



Business & Human Rights Resource Centre appoints Karen Hudlet Vázquez as Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean Researcher & Representative

January 2015



Business & Human Rights Resource Centre is pleased to announce the appointment of its first Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean Researcher & Representative: Karen Hudlet Vázquez, based in Mexico City. Karen will draw attention to the human rights impacts (positive & negative) of companies in these regions; highlight under-reported cases and concerns raised by civil society; seek company responses to alleged abuses; undertake research missions; and build contacts with NGOs, companies, investors, journalists and government representatives. She began working with the Resource Centre on 5 January.

Karen commented: *“The challenges in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean to ensure respect for human rights by companies are many. We are witnessing increasing attacks against human rights defenders; legal reforms that make ‘land-grabbing’ and resource exploitation easier, and encourage precarious working conditions; all in the context of lack of transparency regarding business’ operations.*

This region’s historical inequality exacerbates the negative impacts that the competition for natural resources brings with it. At the same time, there is a vibrant civil society here and more and more communities are demanding respect for their rights. Working at the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre is an opportunity to give international visibility and document what is happening in the region; to give voice to individuals and groups facing enormous challenges; and to draw attention to positive human right initiatives by progressive companies”.

Karen will be responsible for the Resource Centre’s coverage of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and the smaller Caribbean countries.

Karen was appointed following a recruitment process that drew over 100 candidates. Six were interviewed, all of whom were of a very high calibre.

About Karen

Karen, a national of Mexico, has worked in various human rights organizations. At *Indignación Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos*, she worked as a project coordinator for economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in south-east Mexico. She advised Mayan beekeepers who were resisting the planting of transgenic soybeans that affected their livelihoods. She also successfully coordinated fundraising for the organization.

Previously, Karen worked for three years at one of the leading human rights NGOs in Mexico, *Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez (Centro Prodh)*. At Centro Prodh she was part of the institutional development department and played a key role in planning, managing and evaluating the access to justice, public safety and ESCER (economic, social, cultural & environmental rights) projects.

Other work experiences included consulting for a Dutch international development organization in participatory gender and human rights project planning involving indigenous peoples in Guatemala. This experience enabled her to deeply understand the regional human rights challenges. She has also been an assistant in research projects on human rights, rural development and gender issues.

Karen received a BA in international relations from *Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México* and an MA in international development from the University of Utrecht. She did her academic fieldwork in northern Tanzania on the impact of luxury residential complexes and floriculture companies on small peasants.

Karen is fluent in Spanish and English, and has a good level of French.

About Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

The Resource Centre, a non-profit organization, provides the leading information hub on business & human rights: www.business-humanrights.org. The website tracks reports about the human rights impacts (positive & negative) of over 5600 companies in over 180 countries, and provides guidance tools and resources. The site is relied on by businesspeople, NGOs, investors, governments and the United Nations.

We seek responses from companies when concerns are raised by civil society. The [response rate is over 70% globally](#). Advocates thank us for bringing global attention to their concerns and for eliciting responses from companies. Companies thank us for providing them the opportunity to present their responses in full. This process often leads to real improvements on the ground.

Our researchers are based in Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, UK, Ukraine, USA, and now in Mexico as well.

Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland, is Chair of the Centre's International Advisory Network. Our Academic Partners comprise 23 leading academic institutions.

The Resource Centre's aim is to encourage companies to respect human rights, avoid harm to people, and maximise their positive contribution.

The Centre does not accept funding from companies or company foundations, in order to maintain its independence and to prevent any possible perception of a conflict of interest. Please consider [making a donation](#) to help us continue our work.

For further details, see the "[About us](#)" section of our website. [Sign up for free Weekly Updates on business & human rights here](#).