grantmaking Advisory Committee about how best to assess the effectiveness of current grantees in accomplishing their goals and what is reasonable to expect of future grantees in the coming year. These are considerations that will be an ongoing part of our grantmaking conversations and deliberations.

As student volunteers have settled into our new roles at the MBI, we have also had to adapt to changing modes of working and communication amidst the pandemic. We have grown used to weekly Zoom meetings, and feel wholly welcomed by the MBI even as they are forced to tune in virtually from their own homes or dorms. We are excited to continue to think of creative ways to spread Martín-Baró's message in this hectic time, and look forward to fostering new relationships with the MBI@GRI, even if only virtually for the time being.

From an administrative and logistical standpoint, all meetings and correspondence have transitioned to a virtual format, calling on us to think intentionally and creatively about hosting meetings, planning events, and completing projects. Committee meetings are hosted on Zoom, and the MBI's 31st annual educational and fundraising event commemorating the 1989 assassination of the Jesuit priests, their homemaker and her daughter in El Salvador, which is taking place on December 8, will also be virtual. These uncertain, stressful, and tumultuous times in the age of COVID-19 and the historic September trial verdict of one of those responsible for that horrific event inspired the title of this year's commemorative event, "Justice Delayed in Turbulent Times: Psychology & Wellbeing Toward Liberation."

Check out GRI's approach to Solidarity
Philanthropy principles at
grassrootsonline.org/what-we-do/strategic-plan

OUR APPROACH

Key Principle

Solidarity Philanthropy

Grassroots International partners with movements through an approach we are calling *solidarity philanthropy*. We built this framework on principles and practices that are informed by social movements, our sense of responsibility, and experience of grantmaking and accompanying movements since our founding. As part of solidarity philanthropy:

- We believe in a theory of change that centers social movements. We accompany social movements through long-term partnerships that are based on: shared vision and values, reciprocity, trust, transparency, movement autonomy, and working together for the long haul.
- We work to make our own organizational practices consistent with social justice values—from grantmaking practices that are flexible and responsive, to an organizational culture based on collaboration, diversity, equity, and health and wellbeing.
- We recognize the contradictions of philanthropic wealth and the often harmful role that philanthropy has played. We form partnerships with peer funders to engage in political education and self-reflection to decolonize philanthropy and promote funder-activism.
- Contribute to reparations and redistribute financial resources toward social movements.
- We recognize the role that the US has played in the world and take social action to hold our own government accountable.
- We participate in alliances with the grassroots organizing sector, take positions on issues, collaborate on campaigns, and support the growth of internationalism in the US.



Projects Funded in 2020

Meredith Hawkins, Sarah Engelberg-Nolan and Mary Noal

Victim's Association for Peace and Development (ASVIPAD), Colombia

\$7000

The Victim's Association for Peace and Development (ASVIPAD) was founded in 2005 in Colombia and is in its second year of grant funding. ASVIPAD's goals include promoting the rights to truth for populations affected by conflict as well as reparation for the relatives of those who have been disappeared. ASVIPAD hopes to expand its accompaniment of these communities through the "Access to Reparation for Female Victims of Violence" project. From a psycho-judicial perspective, ASVIPAD plans to address the 31.7% of the nearly 9,000,000 people in Colombia impacted by armed violence who identify as victims of sexual violence, the large majority of whom are women. In order to achieve justice, ASVIPAD plans to address the current lack of judicial attention to this issue from a psychosocial perspective through: (1) The formation of a holistic system of "Truth, Reparation, and No Repetition"; (2) Psycho-judicial accompaniment of the victims; (3) Revision and activation of systems of support for female victims; and, (4) Documentation of cases of sexual violence within the context of armed-conflict in Colombia to highlight the gravity of the phenomenon of violence against women.



Farmers' and Breeders' Community in the Cold Region of the DRC (COPERMA), D.R. Congo

\$7000



COPERMA, the French acronym for Farmers' and Breeders' Community in the Cold Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Communauté des Planteurs et Éleveurs dans la Région Maraîchère), is in its third year of funding from the Martín-Baró Fund. COPERMA has been working in rural communities in the region since 1983 with the goal of fostering development and self-sufficiency among young mothers and survivors of sexual violence that has resulted from the perpetual presence of armed conflict in the region. With support from the Martín-Baró Fund, COPERMA has been able to successfully intervene and assist victims of sexual violence through strengthening its support programs' infrastructure and knowledge base. In their final year of funding, COPERMA will continue their work with women survivors of sexual violence through promoting their participation within their communities. As community connection remains a vital part of Congolese mental health, this year COPERMA hopes to develop its counselors' skills in facilitating both group sessions and vocational training to decrease survivor isolation and promote community healing.

Al Zahraa Society, Palestine

\$7000

Al Zahraa (The Flower) Society is dedicated to promoting women's rights and raising awareness about gender-based violence. Al Zahraa provides support to women who are survivors of sexual and domestic violence as well as women and children who have been displaced from their homes by war. Through psychological, legal, and economic consultation and guidance, Al Zahraa aims to reduce gender-based violence by educating communities and advocating for gender equality.

This past year, with support of the Martín-Baró Fund, Al Zahraa was able to continue their structured support sessions, include more



participants in legal awareness workshops, expand vocational training, and participate in the 16-day campaign on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls. Al Zahraa was able to provide 10 structured group support sessions and about 50 individual consultations that included topics such as gender-based violence, children's behavioral disorders, and legal issues related to women's rights. Moreover, Al Zahraa conducted 10 legal consultation group sessions. Al Zahraa also continued with its vocational training, conducting 300 hours of hairdressing and recycling training this year.

For its third year of funding, Al Zahraa hopes to conduct home visits for women in Gaza who wish to participate in the programs as well as field consultations to support families in need. In addition, Al Zahraa aims to obtain funding for a mental health clinic within the organization so that they can provide quality care for women in need of psychosocial interventions. They also hope to obtain loans to support their vocational training clients in Gaza. Lastly, Al Zahraa will enhance training on economic empowerment by hosting facilitators to run workshops on economic planning, income-generating business, and marketing. These new initiatives will be coupled with the organization's existing efforts to support vulnerable women that are victims of sexual and domestic violence in Palestine.

Center for Mayan Ixil Education and Development (ACEFOMI), Guatemala \$7000

La Asociación Centro de Educación y Formación Maya Ixil (ACEFOMI), or the Center for Mayan Ixil Education and Development, was founded in Guatemala in 2003 and has worked with Maya women and their families who have been affected by violence during the armed conflict in Guatemala. In 2019, with support from the Martín-Baró Fund, ACEFOMI worked with young women and youth in Chajul through their Mental Health and Human Rights program, which had 50 participants.

The themes of the program included self-esteem, leadership, migration, sexual and reproductive health, human rights, life experiences, and the environment. These workshops allow youth to confront difficult issues affecting their lives, including, for example, drug addiction or teen pregnancy, through education on these topics. With funding from the Martín-Baró Fund in 2020, ACEFOMI will continue with these educational and psychosocial goals and the participatory methodology of the Mental Health and Human Rights program with new groups of youth in Chajul.



The Palestine Youth Action Center for Community Development (LAYLAC), Palestine \$7000

The Palestine Youth Action Center for Community Development (LAYLAC), centered in Bethlehem, Palestine, was founded in 2005 and aims to foster youth involvement in community concerns. Through rights-based initiatives and workshops, LAYLAC seeks to engage community members in development, particularly with projects concerning marginalized groups.



In 2019, with support from the Martín-Baró Fund, LAYLAC focused on three main initiatives, having recruited 18 social workers and 14 youth participants to engage in the projects. After an orientation with the new members, the three groups of participants each tackled a specific project. These included cleaning and beautifying the Dheisheh camp, coordinating a UNRWA class in the camp, and renovating a garden for a school servicing children with special needs in the Al-Khadir village. These projects sought to create collective identity and community investment and engagement through youth volunteerism.

LAYLAC seeks to continue this work in 2020, while expanding their programs. The two projects supported for funding from the Martín-

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Projects Funded in 2020

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Baró Fund in 2020 include: (1) Improving the Dheisheh public library to encourage literacy and increase discussions of literature. The library needs to be physically reconstructed and integrated into the community to increase involvement. And, (2) Training for social workers to support community-based education. This training occurs at the Bachelor's and Master's levels and supplements education received at the surrounding Universities. LAYLAC will focus on these two projects in 2020, while continuing their mission for community development and youth engagement.



The Justice Committee, New York City, USA

\$7000

The Justice Committee is a grassroots organization seeking to create a movement against police brutality and structural racism in New York City, specifically through empowering communities of color. Emphasizing the power of a cohesive community, the Justice Committee aims to bring together families and communities across generations and to foster solidarity with other organizations with similar visions.

In 2019, with funding from the Martín-Baró Fund, the Justice Committee organized skill-building training and political education workshops on the topics of power and oppression, community organizing, and campaign development. The Justice Committee also conducted one-on-one media training for community leaders as well as one-on-one social media training. Over a retreat weekend, the Justice Committee developed a Rapid Response System to streamline reactions to the aftermath of police violence.

Upcoming projects in 2020 include a Leadership Development and Organizing Skill-Building Trainings for Families Who've Lost Loved Ones to the Police and an increase in one-on-one skills-building with family leaders. The Justice Committee also seeks to activate the Rapid Response system to police violence and continue to provide support for families affected by such, and increase their network of attorneys and legal aid. Regarding the current health crisis, the Justice Committee will also devote time to Emotional Release and Healing through checking in with community members and directing them to resources. Due to the current pandemic, the Justice Committee has converted their meetings to online and will continue their work remotely.



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Looking Ahead to Our December 2020 Event

Please join the Martín-Baró Initiative for Wellbeing & Human Rights and Grassroots International for the 31st annual commemoration anniversary event for the 1989 assassination of Jesuit priests and their companions in El Salvador. This panel comes on the heels of a much-delayed moment of justice, as this past September Spain's highest court convicted one of the intellectual authors who ordered the murder of Ignacio Martín-Baró and his companions in El Salvador in 1989. Join us to learn more about the psychology of liberation, as well as ongoing community resistance, resilience and wellbeing work in an era of persistent pandemics. This event will be held online on **Tuesday, December 8, 2020 at 7:00pm EST**. To register for the event, go to grassrootsonline.org/MBI-panel

Featured speakers include:



Almudena Bernabeu, Guernica
Centre for International Justice



Yul-san Liem, NYC Justice Committee



Natasha Duncan, NYC, Justice Committee



Khitam Edelbi, Palestine Mobile
Expressive Therapies Program



The Martín-Baró Initiative
for Wellbeing and Human Rights



Grassroots International & The Ignacio Martín-Baró Initiative for
Wellbeing & Human Rights present:

Justice Delayed in Turbulent Times: Psychology & Wellbeing Toward Liberation

Tuesday, December 8th | 7:00PM EST
Online via Zoom | To RSVP, go to:
grassrootsonline.org/MBI-panel

Coordinating Facilitator:

M. Brinton Lykes, Co-Director, CHRIJ

With greetings from:

Chung-Wiha Hong, Executive Director, Grassroots International

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THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.
CONTACT: CHRIJ 617.552.8491 | HUMANRIGHTS@BC.EDU
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CHRIJ Center for
Human Rights
and
International Justice

"War implies social polarization, the displacement of groups toward opposite extremes. A critical split is produced in the framework of coexistence, leading to a radical differentiation between "them" and "us"... People, actions and things are no longer valued in and of themselves... Thus the basis for daily interaction disappears. Without doubt, of all the deleterious effects of the war on the mental health of the Salvadoran people, the undermining of social relations is the worst, for our social relations are the scaffolding we rely on to construct ourselves historically both as individuals and as a human community."

- Ignacio Martín-Baró



Painting by Suzanne Ouellette

Grassroots International Vision Statement

We envision a world in which a universal commitment to the health and well-being of the earth and all its peoples, fueled by successful global movements for social, economic, and ecological justice, has transformed production practices, consumption patterns, and economic and social relations to ones based on sustainability, equity, and dignity.



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