

Public Statement

International Civil Society Organizations Express their Serious Concern for the Grave Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis in Colombia Jeopardizing the Sustainability of the Peace Accord



The International Civil Society Organizations signatory of this statement, in reference to our mandates, have been committed to the respect for human dignity, the guarantee of rights, the construction of peace, and the negotiated termination of the Colombian armed conflict for over 40 years.

We recognize the importance of the agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP guerilla signed on November 2016, as well as the dialogues with the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), now sadly stagnant due to lack of political will.

The renegeing and delays on the commitments made in the Final Agreement (FA), the permanent attacks against the Integral System for Truth, Justice, Reparations, and no Repetition (Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y no Repetición, SIVJR) – particularly towards the decisions of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, JEP), place the lives and lawfulness of those participating under this jurisdiction at risk, including members of the FARC.

This along with the murders, threats, intimidations, and stigmatizations against human rights defenders, environmentalists, and persons participating in voluntary illicit-use crop substitution, place the possibility to consolidate peace under serious threat.

According to the Center for Research and Education's Program for Peace (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, CINEP), their 2018 category for political violence reports 648 murders, 1151 death threats, 304 injured, 48 attacks, 22 forced disappearances, three cases of sexual assaults, and 243 arbitrary detentions. So far, 62 social leaders have been murdered in 2019¹.

¹ <https://www.cinep.org.co/Home2/component/k2/690-informe-ddhh-violencia-camouflada-labase-social-en-riesgo.html>

The annual report of the We Are Defenders Program (Programa Somos Defensores), published this year on April, states that in 2018 there were 16 women human rights defenders murdered, surpassing the murder rate of male human rights defenders².

The New York Times recently exposed³ a military directive that could bring back the infamous “false positives” within the Colombian Armed Forces, as seen in the case of demobilized FARC-EP member Dimar Torres, who was murdered by an active member of the military on April 22, 2019. Dimar’s murder in the Colombian northeast was confirmed as a military killing by general Diego Luis Villegas⁴.

The government’s response to these reports is worrying. Among these are the Defense Minister’s recent statement denying the existence of said directive, and the inflammatory remarks made by a government party congresswoman, which forced the article’s author⁵ and photographer to leave the country⁶.

The Colombian government has the obligation to guarantee Human Rights, honor the commitments made in the peace accords with the FARC-EP, and respond effectively to protect the life and dignity of those who are put at great risk for advancing peace and Human Rights.

Thus, we demand the Colombian government to:

- Order government officials to abstain from making speeches that stigmatize those who defend peace and Human Rights, as well as civilians.
- Order the respective authorities to carry out investigations and sanctions towards the material and intellectual authors of the murders, attacks, and threats against Human Rights defenders and FARC-EP leaders who seek reintegration into civilian life.
- Ratify the statutory law of the JEP and comply with its decisions. In this regard, investigate the facts surrounding the recapture of Mr. Seuxis Paucias Hernández, establish its legality, the truth about his situation, and guarantee him his right to due process.
- Abstain from promoting high ranking members of the military that have been admitted to the JEP, or have open judicial cases, as a measure to guarantee non-repetition to the victims of conflict⁷.

² <https://somosdefensores.org/2019/04/23/la-naranja-mecanica/>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2019/05/18/colombia-ejercito-falsos-positivos/>

⁴ <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/homicidio-de-dimar-torres-fue-una-ejecucionextrajudicial-comision-de-paz-articulo-852708>

⁵ <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/periodista-del-new-york-times-abandona-el-pais-poracusaciones-del-maria-fernan-cabal/616115>

⁶ <https://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/otro-periodista-sale-de-por-senalamientos-contrapublicacion-the-new-york-times-nicholas-casey.html>

⁷ <https://www.france24.com/es/20190302-human-rights-watch-colombia-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales>

- To the President, as commander in chief of the military, that he ensure that all orders, manuals, and operational documents of the military comply with national and international law as well as Human Rights and International Human Rights Law.
- Extend the presence of the UN Verification Mission and renew the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as recognition to the work of the international community on Human Rights.
- Guarantee the right to information by protecting free and independent journalism.

We request that the diplomatic apparatus, international community, and guarantor countries of the peace process demand the Colombian government honors the Final Agreement and takes the necessary measures so that its implementation is not bloodier than the conflict it aims to overcome.

As civil society organizations, we reiterate our compromise to the construction of complete peace in Colombia and we will keep on working alongside victims, rural communities, persons on transit to civilian life, and the Colombian civil society at large.

Bogotá, May 30, 2019