

Brussels, 27 April 2018

## **Urgent protection needed for the Living Rivers Movement (*Movimiento Ríos Vivos*) in Antioquia and for victims' human rights in the area of the Hidroituango project.**

On 20 April this year, 25 members of the European Parliament from three political groups and nine different countries sent a letter<sup>1</sup> to the Colombian authorities expressing **concerns about the possible impacts of the Hidroituango hydroelectric project.**

The letter highlights allegations of **alleged human rights violations related to this project** and states that filling the reservoir would mean the **loss of livelihoods for part of the population** who have not received proper reparation for these losses. The delegation of the European Union (EU) in Colombia and some European embassies are aware of this as they visited the area in November 2017 and were able to see the situation first-hand.

Moreover, it has been revealed that 159 bodies have been exhumed in the area, due to the insistence of the Ríos Vivos Movement in Antioquia (*Movimiento Ríos Vivos Antioquia* - MRVA) and there is a possibility that hundreds more victims' bodies will be found there. **The filling of the Hidroituango reservoir, scheduled for 1 July 2018, would make it impossible to find out the truth about hundreds of victims of the Colombian conflict, for the family members of people who may have been forcibly disappeared.** This would seriously harm their rights as victims as recognised in the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC.

The MRVA has been acting in response to these impacts, and because of this the movement has been targeted with threats, prosecution and persecution. In light of this, the Movement has developed a Prevention and Protection Plan supported by the Ministry of the Interior that is still pending implementation.

The **International Office on Human Rights – Action Colombia (OIDHACO)** urges the **European Union, its Member States, Switzerland, Norway** and, in particular asks Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; Patricia Llobart Cussac, EU Ambassador in Bogotá; and Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Envoy for Peace, to:

- Call upon the Colombian authorities to **respect the right to the truth for the victims of the conflict** who may be affected by Hidroituango and to adopt measures to guarantee that this right is respected, including the suspension of the filling of the reservoir if necessary.
- Request the Colombian authorities to **guarantee appropriate redress** to all the people affected by the Project.
- **Discuss this situation with European banks and companies who have interests and investments in Hidroituango and with the inter-American bank about the repercussions on human rights** and the need to respond to the requests of the affected communities.
- Urge the Colombian authorities to **guarantee the safety of these communities during social protests as well as the MRVA** by implementing its Prevention and Protection Plan, and investigating the harassment suffered by its members.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://goo.gl/AhSWrB>.

