

# GRASSY NARROWS: A Delegate's Reflections on the Giving and Receiving

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*(Grassy Narrows Elder Cathy Lindsay (third from right) speaks to Indigenous Peoples Solidarity delegation participants.*

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## The Rosary on the Migrant Trail

By John Heid, CPT Reservist

A traditional Catholic rosary consists of five “decades,” totaling 59 beads, and a crucifix on a cord. Within the past year, 58 bodies were recovered from the Sonoran desert in the vicinity of Ajo, Arizona, 42 miles north of the US/Mexico border. Humanitarian aid organizations estimate that for every body recovered, at least five are not. The remote nature of borderlands and the natural conditions accelerate decomposition. 59 bodies, 58 beads.

In May, residents of Ajo initiated a monthly vigil in the town’s central plaza to commemorate the lives of those who have died in and near their community. Most of the deceased are unidentified. Their names may



Water left on a migrant trail on the US/Mexico border, wrapped in a rosary.

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never be known. The vigil has brought into the open a hidden wound. It allows the community to acknowledge and grieve this ongoing tragedy. As the circle of awareness widens, there is an increase in the numbers of people providing humanitarian aid, mostly by placing gallons of water on the many migrant trails around town.

Humanitarian aid workers often place rosaries at the water sites. We have heard that many people crossing feel that rosaries are a sign that the water is safe, not contaminated by militia. Given that devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe is a phenomenon in Latin American culture, the rosary is a sign of comfort on the trail.

Bead by bead, bottle by bottle, prayer and action commingle. The water provides a moment of relief. The prayer is not only that people make the journey safely, but that one day no one will have to endure this trauma. We envision a day of safe passage for all.



*Members of Shoal Lake 40 tell IPS delegates about life on the reserve.*

## **On Gratitude: A Delegate’s Reflections on the Giving and Receiving of Stories**

*By Rhea Daniels, CPT Delegate*

In his book *Embers*, Richard Wagamese writes, “What defines me is not what I do but what I receive, and I have received in great measure.” These words speak to my experience on the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity delegation, particularly in regards to my gratitude towards peoples’ stories. Their narratives. Narratives that hold promise, pain, hope, sorrow, joy and wisdom.

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Everyone that I encountered on the trip shared with me a piece of their life. This came in many forms. From the delegates, it came through words of wisdom in the early morning debriefs, and after we watched a film on Indian Residential Schools entitled *We Were Children*. From those who took time out of their day to teach us, such as Cathy Lindsay (an Elder from Kenora), it came through words of enlightenment. Cathy reminded me that everything has life and that we must treat everything as family. Everything and every object. From the strangers, now friends, that we met along the way, it came through their openness to share stories about their life. These friends spoke of healing. These friends spoke of hope.

This delegation was also a good reminder that narratives are not just communicated verbally. They come alive through our being, through living and working with each other – something that was apparent on the trip. Through the delegation I also got to be a part of creating new and shared

stories. I think all of the delegates and leaders will remember the times we laughed together, the times we had hard conversations, the sights we felt awed at together. Being part of these communal stories is an honor for me.

As the delegation came to a close, I pondered how to create the same community experience when I went back to my hometown. I wondered how I could create common spaces, shared meals and comforting environments for discussion in a place where everyone is guided by work, screens and that scent of stress that lingers in the air no matter how hard you always try to carry an air freshener with you.

The answer is stories. Wagamese writes, “Creating those stories is a sacred act, and all that we are really meant to do.” My hope, moving forward, is that I am able to take what I learned, witnessed and embodied on the trip, and create sacred stories. Sacred stories that will dance into sacred relationships. Sacred relationships through which dreams for the future respected. After all, dreams are alive, waiting for us to hear them.

*Editor’s Note: to learn how you can experience CPT’s work like Rhea did, visit [cpt.org/delegations/](http://cpt.org/delegations/)*

## **UNDRIP & Bill C-262** **One Step Closer to Reconciliation**

*By CPT Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Team*

Bill C-262 is one step closer to being legislated, which will become the legal framework through which the Canadian government ensures that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on May 30, 2018, when members of Parliament voted to pass the UNDRIP bill, Bill C-262, by a margin of 206 to 79. Now, Bill C-262 waits to be debated and voted on in the Senate, which will resume on September 17. We need you to call on Senators to support this important step towards reconciliation.

Bill C-262 is an unprecedented step by a settler-colonial government, as it provides for a national action plan to ensure that the laws of Canada uphold the principles of the Declaration in consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Team has been involved in advocacy for the bill for the past two years, starting with co-organizing the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, and continuing with public actions directed at the Liberal caucus members, letter/email campaigns, and most recently, a social

media campaign that IPS launched to show public support for the bill.

IPS continues its advocacy along with other church and ecumenical organizations as the bill seeks approval in the Senate this fall. Canadian readers, please join other voices in urging Senators to support Bill C-262. Watch for our forthcoming ecumenical email campaign!





*Anti-Moria graffiti made by migrants.*

## **Tremble, Or You Do Not Cross a Border**

*By Rûnbîr Serkepkanî, CPT Lesvos, Greece*

Imagine your name is Momadou and you are from Burkina Faso. You have been held in the open air confinement of Lesvos for two years, and all the decision makers in the Asylum Services and Courts have rejected you. You are supposed to be detained behind the barbed wires of the pre-removal centre inside the Concentration Camp of Moria. You are supposed to be removed, deported, thrown into the open mouth of uncertainty. You do not want to accept your fate. Your friends do not want you to accept your fate. So you go against all the odds and whisper with your friends that now it is time. If there is anything they can do to help you break yourself free, they can do it now.

Imagine you stand there in the line in Mytilini Airport and you try to not look at the guard, who has the power to push you back. The guard who is probably about your age, and who is making a living by filtering people. You try to not look at him, but he seems to be everywhere. The guard, who can change your life by letting you go, or by arresting you. Taking those steps, passing by the guard toward the gate, is gambling with your life. If he arrests you, they will put you in prison, and then they will send you away. If he lets you go, you can finally break free.

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You tell yourself everything is arranged; he has got his payment, he must hold to what he has promised. You try to not tremble, but you do. And the guard looks into your eyes, and smiles. A smile which indicates that the agreement is still valid. You smile back. “Kalimera sas,” (“Good morning”) you say. “Kalimera sas,” answers the guard.

You think about your friend, who had to provide sexual services to the guard, just to make this smile possible. You think about all the others who have paid large amounts of money, or provided sexual services, or done many other things just to be able to take these steps.

The border is hiding, hanging, being in prison, being afraid. If you wait in the line in Mytilini Airport without any sexual services being provided by you or your friend to pass through the passport control, you are not crossing a border. When you cross a border, you will always tremble. If you do not tremble it is not a border you cross, but a sea, a canyon, a river, a sky.

# Israel Denies Entry to CPTers

By CPT Palestine Team

Between July and September, Israeli immigration denied five full-time CPT workers entry into Palestine, intentionally eliminating staffing for CPT Palestine. Below we share reports of three who were deported within a single 10-day span in July.

Carter,\* 24, from the US, asked the Israeli soldier who was questioning him at the border if he was a threat, holding the Israeli military accountable international law and its own national laws. The Israeli sergeant stated that “CPT is a leech.” The soldier threatened that no CPTers will ever pass through Israeli immigration again and that CPT will die as an organization. After six hours at the Israeli occupying border,

Carter was denied entry for 15 years and sent back to Jordan.

Joyce, 29, from the US, landed at Ben Gurion Airport late in the morning, and after several interrogations she was held overnight in a cell with seven other women. After more than 20 hours, Joyce was put on a plane to Canada.

Jane, 24, from Australia, was questioned twice by immigration and interrogated a third time by



*The marketplace at night - Old City, Al Khalil (Hebron.)*

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a soldier and an immigration worker for 40 minutes. After nine hours at Allenby border, Jane was denied entry and sent back to Jordan.

For the three CPTers, it was clear at the beginning of their interrogations that the immigration officials knew of their work with CPT, and for this reason they would be denied entry: for being associated with an organization that works alongside and is led by Palestinian nonviolent organizations and activists striving for a peaceful future.

These denials have several repercussions. CPT could not staff an operating team for two weeks following the events, resulting in one less ally on the ground to witness and document the daily human rights abuses against Palestinians. For the community of al-Khalil, it is another instance when their power and voices are ignored, unable to welcome their partner organizations into

their own community. Palestinians continuously feel the stranglehold on their voices and their rights under international law, the denial of their right to self-determination and freedom. For the individual CPTers, the experience of denial is personally difficult. They had planned to spend another three to six months in al-Khalil, continuing their commitment to the community.

Israeli denial of human rights workers and supporters of Palestine is increasing. In January 2018, the Israeli parliament passed new laws stating that any foreigner entering “Israel” (including the illegally occupied Palestinian territories) could be denied entry into the country if any link is found between them and the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) Movement. Currently, a bill in the Israeli Parliament seeks to make it illegal for anyone to photograph or record Israeli military personnel and police. Foreigners are being denied entry for supporting Palestine and for being part of a nonviolent campaign based on ethics and morality. CPT asks: if Israel has nothing to hide, then what is it so afraid of?

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\*Names of CPTers have been changed.

## On the Move

*By Jennifer Keeney Scarr, CPT Reservist*

“No, no, don’t leave yet! I have to denounce!”

The Cahucopana leader’s fingers flew with purpose over her cellphone’s keyboard as we sat in the jeep waiting to depart from Remedios. Her team had received word of an assassination committed by three armed men in Lejanías, a town in the municipality of Remedios, and were urgently attempting to publicly declare the injustice of this violence through social media before we lost all cell signal three minutes into our journey.

Sometimes, the work of Cahucopana takes place on the move.

Corporación Acción Humanitaria por la Convivencia y la Paz del Nordeste Antioqueño (The Corporation of Humanitarian Action for Coexistence and Peace in Northeast Antioquia, or Cahucopana) is an organization for miners and campesinxs\* with a mission to resolve the human rights crisis overwhelming the region of Northeastern Antioquia. CPT has been accompanying Cahucopana since 2008. On this occasion, my teammate and I were accompanying Cahucopana’s leaders to one of their biannual meetings.

Back on the road, the public declaration was successfully posted during a stop at a gas station, while the jeep was loaded with gasoline. Our destination was one of Cahucopana’s Transitional Humanitarian Safe Havens. Cahucopana has established Safe Havens like this one to nonviolently resist the displacement of Antioquia’s communities into cities. Families are generally displaced from their land due to the violence and intimidation of military, guerrillas, or paramilitaries. Fearing for their lives, they flee to the perceived safety of cities, and are rarely able to return.

Cahucopana seeks to resist this pattern of displacement. Recognizing the right each human has to their life, their dignity, and their land, Cahucopana created locations alongside the communities where families could seek safety much closer to home. “The beautiful thing about these homes of refuge, and why we consider them homes of transition, is that we believe that



*Cahucopana members install a sign marking a Transitional Humanitarian Safe Refuge in Lejanias, Northeast Antioquia.*

the people who find refuge there have the right to return to their territory, to their home, to their culture and not be displaced to the cities,” says Carlos Morales, Cahucopana’s President.

During their temporary stay in these havens, displaced women, men, and youth take workshops on international humanitarian law, human rights law, and the protection and permanency of their land. They may even participate in humanitarian actions by publicly denouncing the violence against them and sharing their experiences with national and international accompaniment agencies. In this way, education and storytelling empower the displaced individuals and communities to return to their homes without fear of encountering the armed actors in the region. It is the intention of Cahucopana that every temporarily displaced person return home with the tools they need to defend their rights and to be a better member of their community.

The Humanitarian Safe Haven we visited is a farm tucked away amidst beautiful green hills. The first sounds to greet us when we arrived on foot were the gentle snorts of pigs, the friendly clucks of the chickens, and the urgent crow of one insistent rooster. This farm was once the location of a collective farming initiative for the surrounding communities. However, the rise of Álvaro Uribe’s government in the early 2000s made way for economic blockades, threats, massacres, and executions in the region, causing the farming of this land to cease while the communities looked for other sources of income. Recently, the campesinxs donated the land was donated to Cahucopana. Two members of Cahucopana live on the land and stand ready to provide safe harbor and support to all those fleeing nearby violence, like a lighthouse in a storm.

It occurs to me now that on this farm we were in liminal space. We were on land prepped for transition and impermanence. Where crops grow and are harvested, where animals live and die, where people come and go.

This serene farmland is meant for people on the move. On the move toward life and dignity. On the move toward peace and justice. On the move and ready to return to the land that is theirs, to the life that they claim, to the intentional and worthwhile work of daily nonviolent resistance.

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And you, dear reader, are on the move too: on the move toward being better informed about your brothers and sisters in Colombia; on the move toward expanding the narrative of Colombia as we know it in our communities, and toward sharing a story of hope and life amidst the newsreels of chaos and violence.

As you go, you are invited to remember the words of Carlos Morales: “in one corner of Colombia there are communities that believe in life, and that resist violence in an organized way. We call on the solidarity of other people to get to know our country, which is a beautiful country with people who dream.”

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\*Small farmer. The ‘x’ is used for gender inclusivity.

## “I lost my sister...and I want everyone to know.”

*By CPT Iraqi Kurdistan*

In Halania village, a black banner with a single white dove now marks the home of 19-year-old Dunya Rasheed, commemorating her young life - a life that the Turkish military ended in a horrific act of violence.

On June 30, 2018, Dunya, a high school student from Halania, went to harvest nuts with her family. The village lands of Halania are in close proximity to a Turkish base constructed within the international borders of Iraqi Kurdistan. Turkish soldiers shot a rocket directly into a group of thirty villagers harvesting crops on their own lands. This attack ended Dunya’s life.

Members of Christian Peacemaker Teams visited Dunya’s family, who were present at the time of the



*19-year-old Dunya Rasheed.*

attack. Saman, Dunya's brother, recounted the events with CPT as his family and village members gathered in their home.

Saman told CPT that the family had gone to their lands on a nearby mountainside two days prior to the attack on the villagers. These lands belong to the village and provide a main source of income for the people living in Halania, as well as other small neighboring villages. There are a variety of crops planted on the mountainside, including the nuts that the villagers were attempting to harvest that day. Soon after the villagers arrived, Turkish soldiers shot rockets from a nearby base into the fields. The exploding shells set the dry summer fields on fire, forcing the villagers to leave their valuable crops unharvested. The fire burned for two days, scorching the whole mountainside.

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On June 30, villagers returned to the area to salvage any nuts that survived the fires. "There were already families there when we arrived," Saman said. "They had been there since the morning. We were all carrying our baskets to harvest nuts." He reported that there were many villagers in the area when the attack started. "The first rocket from the base went toward our village. It didn't hit it. It landed outside ... Then a second rocket came toward us. There were about thirty people in the area, mostly children."

Saman said that the second rocket hit his sister Dunya. She was standing near many children and other teenagers. The rocket pierced the basket of nuts she was holding and passed through her leg, leaving an enormous and devastating wound. Family members removed Dunya's body from the field, as other villagers stayed to retrieve the nuts that had already been harvested.



*Mortar that struck Dunya Rasheed.*

Turkish soldiers came from the base and threatened the remaining villagers, warning them not to take pictures of the scene. The soldiers retrieved all of the fragments of the rocket that killed Dunya, and returned to the Turkish base. However, villagers had already taken pictures and video prior to the arrival of the Turkish soldiers, as proof of what happened that day.

It is often dangerous to speak about Turkish bombings in Iraqi Kurdistan. But after CPT spoke with Dunya's family, her brother Saman asked to be mentioned by name. "I lost my sister," he said. "There is nothing wrong or shameful in this. I want everyone to know what happened to Dunya."

Turkish military shelling and bombardments now happen daily along the Turkish border. Turkish soldiers have crossed far into Iraqi Kurdistan, and are building bases as far as thirty kilometers over the border, claiming to be ridding the area of members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK has spanned over thirty years. The mayor of the sub-district governing Halania told CPTers, "Over this time, the villagers are the ones who have suffered the most. We need a political solution."

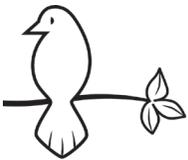


The basket that nineteen year old Dunya Rasheed was carrying when she was killed with a Turkish missile in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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