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Deepening Rights and Humanitarian Crises in Colombia

by  Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) is deeply concerned about the findings of NGO Global Witness' [most recent report](#). Colombia was deemed not only one of the most dangerous countries for those protecting the environment in Latin America, but in the world, with a record-breaking 65 defenders murdered in 2020. A third of these attacks specifically targeted Indigenous and Afro-descendent people, and around half were aimed at small-scale farmers transitioning to legal crops.

We continue to receive concerning human rights and security situations that require attention from U.S. policymakers. Below you will find situations brought to our attention since August 30:

Attacks and Threats against Social and Political Leaders

Alarming Assassinations of Environmental Leaders in Colombia

On September 14, the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (*Instituto de estudios para el desarrollo y la paz*, INDEPAZ) [issued](#) new data revealing that armed actors have assassinated over 611 environmental leaders since the signing of the 2016 peace accord. Of those killed, 332 are Indigenous, 75 are Afro-descendents, 102 are campesinos, and 77 are members of community action boards. The data also identifies 152 different environmental conflicts concerning megaprojects on mining, agriculture, and infrastructure, which in large part undermine the well-being of affected communities.

Police Violence Against Women Opposing Forced Eradication (Putumayo)

On September 16, members of the anti-narcotics police unit violently [attacked](#) two Indigenous women with gas and rubber bullets after the women confronted them for entering the territory without prior consultation to eradicate coca crops. Yerly Andrea Yunda, treasurer of the town council, who was pregnant, was hit in her stomach and Estefanía Meza was hit in her left leg and abdomen leaving visible bruises. According to the CIJP, violent police intervention has unfortunately become common among anti-narcotics police since the Duque administration chooses to address issues with force and not effective civilian institutional intervention, as established by the 2016 peace accord.

Former Indigenous Governor Murdered (Chocó)

On September 16, illegal armed groups [shot and murdered](#) Efrén

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Antonio Bailarín Carupia, the former governor of the Tolo reservation and a current member of the community's collective Indigenous Guard, while he fished. In 2011, the community helped pass a ruling that opposed illicit crop cultivation in the territory, highlighting the safety guarantees for defenders like Carupia. The Colombian state must act in compliance with its constitutional duties to protect Indigenous peoples. It needs to provide humanitarian and territorial guarantees to prevent armed groups in the Darien region from occupying Indigenous territories.

Female Social Leaders Threatened (Córdoba)

On September 15, unknown actors [sent](#) death threats to more than 20 female leaders. Julieth Guzmán, the coordinator of the women's platform in the Córdoba department, denounced these threats. The social leaders asked for greater protection for peace workers and an end to the targeted violence. International delegates from the United States and the Mission of the International Organization for Migration, as well as the Truth Commission (*Comisión de la Verdad*), the Search Unit for Disappeared Persons (*Unidad de Búsqueda de Personas Dadas por Desaparecidas, UPBD*), the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (*Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, JEP*) were present at the event.

Union Leader Disappeared (North Santander)

On September 15, the Space for Dialogue and Coexistence for Peace (*Espacio de Diálogo de Convivencia por la Paz, DIACONPAZ*) [denounced](#) the disappearance of their colleague Rodolfo Galvis, a member of Agro-Industrial Peacebuilding Cooperative (*Precooperativa Agroindustrial Semilleros de Paz de Colombia*) and a human rights defender. Unknown perpetrators threatened the leader for his participation in a restitution process. In the days prior to his disappearance, his assigned National Protection Unit security detail abandoned their post, leaving Galvis unprotected. DIACONPAZ requested information from the Municipal Office of Tibú and the National Police once the complaint is officially filed and for the UPBD to accompany the process and support the victim's family.

Social Leader Murdered (Meta)

On September 10, armed men [murdered](#) Marco Tulio Gutiérrez Mendoza, an agricultural worker and the secretary of the community action board in the Albania hamlet in Lejanías, Meta department. According to INDEPAZ, Gutiérrez Mendoza is the 116th social leader murdered in 2021.

Two Political Leaders Murdered (La Guajira)

On September 8, paramilitary actors **murdered** Oneida Pertuz Mestre and Enrique Ruiz González, political leaders from the Humane Colombia party, while in their vehicle. The victims were activists who had recently joined the Historic Pact (Pacto Histórico), a political coalition for the 2022 elections. Following the incident, they were taken to a nearby clinic but did not survive due to the severity of their wounds. The authorities are currently investigating the crime and searching for those responsible.

Guerrilla Dissidents Threaten to Kill Political Leaders (Cauca)

On September 6, the Dagoberto Ramos front—a FARC dissident group—**threatened** to murder several politicians, if they refuse to resign or to comply with their group's operations. The individuals threatened by the FARC dissident group include Mayor Ronald Villegas from the Suárez municipality, Cauca department, as well as his supporters; ex-mayors Ramirez, Colorado, Vergara, Ruben, and Ordoñez; and presidential candidate Francia Marquez.

Armed Dissidents Attempt to Murder Indigenous Leaders (Cauca)

On September 5, FARC dissidents of the Dagoberto Ramos mobile faction entered the Sat Tama Kiwe territory and **made an attempt** to murder the Traditional Authority of the Ancestral Territory of Sath Tama Kiwe and the current Senior Advisor of the CRIC, Alfonso Díaz Nene. The armed dissidents arrived bearing weapons to intimidate the community and were hostile towards community members and local authorities after they were asked to leave in compliance with the Internal Resolution on the Non-Presence of Armed Groups in the territory. The CRIC rejected this armed persecution by these armed actors that threaten the community and holds among many entities—the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the Directorate of Indigenous, Rrom and Minority Affairs—responsible because they have ignored and even hindered the creation of collective protection mechanisms to protect this territory. The organization also demanded the full implementation of the 2016 peace accord, especially what is enshrined in the Ethnic Chapter.

Unknown Armed Group Incinerates Social Leader's Protection Vehicle (Cauca)

On September 5, an unknown armed group in Caldono municipality, Cauca department **incinerated** the protection vehicle of Alfonso Díaz Nene, the current Mayor Counselor of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca*, CRIC). Fortunately, he survived the attack. Earlier that day,

the Indigenous Guard confronted these armed actors occupying the Sa'th Tama Kiwe's territory, which most likely, and wrongfully, provoked the attack against Mayor Counselor Díaz Nene. The CRIC and the Sa'th Tama Kiwe community condemned the attack and the armed group's operations in their territory, as they infringe on the community's right to live free of violence and armed conflict. The CRIC called on national and international human rights organizations to accompany the community and monitor developments of the situation at hand.

Political Candidate Threatened (Bolívar)

On September 3, eight armed actors on motorcycles [threatened](#) Ronald de Jesus Gamarra Soto—Mayor of the Margarita municipality in Bolívar department—as he campaigned door to door. These individuals disclosed affiliation with the Gulf Clan paramilitary group and threatened the Mayor to leave town and retire his reelection campaign. Humane Colombia (*Colombia Humana*, CH) and the Patriotic Union (*Unión Patriótica*, UP), both political parties, denounced these intimidating threats against Mayor Gamarra Soto and pleaded with the national and international community to monitor the climate against political leaders.

Social Leaders Killed (Meta)

On September 1, the Claritin Norman Perez Bello Corporation (*Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello*, CCNPB) [denounced](#) the armed attack on two social leaders that left Rigoberto Cabanzo Arévalo injured and María Dorfenis López Cordón dead. Their membership to the Union of Independent Agricultural Workers of Meta (*Sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas Independientes del Meta*, SINTRAGRIM) is seen as the reason they were targeted, as armed actors have murdered many other social leaders in the region in the last months. The CCNPB asks local authorities to protect the lives of social leaders and for the international community to acknowledge and help redress these dramatic human rights violations.

Murder of Illicit Crop Substitution Leader Underscores Faltering Peace (Córdoba)

On August 22, newspaper *El Tiempo* [published](#) an article about the 2017 murder of José Yimer Cartagena Úsuga—an illicit crop substitution leader; former vice president of the Campesino Association for the Development of Alto Sinú (*Asociación Campesina para el Desarrollo del Alto Sinú*, Asodecas) in the Tierralta municipality, Córdoba department; and former member of the

Patriotic March (*Marcha Patriótica*) party's human rights commission. On January 10, 2017, armed men from the Gulf Clan paramilitary kidnapped, tortured, and murdered Cartagena Úsuga, as they opposed his work to shift communities away from illicit crops and establish legal economies.

University Student Murdered by Armed Actors (Cauca)

On August 24, unidentified actors on a motorcycle [murdered](#) Esteban Mosquera, a young student who studied at the University of Cauca, in Popayán, the capital of Cauca department. In 2018, Mosquero participated in a protest where he lost his left eye after confrontations with the riot police ESMAD.

Union Members Threatened and Attacked by Guerrilla Dissidents (Cauca)

Since August 29, dissidents of the FARC have [sent death threats and carried out](#) attacks against members of the Municipal Association of Workers of Piamonte Cauca (*Asociación Municipal Campesina de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de Piamonte Cauca*, ASIMTRACAMPIC). On that day, an anonymous man who claimed affiliation with the 49th Front of the FARC's dissidents called one of the members in an attempt to intimidate him. On September 4, unknown actors, presumably these same dissidents, followed and attacked colleague Jonathan Cuellar Ramírez and his family with an explosive device thrown at their car. The ASIMTACAMPIC urged President Duque, Attorney General Franciso Barbosa, and Director of the National Protection Unit (*Unidad de Protección Nacional*, UNP) Alfonso Campo to provide safety guarantees and to comprehensively investigate these series of attacks. They also urged the international community to pressure the Colombian government to grant physical and legal protection for the victims of these attacks.

Ongoing Violence, Displacement, and Humanitarian Crises

Community Members Disappeared After Bombing (Chocó)

On September 16, the Colombian National Army [bombed](#) the Litoral del San Juan community in Chocó department. Following these events, two local farmers—Oleiser Bermúdez Rivas and Luis Carlos Bermúdez Gamboa—had not been found.

Government Official Threatened by Criminal Group (Chocó)

On September 17, a local criminal organization *Los Mexicano* intimidated the Peace Advisor of Chocó, Modesto Serna Córdoba, by shooting at his residence in the Quibdo, Chocó department because he refused to pay an extortion demand. Following the incident, the Peace Advisor demanded that the mayor and the chief of police of the Rio Quito municipality resign since they have failed to uphold their civic duties in protecting the community from corruption and violence.

Paramilitary Activity Terrorizes Rural Peace Community (Antioquia)

On September 17, the San José de Apartadó (SJA) peace community [published](#) a bulletin outlining reports of ongoing paramilitary activity in their territory. Much of this activity is allegedly supported by mining companies exploiting minerals found in the Serranía del Abibe, state-led development projects, and political interests. The SJA peace community was created in April 1997 when rural leaders came together to implement international humanitarian law and the principle of distinction for non-combatants in the territory, designating the area free of all armed groups, including legal public security forces. Local forums helped establish rules that asked community members to disengage from violence, and also leaders began to form communal projects. Despite these mechanisms, paramilitary—and alleged collaboration by state forces—continues to plague the region. In this latest bulletin, the SJA peace community detailed nine different incidents from the past month.

Former Combatants Lament Lagging Peace Accord Commitments (Huila)

On September 19, FARC ex-combatants [convened](#) in Neiva, Huila department for the National Seminar on Reintegration, where they discussed the Colombian state's dangerously lagging pace in fulfilling the provisions set forth in the 2016 peace accord. In a letter addressed to the Duque administration, the ex-combatants lamented that the state is treating the accord as merely an agreement to disarm, rather than as a set of commitments to provide comprehensive processes of political, economic, and social reintegration. As a result, ex-combatants are excluded from projects and civil society initiatives that promote economic and social reintegration. Alarming, armed actors have assassinated over 280 former combatants engaged in the peace process, which is a result of the state's failure to provide these individuals protection. The Autonomous Roundtable for Reintegration and Peace (*Mesa Autónoma por la Reincorporación, MARP*), created to

avoid further marginalization of ex-combatants in the peace process and to bring about an end to the armed conflict, has requested the following measures:

1. The MARP needs to be recognized as a medium for ex-combatants to strengthen democratic representation at the national and regional levels.
2. The Technical Committee for the Specialized Sub-Directorate of the National Protection Unit (*Unidad Nacional de Protección*, UNP) should be expanded to represent ex-combatants who feel marginalized. Many of them hurdle through bureaucratic obstacles and believe the UNP fails to fully comply with the precautionary measures dictated by the JEP for ex-combatant security.
3. An updated census of ex-combatants who are currently imprisoned should be created to advance their reintegration processes.
4. A plan should be created to address the dispersion of ex-combatants throughout the country, as that hinders the reintegration process.
5. An intersectional approach must be taken in the reintegration process. Government actions are needed to adapt to the needs of ex-combatants.
6. The Social Economies of the Common (*Economías Sociales del Común*, Ecomún)—the economic cooperative created for ex-combatants—needs to be strengthened to overcome current economic crises and disburse resources for productive economic projects.
7. The state should collaborate with ex-combatants to find a different methodology for the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR) process.
8. Ex-combatants, who are committed to the transitional justice process, should be provided legal guarantees in the JEP.
9. There needs to be a formal audit of state, private, national, and international resources invested in the reintegration process throughout the past five years. This audit should investigate fund amounts, designees, regional distribution, contractors, and recipient communities.

Three Killed in Massacre (Huila)

On September 16, unidentified hitmen [massacred](#) Yeison Andrés Castro Chavarro, Carlos Rojas Ruiz, and Marly Julieth Rengifo in

their vehicle. INDEPAZ identified these killings as Colombia's 70th massacre this year, warning of the growing threat of armed groups in the Huila department and the country at large.

Indigenous Communities Face Compounding Crises Amid Government Neglect (Chocó and Valle de Cauca)

Since August 10, armed confrontations between the Gulf Clan and the ELN in Wounaan Indigenous territories, between the Valle del Cauca and Chocó departments, have **terrorized** civilians in the affected communities. Despite the panic induced by this ongoing violence, the Colombian government has failed to respond to their security needs. This armed violence is compounded by the ongoing government neglect in addressing the health crisis that has left a high number of children and women with problems like stomach infections, vomiting, and fever. The government has also failed to support the needs of over 250 people from three internally displaced communities—Puerto Guadualito, Unión San Juan, and Cocalito—and over 630 people from the Puerto Pizarro community, who are confined to their homes as a result of the armed confrontations. The illegal armed actors, as well as the Colombian military, have warned the communities not to transit over the San Juan River and to avoid crop planting sites. In their September 14 statement, the CIJP and the affected communities reiterated their proposal for a Global Humanitarian Agreement, which would effectively deescalate the armed violence, and they affirmed that the Colombian government is failing to meet its international humanitarian obligations.

Armed Groups Cause Mass Internal Displacement (Chocó)

On September 13, the General Community Council of San Juan (*Consejo Comunitario General del San Juan*, ACADESAN) and the Regional Coordination of the Colombian Pacific (*Coordinación Regional del Pacífico Colombiano*, CRPC) **urged** all armed actors operating in the Chocó department to cease their confrontations to protect the civilian population, comprised mostly of ethnic communities. Since June 2021, armed groups have intensified their presence and dispute for control of Indigenous territories. These disputes have limited access to essential goods and services for over 1,391 people and have also internally displaced 391 people and 965 families. The increase in armed confrontations between the Gulf Clan and the ELN has caused a major humanitarian crisis, disproportionately affecting Black communities. The organizations called on state entities, the international community, and Colombian civil society to garner support for comprehensively implementing the 2016 peace accord, particularly its transversal

Abuses Committed within Context of Social Protests

Data on Abuses During National Strike Protests

On July 22, the Campaign to Defend Freedom (*Campaña Defender la Libertad un Asunto de Todas*)—a coalition made up of the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (*Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos*, CSPP), the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers Collective (*Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo*, CCAJAR) and DH Colombia—[published](#) their latest figures on the human rights violations registered in Colombia from April 28 to July 21, 2021. Their data indicates the murders of 87 civilians, of which 28 were allegedly carried out by state security forces; 1,905 people injured by the National Police, the riot police ESMAD, and unidentified armed civilians; attacks against 326 human rights defenders; and 3,365 people detained, many of them arbitrarily. Investigations into these abuses continue to lag due to the lack of judicial independence in the country.

Teen Murdered by Riot Police, His Family Faces Security Threats (Valle de Cauca)

On May 28, members of the riot police ESMAD (*Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios*) [arbitrarily detained and allegedly murdered](#) 16-year-old Daniel Stiven Sanchez, a resident of the Siloé neighborhood in Cali, Valle del Cauca department—the epicenter of the recent protests during Colombia's national strike. According to the Justice and Dignity Corporation (*Corporación Justicia y Dignidad*, CJD), Sanchez was not participating in the protests. Witnesses who saw the ESMAD detain him recalled the boy stating he was a minor, asked for help, and was forcibly put into a police tank. A health brigade attempted to intervene, however, the ESMAD officers shot at them. Sanchez's lifeless body was later found and falsely presented as a victim of a commercial building fire. Testimonies stated that proper protocols were not followed for removing the body, undertaking the autopsy, or returning the body to the family. The family publicly denounced the handling of the case. Since May 30 they have received threats to their life, their phones have been illegally tapped, and they have been internally displaced over four times due to safety concerns. To date, and despite the existence of court orders, the state has not granted the family victims any

protection measures. The CJD exhorted the Colombian state and the Attorney General's Office to comply with the standards of due diligence to guarantee justice and protect the family, victims, and witnesses of the case.

We also wish to bring the following to your attention:

Report Outlines How Judicial Independence in Colombia is Compromised

In July 2021, the Judicial Independence Campaign (*Campaña por la Independencia de la Justicia*)—a civil society coalition formed in September 2020—[published](#) an extensive report to help muster broad support from the international community for judicial independence in Colombia. Entitled “Call to Defend Judicial Independence in Colombia,” the report outlines the main issues compromising judicial independence in the country and provides a great array of conclusions and recommendations.

Some of the main problems identified in the report include: “an under-resourced justice system with a low level of operational autonomy, intimidation and persecution of judicial officers in an effort to control their decisions, contempt for judicial decisions that curb the power of the executive branch, high-level efforts to deeply undermine the Special Jurisdiction for Peace—the transitional justice tribunal devised in the 2016 peace accord, and political meddling in the election and selection of judicial officers that favor clientelism over meritocracy.”

Of great concern, the findings discuss how “...public servants who work in the judicial branch have been victims of multiple forms of persecution and intimidation aimed at impairing and illegally impacting their procedures and decisions; such attacks result from a variety of factors, among them those associated with the armed conflict and criminal activity carried out from the State.”

Documented abuses indicate that “...1,340 public servants who work in the judiciary have been victims of violent acts from 1989 to 2019. From January 2019 to April 2021 there were five homicides, 19 persons threatened, 11 subject to attacks, three persons prosecuted, two displaced, and one person was a victim of rape.” The report underscored deep apprehension of “...threats and coercion directed against judicial personnel involved in land restitution proceedings in areas openly controlled by groups associated with paramilitary groups,” as well as “...very scant mechanisms of protection available to judicial personnel who must

make decisions that affect powerful political and economic actors.”

The report concluded that attacks on judicial independence by President Iván Duque, his administration, and his political party are far from sporadic discrepancies. The administration has failed to carry out judicial decisions, places pressure on and meddles in judicial activities, adopted regulations contrary to the Constitution to concentrate power, violates fundamental rights, and benefits its friends and allies. Read the entire report in Spanish [here](#).

Afro-Colombian Professor Highlights the Importance of Incorporating Race in Academia

On September 17, Afro-Colombian Aurora Vergara-Figueroa, an Associate Professor of Sociology at the ICESI University in Cauca, Colombia [presented](#) at the Harvard-sponsored ALARI Seminar Series Inauguration Lecture. Dr. Vergara-Figueroa discussed Afro-Colombian Studies in 2021, which the Colombian Ministry of Culture designated as the Year of Freedom. This distinction was made to commemorate 200 years of the Law of Freedom of the Womb, the remembrance of the 170 years of abolishing slavery in the country, the acknowledgement of the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which also coincided with the second wave of social mobilizations that started on April 28. Dr. Vergara underscored the significance of Francia Márquez’s presidential candidacy for the continued process of gaining respect for the history, land, and culture of Afro-Colombians. The professor criticized the high death rate for Afro-Colombians, citing the report from the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento*, CODHES) that showcased high levels of social exclusion and racist practices; a reality heightened during the national strike protests and the COVID-19 pandemic in the Cali department. Dr. Vergara defined Afro-Colombian studies as the ‘systematic study of life’ and encouraged attendees to continue supporting the growth of the field by attending lectures, citing Afro-Colombian academics, and recognizing the impact the academic field can have on real world events.

Colombian President Misses the Mark on Indigenous Inclusion During Biodiversity Convention (Amazonas)

On September 1, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia*, ONIC)—the national authority for Indigenous governance—[publicly stated](#) that they were indignant and regretful of the President of Colombia’s disgraceful media incident at the launch of the PreCOP Convention of Biodiversity on Monday, August 30. The event was held at the

ancestral longhouse of the Jusu Monilla Amilla Indigenous Community of the Colombian Amazon, a community that promotes tourism and is not a political or representative organization. The Presidential Palace hired a tourist services operator that was intended to create an image of inclusion and dialogue with Indigenous communities and peoples. The ONIC called on President Duque to sit down and dialogue with Indigenous authorities and not with tour operators, so they can have a direct dialogue about biodiversity, “Good Living” and their mandate to “Return to the Origin.”

Paramilitary Group Threatens to Kill Ex-Paramilitary Commander Cooperating with Transitional Justice Process

In a pamphlet dated September 2021, the Black Eagles paramilitary **threatened** to murder ex-paramilitary commander Salvatore Mancuso should he continue to share information and cooperate with the JEP. In pursuit of what it deems a “social cleanse” and “a duty to ensure the left doesn’t take power,” the Black Eagles believe Mancuso’s testimonies could threaten its illicit drug operations.

Ex-Paramilitary Commander and Lawyers Receive Multiple Death Threats (Atlantic)

On August 30, ex-paramilitary commander Salvatore Mancuso, who is currently incarcerated in a U.S. federal prison in Georgia, **reported** threats, which were published in a letter by the Gulf Clan (*Clan del Golfo*) paramilitary, declaring Mancuso and his lawyers military targets. This recent threat from the armed group came after a hearing that highlighted the importance of identifying corruption by notable politicians. Recently, Mancuso has received death threats from the Black Eagles (*Águilas Negras*) with the intent to sabotage his participation and cooperation with the JEP. Mancuso requested safety and protection guarantees, both physical and legal, from the Colombian state for himself, his lawyers, and family members.

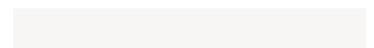
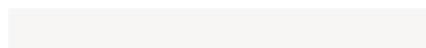
Former President Accused of Grave Human Rights Abuses Meets with Truth Commission (Antioquia)

On August 16, Colombia’s Truth Commission, as part of its transitional justice mandate, **met** with former President Álvaro Uribe to hear his perspectives about various armed conflict topics including extrajudicial killings, paramilitarism, the peace accord, among others. The dialogue was unconventional for the Truth Commission, as it was not an official testimony and was held at Uribe’s ranch in Rionegro, Antioquia department. It ultimately

stirred intense political debate among several sectors of Colombian society; while Uribe agreed to dialogue with the Commission, he reiterated his refusal to recognize the legitimacy of any peace accord institution, including the Commission itself.

On August 18, the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination (*Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos*, CCEEU)—a civil society coalition made up of 285 organizations—**profoundly rejected** what they deemed as Uribe’s innumerable affronts to the truth, his denial and mockery of the clarification efforts made by victims, and his deliberate manipulation and disrespect of the Truth Commission and the peace accord’s transitional justice mechanisms. His comments claiming he was unaware of extrajudicial killings and they were merely “an error” were deeply offensive to the large population of victims of state-sanctioned violence, especially when the JEP has identified at least 6,402 victims of these crimes and acknowledged these grave atrocities could not have occurred without policies implemented by the state. The CCEEU also denounced Uribe’s comments about paramilitarism, as he justified their creation stating they were necessary for security at that moment in time, which is why he contributed to their existence as Governor of Antioquia department. The CCEEU believes these comments reflect Uribe’s disdain for the peace accord’s provisions to dismantle paramilitary groups and their successor groups, who contribute significantly to post-accord violence in the country. Finally, the CCEEU criticized Uribe’s refusal to accept the legitimacy of the peace accord and its institutions. They believe citizens who refuse to submit to its constitutional order must be called upon to end their victimizing practices and discourses, and fully comply to ensure the transition from armed conflict to peace. They also believe these institutions should not make concessions to actors who refuse to comply with the transitional justice process.

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