

Brussels, 28 January 2019

Oidhaco deeply regrets that the Colombian government has suspended peace dialogues with the ELN and asks the Parties to make progress on a joint agenda for peace building

The International Office for Human Rights - Action Colombia (Oidhaco) is dismayed to learn of the car bomb attack on 17 January 2019, for which the National Liberation Army (ELN) has claimed responsibility, against the General Santander National Police Cadet School in Bogota, and expresses its solidarity with the families of the 21 deceased victims and the 68 people injured in the attack.

Likewise, Oidhaco deeply regrets that the Colombian government has put an end to the peace negotiation process with the ELN and re-issued arrest warrants against members of the Havana dialogue table.

These actions taken by both parties go against the Colombian State's peace agenda and the desire of many sectors of civil society and the international community to seek a peaceful and negotiated solution to the internal armed conflict and to achieve complete peace. The closing of essential dialogue spaces aimed at ending armed violence puts at risk both the consolidation of a human rights agenda and the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP.

We express our confidence in the commitments that the guarantor countries and accompanying countries have agreed upon within the framework of the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the ELN, so that this process can be reactivated as soon as possible. The resumption of dialogue is vital to protect the lives of civilians and members of the communities most affected by the armed conflict, such as indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, small-scale farmers, human rights defenders and social leaders, who continue to be victims of murders, assaults and threats in the context of the armed conflict.

We call on the European Union and its member states, Switzerland and Norway to reiterate their full support for a negotiated political solution to the armed conflict, and we therefore urge the Parties to fully respect the International Humanitarian Law and take necessary measures to re-establish channels for dialogue, including fast and concrete actions reducing the high impacts of the armed conflict on civil society.

We ask the international community to continue monitoring and ensuring the correct and full implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP and to ensure full guarantees for social protest and the defence of human rights.

We trust that the Colombian government will act in accordance with State commitments and in good faith towards the guarantor and accompanying countries to the negotiation process with the ELN, in order to guarantee the continued commitment of actors from the international community who support the construction of peace in Colombia and throughout the world.

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