



AT A GLANCE 2024

For nearly 25 years, Cristosal has served the most vulnerable communities by defending human rights and contributing to long-lasting positive social change in northern Central America. From our origins as a solidarity bridge for church-based community development to our current three-country focus on human rights, we continue to be committed to identifying and responding to the most pressing issues facing the region.

Cristosal is recognized as the leading organization working to protect human rights and change public policies to fight corruption and strengthen democracy in the region. We promote justice and democratic societies in northern Central America through strategic human rights litigation, research, education, and victim protection. Today, Cristosal is at the center of every major policy debate regarding human rights in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Our Mission and Vision

Our mission is to defend human rights, accompany victims, and promote just and democratic societies in Central America. We lead by accompanying the Central American human rights movement, building upon the legacy of past generations to advance knowledge, strengthen organizations, develop leaders, and innovate methodologies. We are building a future where human rights are universally respected and upheld. We aspire to be recognized for human rights advocacy rooted in direct work at the grassroots level, social movements, and victims' organizations.

Our Approach

We focus on sharing the tools that will empower people and collectives to claim their rights, become human rights defenders, form movements, and foster environments conducive to exercising human rights. We know that despite significant progress in integrating human rights principles into legal frameworks and institutional policy, widespread human rights violations persist in Central America. Laws and institutions are ineffective without active citizen engagement and advocacy. Therefore, we build and strengthen the movements of human rights defenders.

Our Strategies

- **Directly assist victims** of human rights violations with legal services, social and mental health support, organization, training, and community development. Since 2020 we have assisted more than 3,880 people affected by the state of exception in El Salvador and more than 7,900 victims of violence and climate-related disasters throughout the region who were forcibly displaced from Honduras, Guatemala,



and El Salvador. We protect and defend local human rights defenders and leaders so they can continue to lead movements for human rights.

- **Educate and mobilize** the public to engage in civic action in favor of human rights. Since 2022, we have brought together over 2400 people in dialogue for democracy and human rights and trained more than 2200 regional leaders to fight for human rights. We focus on the tool of nonviolent resistance to strengthen movements even when they confront violent authoritarianism.
- **Engage with media and create communications strategies** that build public awareness about important issues and the impacts of human rights violations while showing the outcomes of organized, informed citizenry fights for their fundamental rights.
- **Monitor and document human rights violations** and, whenever possible, work with governments at different levels to bring human rights focus to policy and service to the public. By building an evidence base even in the most difficult circumstances, we ensure that future human rights defenders will have a record of truth.
- **Apply Strategic Litigation and participative legal action** to bring about lasting change in the systems and structures created to protect victims and guarantee rights. This includes litigating four emblematic cases of war crimes against humanity.

Our Team

Our staff and partners include the region's most respected lawyers, forensic investigators, human rights educators, researchers, and victim protection teams. **The Cristosal team is a diverse community of staff and interns who stand with the victims of human rights violations.** Our team includes different generations, backgrounds, genders, and beliefs, but **we share a vision of a world where every person can live to their full potential.** We are from countries with long histories of violence and injustice where human rights defenders often face serious risks. But we also believe our countries have rich histories of resilience, resistance, and defiant hope, which inspire new generations to carry on the work.

Where We Work

Our home base and main offices are in **San Salvador, El Salvador**, where our work began. We have offices in **Guatemala City, Guatemala**, and **Tegucigalpa, Honduras**. We have a legal home address in Burlington, VT, USA, and an office for resource development and outreach in Minneapolis, MN, USA.

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