

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

First and Second Delegation of Colombian Victims to Cuba

Bogotá, October 6, 2014

At this historic moment in Colombia, in our capacity as members of the First and Second Victims' Delegations invited to Havana on August 15 and September 10, we would like to send a united message of peace to our country, the State, the public and the international community, upon the visit of the third delegation of victims to Cuba.

When we agreed to take part in this experience, we travelled convinced of our legitimate voices as victims of an armed conflict that we did not start, conscious that repeating our painful individual and collective stories once again in front of the perpetrators, would reopen our wounds of summary executions, massacres, kidnappings, forced disappearances, sexual violence, displacement, threats, exile, forced recruitment, and landmines, which have left deep scars in ourselves and our families and in the social fabric. It is us who have lived through the long night of impunity and who have suffered firsthand the unacceptable inhumanity of the conflict that continues every day to claim indiscriminately and with terrible barbarity, at the hands of the FARC and ELN guerrillas, the security forces and paramilitary groups, the lives, integrity and freedom of hundreds of children, women and men from the civil population.

We have not only taken our pain to Havana, but also our proposals, which we have built using the very best of ourselves. **We are people who live in hope, who without a doubt strongly believe in and are working towards the dream of a dignified and lasting peace for Colombia, for our families, children, mothers, spouses, siblings, grandparents and for future generations.**

The experience of participation in the Dialogue Table has given us a historic task which can open up the way for the victims' roles in the future. However, as we work together in grief and love for our loved ones, we are hurt and outraged by the stigmatization, threats, acts of intelligence, surveillance and harassment -protagonized by paramilitary groups, people doing intelligence work, and members of the Colombian Congress, which have occurred during recent weeks against several of the victims who have travelled to Havana and the consequences of these crimes for their life, integrity and good name. This has occurred at the same time as serious threats to more than 120 human rights defenders and social leaders.

From the outset we warned that such attacks on the victims who travelled to Cuba could be perpetrated by those who persist in prolonging the war in our polarized country, nevertheless we decided to participate as a contribution to peace. These attacks have served their purpose by causing us anxiety and stigmatising us, and urgent action therefore needs to be taken, by: i) Making visible the refusal of the authorities, including the President of the Republic, to respond to any of the events which have harmed the legitimacy of the victims' participation in the negotiation table, smeared us through social networks, labeled us as being guerrillas, threatened our life and integrity by email, or persecuted us through surveillance, monitoring or photos taken by unknown persons, or treated us like sheep or idiots, in emails and on television, contrary to our potential as peacebuilders.

We thank the UNDP, the Colombian Episcopal Conference and the Colombian National University for their brave statements on the day that the Third Delegation travelled to Havana, calling for protection for victims' participation and we thank them for their actions and efforts which contributed to the adoption of security measures by the national authorities and for their professional accompaniment to the victims' delegations. The task that remains ahead is of great importance.

We emphasize that the urgent need to make visible the threats and slander against victims, must be accompanied by: ii) political actions and pronouncements from the highest echelons of national government and the Parties in the peace dialogues, for the protection of the dignity and participation of victims in the peace process; iii) urgent scenarios for follow-up, dialogue and serious response from the Parties regarding the victims' proposals in relation to our rights, which were officially handed over to the Dialogue Table in Havana; iv) national and regional participatory learning processes for peace run by its main protagonists: the victims, who as Peace Ambassadors can promote awareness-raising related to our experiences and our proposals taken to Havana, and a grassroots referendum on any Agreements, which will be signed only when they include victims' rights, an end to the armed conflict and the beginning of peace with social justice.

We, as victims, demand and urge the Parties to agree on a Ceasefire and to remain at the negotiating table in order to achieve the longed-for signing of Peace Agreements and to include our voices and proposals in these agreements. We jointly ask President Juan Manuel Santos to grant us a hearing for the three (3) Victims' Delegations to Havana on the issues set out in this statement, the future of the peace talks and the implementation of the Agreements. We the undersigned endorse this statement:

First Delegation

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