

**International civil society organisations (CSOs) urge the Colombian government to guarantee, the legitimate right to freedom of assembly and peaceful social protest enshrined in the Colombian Political Constitution.**



The peaceful protests by Colombian citizens that started on 21 November 2019 in several cities and municipalities across the country, as part of the National Strike, are the legitimate right of the Colombian people to freedom of assembly and social protest enshrined in the Article 37 of the Political Constitution.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the reports of arbitrary detentions and criminalisation of social protest, along with the excessive use of force by some members of the Police Force are gravely concerning, particularly in the case of young people and students. As of 23 November 2019, according to statistics collated by the Campaign *Defender la Libertad: Asunto de todas*, there have been 831 detentions, 25 people injured<sup>2</sup>; and the death of young Dilan Cruz.<sup>3</sup>

As international civil society organisations that work and have a presence in Colombia, we call on the Colombian authorities, led by the President of the Republic, to ensure that citizens who decide to protest, are guaranteed their rights to assembly and freedom of expression at public gatherings and can demonstrate without fear.

We publicly express our support for the right to peaceful and public demonstrations, we reject any use of violence, and call on the Colombian government to respect the right to peaceful protest by taking specific measures:

1. Fully implementing the Peace Agreement signed with the FARC-EP.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 37. Citizens are entitled to public assembly and to peaceful public protest. Only the law may expressly establish the cases in which the exercise of this right may be limited.

<sup>2</sup> <https://defenderlalibertad.com/boletin-informativo-7-paro-nacional/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.las2orillas.co/la-vida-triste-que-tenia-dilan-cruz/>

2. Immediately implementing resolution 1190 of 2018 of the Ministry of Interior as a mechanism to prevent excessive use of force by members of the Police Force.
3. Refraining from issuing statements that delegitimise or stigmatise social protest and that may put at risk people who participate in demonstrations.
4. Ordering the relevant authorities to promptly conduct investigations and sanction any State agents and other persons responsible for abuse and violence within the framework of the protests.

**As international civil society organisations, we continue on Alert for a Colombia in Peace and reiterate our commitment to a negotiated solution to the conflict in Colombia.**

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More information

**María Cristina Umbarila Chacón**  
**cooppaz2016@gmail.com**