

Public letter. Oidhaco calls upon the Colombian Congress to exercise its responsibility and accelerate the approval of the Law to regulate the Special Jurisdiction for Peace

Brussels, 14 November 2017

Mr
Efraín Cepeda
President of the Senate

Mr
Rodrigo Lara
President of the House of Representatives

Mr
Hernán Penagos
Rapporteur for the Statutory Law on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace

Honourable sirs,

The European Coordination Group Oidhaco is highly concerned about the serious delays in the process for the normative implementation of the Peace Agreement and in particular the approval of the Statutory Law for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace by the Colombian Congress.

The statutory bill for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is currently going through different debates in Congress¹ and has been approved in joint sessions of the first committees of the Senate and House of Representatives, but it is yet to be discussed and put to a vote in plenary sessions. Oidhaco is concerned that in recent days this debate and the vote in Congress have been postponed. On 30 November 2017 the application of the *fast track* procedure for the normative implementation of the agreements will come to an end.

The law that regulates the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the justice component of the Comprehensive System of Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition, is fundamental to guarantee the rights of the victims of the armed conflict. The JEP enables the prosecution of those held to be most responsible for crimes against humanity and serious war crimes that occurred during the conflict and will therefore contribute to the victims' right to the truth. The JEP is part of what is envisaged in Chapter 5 of the Agreement on the Victims of the Armed Conflict. This part of the Agreement was the result of an extensive process of consultations through forums and delegations of victims to the negotiating table and stipulates that victims will occupy a central place throughout the Comprehensive System. In addition, the International Criminal Court may intervene if there are no guarantees that Colombia can prosecute within its own jurisdiction those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

November 24 marks the first anniversary of the signing of the Final Peace Agreement. Oidhaco and the Taula Catalana per Colòmbia recently published a report '[One year since the start of the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia](#)' in which they highlight a number of concerns related to the delays in the general implementation of the Agreement and the lack of implementation of fundamental provisions for the protection of social leaders, the dismantling of paramilitarism and guarantees for social protest.

Oidhaco insists on the need for the comprehensive fulfilment of the Final Peace Agreement to guarantee lasting and sustainable peace, with social justice and respect for the rights of the victims of the conflict to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition.

We therefore ask that the members of the Colombian Congress prioritise these considerations and speed up the discussion about the norms for the implementation of the Agreements, in particular bill 008 of 2017 in the Senate and bill 016 of 2017 in the House of Representatives on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

Yours sincerely,

International Office on Human Rights – Action Colombia

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ⁱ Filed as bill 008 of 2017 in the Senate and bill 016 of 2017 in the House of Representatives