

Brussels, 23 October 2018

The Colombian President must commit before the European Union to implementing the Peace Agreement and guaranteeing security for human rights defenders in Colombia

On the occasion of the visit to Brussels of Iván Duque, President of Colombia, on 23 and 24 October, the **International Office for Human Rights - Action Colombia (OIDHACO)** and the Belgian Coordination Group for Colombia (CBC) are calling upon the Colombian President to reaffirm his commitment, before the institutions of the European Union and the Belgian Government, to fully implement the Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP and security guarantees for human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia.

The Colombian government has a commitment with the European Union and its Member States, who have given political, diplomatic and financial support for the Peace Agreement. The European Union is supporting the areas of Comprehensive Rural Reform, the socio-economic reincorporation of former combatants and the Special Investigation Unit in the Prosecutor's Office, responsible for dismantling paramilitary successor groups.

As civil society organisations, we are also concerned about the following issues:

- The proposed amendments to the Peace Agreement, especially the Transitional Justice System, which promote impunity for crimes committed in the context of the armed conflict, including crimes against humanity, and hinder the victims' right to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition.
- The increase in aggression against and murders of human rights defenders and social leaders, particularly those involved in processes of land restitution, the substitution of illicit crops, and those who support the implementation of the Peace Agreement in the territories.
- The lack of progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Reform, the restitution of land and the proposed amendments to Law 1448 - the Law on Victims and Land Restitution, which undermine the process of restitution to victims of dispossession and forced displacement (and the figures are constantly increasing).
- The limitations to grassroots consultation that weakens the power of the communities to demand environmental guarantees and their human rights in the face of extractive projects.
- The breakdown in the negotiation table with the National Liberation Army (ELN), which hinders the achievement of a stable and lasting peace involving all the actors in the armed conflict, and perpetuates patterns of violence associated with the conflict, especially in the territories.

Given the above, we call upon the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union, to:

Monitor the implementation of the Peace Agreement as it was agreed, and ensure transparency, monitoring and evaluation of the projects implemented via the EU Trust Fund. Guarantee that modifications are not made to the Agreement which limit human rights standards, particularly those which affect the rights of victims of the armed conflict.

Urge the Colombian government to assign the necessary resources to guarantee the implementation of the Peace Agreement, including mechanisms in the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and



Guarantees of Non-Repetition, and the initiation of projects for the socio-economic reincorporation of former combatants.

Urge the Colombian government to implement effective measures to prevent, protect and guarantee the non-repetition of killings of human rights defenders and social leaders.

Guarantee protection measures for former combatants, their families and communities. These measures should include genuine results in the struggle against impunity, establishing who is responsible for having planned and implemented these multiple and constant aggressions, to contribute to the construction of a lasting and stable peace.

Urge the Colombian Government to make effective progress in the dismantling of paramilitary structures, which threaten the lives of human rights defenders and social leaders, former combatants and the civilian population, and cause forced displacement and violence against women, girls and adolescents. For this to happen, it is fundamental that the National Commission on Security Guarantees begins to operate immediately, and that its work plan is made known, as well as the results of the pilot plans for dismantling paramilitary successor groups allegedly underway in the cities of Buenaventura and Tumaco. Request that the Colombian Government resumes peace talks with the ELN, including a joint discussion by the parties on their requirements to continue the negotiation and the appointment by the government of representatives for this dialogue.

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