

Speech by PBI Kenya Country Director, Alberto Fait at the PBI-Kenya 10th Anniversary

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, comrades and friends, welcome to this anniversary. Comrades, today we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of our journey. A journey that we have made together. A journey to advance equality and justice. A journey of courage. A journey of which you all are the protagonists because exposing inequality, corruption, violence requires courage. Standing against intimidation and violence requires courage. Marching against tear gases to exercise our constitutional rights requires courage. Making changes requires courage.

Ten years may not be seen as a long time, but looking back we have plenty of memories. Moments of struggle and moments of joy. Bonding experiences and time for learning together and supporting each other.

PBI has reason to be satisfied and proud of having been part of the journey. Back in 2013, BBI had the opportunity to witness and support the creation of the social justice centers of Mathare and Dandora as well, which inspired many other HRDs to follow the example and create their own social justice center, which I believe contributed to the growing of a more united, better structure and coordinated and stronger movement.

A movement that PBI has supported and intends to support in the future with capacity building, advocacy, psychosocial support and other needs that will emerge and will identify together as it is in our normal practice. In the last 10 years, particular attention has been given to countering gender-based violence, which has been the mission of our brothers and sisters, which are here with us. I'm talking about the women human right defenders we have been working with since 2016 and whose journey is documented in the beautiful photo book that you received at the registration point.

The action of every day makes the difference. You may not appear in the news, but we know that each and every one of you is a hero. The dedication, passion, commitment that you have demonstrated throughout the years has been inspiring to me and to all our team and our supporters as well.

You have been fighting stereotypes and impunity. You have denounced perpetrators, not without risk involved, and you have helped victims to find comfort and, when possible, justice. That has been a bit more challenging, but I think we are on the right way.

You have campaigned for a better Kenya and some of you had the chance to travel abroad to make others aware of what the situation in Kenya is and what the challenges we are facing are. You have gained credibility and respect within your own communities, including among traditional and institutional leaders, and you are spearheading and promote human rights action for the best of the country. PBI, just to mention, is also part of the Missing Voices Coalition, which is an important initiative in investigating and documenting forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, and is also a member of the Police Reform Working Group that aims at improving the national police service, professionalism, accountability, and also well-being.

All this journey, these 10 years' journey, would not have been possible without necessary resources. Therefore, I want to thank all our supporters, and particularly the German Embassy in Kenya and the German government for their continuous attention and support to actions aiming at advancing human rights in Kenya.

Last but not certainly least, I want to recognize the value of teamwork. I wish to thank the Board of Directors of PBI for their continuous support, advice, and guidance, and PBI staff, which makes a fantastic team, always on the front line in making sure that our action provides genuine and real benefits. They are consistently in dialogue and in action with our partners. They consult, decide, and implement together, and move forward hand-in-hand, which I believe is a fundamental recipe for success.

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