

# IMPACT REPORT

2020



# INDEX

20 Years of Cristosal	1 - 2
Our Mission	3 - 4
Putting Our Tools to Work in 2020	5 - 8
The People We Impact	8 - 14
People Forced to Leave Their Homes LGBTQ+ Community Communities Affected by Eta and lota	
People Forced to Leave Their Homes LGBTQ+ Community Communities Affected by Eta and lota Victims of War Crimes	15



# A Note of Gratitude Kendall Guthrie, Board President 2021-22

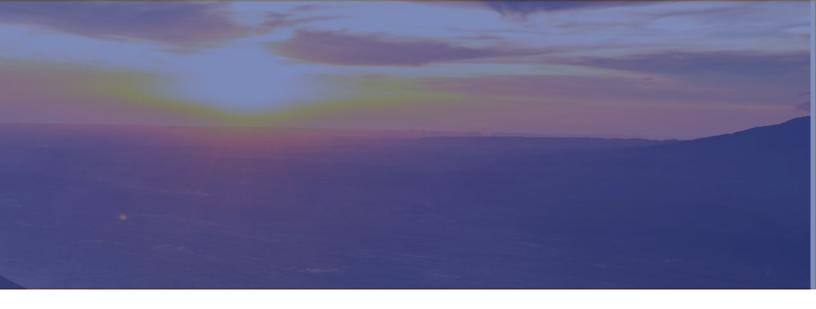
Dear friends,

Cristosal began 20 years ago in a conversation among a small group of North American and Salvadoran friends. As the bitter civil war was ending, they envisioned an El Salvador where respect for human rights was the norm. They believed that a country then known for some of the worst human rights abuses in the Americas could become a model for change. They committed to walking alongside the Salvadoran people towards that vision.

That initial commitment has grown into a cross-national community of hope and influence for human rights beyond anyone's expectation. Twenty years later, Cristosal had 70 highly skilled staff working in four countries. Together with our partners and communities throughout Central America, we give voice to the human rights of millions of people living in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. We now support hundreds of individuals displaced due to physical violence and psychological persecution to claim their rights. Their demands are now influencing national laws and policy.

The accompaniment of North Americans was critical again in 2020. Cristosal had unique flexibility to adapt to the twin challenges of the pandemic and authoritarian attacks because so many donations support the organization as a whole. At many other nonprofits, projects funded through highly specified grants came to a halt. Because of our faithful donors, many facing hard times themselves, Cristosal retained our entire staff throughout the pandemic.

In 2020, authoritarian leaders in the region used public health measures to combat COVID-19 as cover to weaken democratic rule. Cristosal staff coordinated powerful responses against new anti-democratic policies, despite operating under some of the most restrictive quarantine restrictions in the world.



We also created a groundbreaking initiative to combat increased persecution of the LGBTQ community. We expanded our social media skills to combat fear-based messaging and publicize people's rights.

In October, the video conferencing skills we all honed during the pandemic enabled Cristosal to shrink the miles between nearly 400 of us and to gather virtually for our 20th Anniversary Gala. We celebrated our successes in a tough year and basked in the power of our solidarity. The success also gave us so many new ideas for using video conferences to bring Central and North Americans together and share Cristosal's significant human rights expertise with more people.

Many times over the last year, when I was feeling scared or despondent during the pandemic and challenges to U.S. democracy, I would receive an update from my Cristosal colleagues. Hearing how our Central American compañeros and compañeras were creatively meeting their challenges and maintained hope, despite greater challenges, gave me inspiration to fight for human rights democracy both in Central America and here in the U.S. Thank you for being part of our growing community of hope.

With gratitude,

Kendall Guthrie

Board President 2021-22

Kendall Duthrie



## **Our Mission**

We advance justice, human rights, and democratic societies in Central America through strategic litigation, research, learning, human rights monitoring, and direct accompaniment of victims of human rights violations.



#### **How We Work**

Cristosal's programs contribute to improving human rights in Central America by producing quality research to document violations, protection services to repair harm, get victims back on their feet, and strategic litigation to change the systems that have allowed human rights violations to continue. We share our experiences and create opportunities to learn together about applying human rights to the different contexts of Central and North America.

We use these proven tools of human rights to empower people whose rights have been violated. By amplifying the voices and strengthening the actions of victims, we can hold governments accountable for their obligations to guarantee fundamental human rights. We collaborate with vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded groups to build their capacity to exercise their rights in challenging contexts. We identify barriers these communities face—violence, discrimination, corruption, impunity, and exclusion—and put our technical support teams to work to address the issues. We focus on building partnerships among communities, civil society, and governments at local, national, and regional levels. Together, we build a world of dignity and respect for all.

"We're not primarily a 'take you an aid package' organization; we're about people becoming activated within their communities to advocate for what they need, to make their voices heard. We design our research in ways that get people thinking creatively about what would make life better, what would allow them to stay, to reestablish themselves in their country and invest in their future there."

Rina Montti, Director of Human Rights Monitoring

## **Putting Our Tools to Work in 2020**

#### Research

Our research and documentation of human rights violations was essential to giving voice to the victims about the truth of past abuses and the impacts of emerging issues throughout the Northern Triangle of Central America. We used diverse methods to gather both data and the complex human stories behind the data. Throughout the lockdown of 2020 we told the stories of especially vulnerable people and provided the documentation necessary to bring their cases before the appropriate authorities. Our human rights monitoring system received 80 substantiated human rights complaints. We published 52 reports and bulletins on up-to-the minute human rights conditions, which were shared with everyone from regional media to international human rights organizations to US congressional representatives during COVID-19 emergency.

#### **Victim Assistance and Community Development**

We provided humanitarian, psychosocial, and legal assistance to victims of violence and human rights violations, and together we created pathways to move forward toward lives of dignity. We adapted our strategies from internationally recognized ways of supporting victims in their process of accessing justice and remaking their lives. We then customized these support plans to the situation of victims and their groups. We built alliances with grassroots and civil society organizations, public institutions, and the media to promote a rights-based approach to pervasive social problems and to collectively analyze and propose solutions to decision-makers.

Through humanitarian, psychosocial, and legal assistance, we worked with 100 victims of violence and human rights violations in 15 communities to explore pathways to rebuild shattered lives, regain autonomy, access justice and advocate for social change. Throughout the year, we provided aid for over 236 people affected by COVID restrictions and tropical storms, including 20 trans women who were facing violence and discrimination during some of the worst moments of isolation during the lockdowns.



"We have always sought truth and justice. We have only made small advances, but there is progress, in spite of everything and all the obstacles we face on the way. We admire the courage of Cristosal and its team."

José Cruz Vigil del Cid, Vice President of Association form the Promotion of Human Rights of El Mozote and surrounding areas

## **Putting Our Tools to Work in 2020**

#### **Strategic Litigation**

Our legal teams worked alongside victims and victims' organizations to develop effective legal strategies to bring cases to justice and impact the systems that have failed victims in the past. Some of the cases are high-profile, emblematic cases, such as the ongoing proceedings against the perpetrators of the El Mozote massacre. Other cases, such as the cases brought to the El Salvador Supreme Court during the lockdown, helped guarantee Constitutional rights and end the illegal detentions of people for breaking curfew. Cristosal filed 17 habeas corpus petitions challenging arbitrary detentions, securing freedom in every single case and raising awareness about the abuse of authority in emergency situations.

#### **Strategic Communications**

Cristosal's communications team engaged both traditional and social media platforms to amplify the voices of those affected by human rights violations and build support for social and legal changes in favor of human rights. During 2020 our social media in Spanish reached thousands of followers with messages to keep people safe and informed about the pandemic, access to our monitoring system to denounce violations, and regularly informed the public about the impacts on democracy due to government implemented misuse of emergency powers.

**#SomosCristosal #WeAreCristosal** 



#### **Human Rights Education**

Our learning programs equipped community and religious leaders to defend human rights and apply a rights-based approach to development and other social justice work. Like everything, the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to our education programming. Before the lockdown began, we successfully completed two Global School seminars and optimistically had hoped for more. As we shifted into online learning, we were able to reach new audiences and develop new ways of applying our model of dialogue and intercultural learning. By the end of 2020 we had engaged more than 200 people from five countries in the Americas. We learned from each other about human rights in a variety of trainings, dialogues for peace, online modules, specialized short courses for youth and update and information sessions for donors and churches.

What some of our participants appreciated about their experience:

"The Global School seminar gave us the opportunity to share experiences and feel that all the contributions were valued."

"The quality of the facilitators!"



#### **People Forced to Migrate or Denied Right to Return Home**

In January 2020 the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly passed the "Special law for the protection of and attention to people forced into internal displacement" and the President signed it into law. The first of its kind in the region, this law creates a legal right to government assistance for internally displaced people. The law is a direct result of the court case brought by Cristosal in 2017 on behalf of families displaced by violence. Now, Cristosal's teams will have a legal framework to work with victims for protection and durable solutions to their situations.

200,000+

Migrants returned to the Northern Triangle Countries in 2020: deported, expelled, turned back or thwarted in their attempts to migrate internationally.

6,000+

Central Americans were left stranded outside their home countries due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, including 42 Nicaraguan migrants stranded in Honduras. Cristosal documented and accompanied the fight to respect the right of all people to return to their country of citizenship.

126

Interviews with returned migrants, documenting reasons for leaving home, experiences during migration process, protection and other needs upon return.



Anti-stigma campaign to encourage communities to receive returnees

## LGBTQ+ Community



Known cases of murders of LGBTIQ+ people in Northern Triangle 2014-2019

All three national Cristosal teams have worked to investigate hate crimes and accompany victims and their families in judicial proceedings.

We created an innovative paid professional internship program to equip transgender and non-binary activists for professional human rights work and to support their higher education goals. This year-long program for college students includes mentoring and work experience as well as 8-week sessions of workshops for seasoned activists culminating with exposure to major areas of human rights work.



#### "Making Visible the Multiple Forms of Violence against LGBTIQ+ People in El Salvador and Guatemala"

Based on more than a year of interviews, focus groups and participant-action research, the report presents "a rights-based reflection on the social construction of hatred of sexual and gender diversity and the public policy implications for the prevention of violence and discrimination."

"You have an ongoing fear that they are going to come back, that something is going to happen to you. I don't sleep much, you really can't sleep because you start thinking about a whole bunch of things, that someone is looking for you, what's going to happen to me. You're just afraid. I don't really go out anymore because it makes me too afraid."

Member of the Guatemalan LGBTIQ+ community, currently accompanied in legal proceedings by Cristosal, reflecting on the lingering effects of being targeted for violence based on sexuality and gender expression



# Communities affected by Tropical Storms Eta and lota

An estimated 7 million people were affected by tropical storms Eta and lota in Honduras and Guatemala during the already devastating year 2020. The storms destroyed homes and communities as well as crops and livestock throwing already poor communities into more precarious situations. Although Cristosal is not a disaster relief agency, our work with internally displaced people seeking durable solutions to having left their homes gave us an opportunity to work with some of the victims of Eta and lota.

In Honduras we were able to adapt our projects and re-orient are teams to reach out to families displaced by these natural disasters. Our approach incorporates a model of accompaniment and what we call "life plan" approaches to empower vulnerable people to slowly take back their ability to make decisions about their lives moving forward. One such case was that of "NL" who was a migrant recently returned to Honduras with protection needs. Cristosal had already established a relationship with NL in the beginning of 2020 when the pandemic hit. Once the most immediate were met, NL's resilience and a human rights approach created opportunities to set out objectives that would get NL back on their feet long before local authorities had clarified their disaster response plan.

"2020 was the year we put our strategic planning to the test. COVID-19 showed that Cristosal could move quickly to address rapidly evolving situations. Our donors helped make this possible!"

> -Mauricio Quijano, Program Management Officer



# Victims of War Crimes: El Mozote and surrounding areas

Cristosal continues to walk with the community of victims who have courageously spoken the truth of what happened in 1981 in the north of El Salvador. The judicial proceedings are ongoing, and our legal team regularly faces setbacks large and small. In 2020, the judge in the El Mozote case ordered inspections of the military archives at several sites that would contain information relating to military movements and capacity for the operations that resulted in the massacre. The judge personally presented the order for inspections to the military. At every site, the judge, the victims and the legal team were turned away by the current military leadership who were supported in this by the Bukele administration. As enormous as the cause for justice in this case is, it stands also as a lesson on the strength of collaboration, of victims and allies coming together to create a system of support to confront the power that separates them from justice.



"Transitional justice is one of the key guarantors of non-repetition of human rights violations. That is why we pursue cases from the armed conflict and build coalitions to keep new amnesty laws from being passed."

 -David Morales, Chief Litigator for Transitional Justice

# Our Leadership

#### **Board of Directors, 2020**

Scott Pentzer, President Kathy Veit, Vice President Diane Paulsell, Vice President Roger Jones, Treasurer Glen Mitchell, Secretary The Rev. Mike Angell Charles Call The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss **Audrey Denney** The Rev. Norma Guerra Kendall Guthrie The Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown Doug Mouncey The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel Gail Wheeler Rolfe Elmer Romero



Thank you to our retiring board members
Diane Paulsell, Glen Mitchell, and Doug
Mouncey for their years of dedicated
service.

#### **Elected to the Board of Directors, 2021**

Alessandra Clará Clare Gibson Nangle The Rev. Dr. Lisa R. Fortuna

#### **Staff Leadership Team**

Noah Bullock, Executive Director Abraham Abrego Rina Montti David Morales Salvador Novellino Andrea Portillo Mauricio Quijano Sheila Reyes Gabriel Rocha Jeanne Rikkers Flor de María Salazar Maria Jose Solano

# Thank you to our interns from North America that offered their time and talent to Cristosal in 2020!

Kelsey Carido, Milagro Chavez-Cisneros, Tobias Lunn, Ashley Morales, Sophia Moser, Michelle Sandoval, and Tess Sweeney



#### **REVENUE**

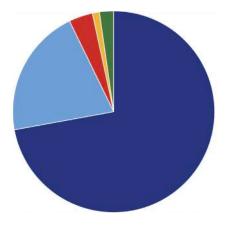
#### **EXPENSES**

¢1 207 466

Grants	\$1,378,378
Individuals	\$395,274
Parishes and Dioceses	\$72,687
Center for Research & Learning	J\$21,618
Misc	\$43,253

Misc.....\$43,253 **Total.....\$1,911,210** 

Total	\$1 590 282
Resource Development	\$148,358
Admin	\$120,727
Center for Research & Learning	g\$113,731
Programs	\$1,207,466



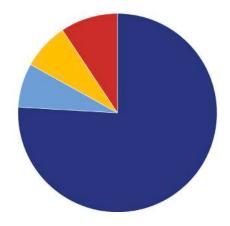
**Grants - 72%** 

Individuals - 21%

**Parishes and Dioceses - 4%** 

Misc. - 2%

**Center for Research & Learning - 1%** 



Programs - 76%

Admin - 8%

**Center for Research & Learning - 7%** 

**Resource Development - 9%** 

#### **Our Supporters**

Through 20 years, you have stood by Cristosal through thick and thin. Thank you!

#### **Families and Individuals**

Jan Adams and Rebecca Gordon

The Right Reverend Skip and Bonnie

Adams

Stephen Adams Susan Adelman

Elizabeth Feehan Adolph

Andrea Alarcon Linda Aldrich Harold Amadon Olivia Amadon William S. Ames

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The Reverend Joan Anderson

Paul G. Anderson

The Reverend Mike Angell and Ellis

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David Beckwith
Joanna Beltran
Carol Bergman
Johanna Berkowitz
Carole Bishop
Sarah Bishop
Jonathan Blitzer
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Carolyn Blum
Cheyanne Bolling

The Reverend Richard and Stephanie

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Alfredo Bonilla

Megan Bonilla

Paul J. Bowen

Sheila A. Brady

Cynthia Brandt and Leslee Subak

Cheryl Britton
Jeremy Bronson
Nina Brooks
Christine Brown
Joan Brown
Elizabeth Broyles

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Val Brustad Peter Bullard Christopher Bullock Clare Bullock

The Reverend Michael and Beverly

Bullock Noah Bullock James Burns

Tom and Barbara Burkett

Miguel Bustos
Sally Cadigan
Chris Cahill
Michael Caldwell
Chuck Call
Wes Callender
Nancy Carlisle-Weaver

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Sebastian Casella Lisa Caton Spencer Caton Joyce Cejka Nancy Chalifour

The Reverend Jac Cherry

Nina Church Kate Churchill Lori Churchill

Julie Chay

Mackenzie Clapperton Julia Denny Clark Nancy Clark

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Eliza Willis

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Woodward, III

The Reverend Brian Wright Pamela Yates

John Yinger

Christina Yu

Ann Zultner

Walt Yund Jr. Suzanne Zilber

The Reverend Amy and Vince Zuniga

**Faith Communities** 

All Saints Anglican Church, Waterloo, Ontario All Saints' Episcopal Church, Palo Alto, CA All Saints Episcopal Church, Wolfeboro, NH

Christ Church, Cambridge, MA

Christ Episcopal Church & San Marcos, Tarrytown, NY Trinity Episcopal Church, Princeton, NJ

Grace Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

Bidwell Memorial Presbyterian Church, Chico, CA

Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA Grace Episcopal Church, St. Helena, CA

St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, San Francisco, CA St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Edgartown, MA

St. James' Episcopal Church, Skaneateles, NY St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Napa, CA

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Laredo, TX

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Natick, MA St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Syracuse, NY

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Greenville, SC

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Phoenixville, PA St. Thomas's Church, Fort Washington, PA

The Episcopal Church of St. Martin, Davis, CA

The Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, St. Louis

The Episcopal Diocese of California

The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

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Alison Pease & Jeff Staniels Fund American Institutes for Research American Jewish World Service Autotech of Syracuse, Inc

Ausherman Family Foundation (Kerry McHugh)

Barbara Stewart Gratitude Foundation

Brent Denis Lang & Elizabeth Maria Van Schaack Fund

Brot für die Welt (Germany)

Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

Due Process of Law Foundation

Eagle Fund

Ford Foundation

Harder + Company Community Research

Heimarck-Gibson Foundation Hispanics in Philanthropy Inter-American Foundation

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The Laura Ellen & Robert Muglia Family Foundation

National Endowment for Democracy

Network for Good

Open Society Foundations

Patricia Redington & Randy Mariani Fund

Weil Family Fund

Workers' Welfare Association (Germany)

The Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real The Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Trenton, NJ Trinity Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, NY Trinity Episcopal Church, Shelburne, VT Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)



You have given hope to families who have had to leave everything behind.

You have amplified the voices of people who have been left out for too long.

You have helped to keep our staff safe.

You have spread the word, reminding your fellow North Americans of how deeply intertwined we are with our Central American neighbors.

You have dreamed of a world where peace is possible. You have invested in that dream.

Thank you.