

PUBLIC STATEMENT

We reject the latest threats against the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace

We, the international member organisations of the Inter-Agency Dialogue on Colombia (DIAL)¹, the International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia (OIDHACO)² and ABColombia³, express our deep concern at the grave situation of risk and threats that members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace (*Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz* - CIJP) have been suffering for many years, and which have been increasing in the past few weeks.

CIJP lawyers have suffered threats, intimidation and been followed.⁴ On 21 August 2013, CIJP announced its temporary withdrawal from the zone of Curvaradó after finding out about a planned attempt on the lives of their members, in particular against their staff working on the ground in the region⁵. The most recent threat, according to information received by DIAL, OIDHACO and ABColombia, targeted Danilo Rueda, one of the coordinators of CIJP, and took place in Bogotá on Thursday 22 August. Two men approached him, one of whom slapped him and said *"Guerrilla fighter. Death to the Justice and Peace people"*.⁶

These attacks are the latest in a long series. In the first six months of this year, CIJP reported two attempted attacks against them and a total of 18 acts of intimidation, of being followed and surveillance at their offices and places of residence.

¹ Made up of Diakonia Suecia, Christian Aid UKI, Consejería en Proyectos-PCS, Consejo Noruego para Refugiados-NRC, Oxfam, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, Lutheran World Relief, HelpAge Internacional. Observers: Peace Brigades International-PBI and Swefor.

² Network of 35 European and International organisations.

³ ABColombia is the advocacy project of five British and Irish agencies with programmes in Colombia: CAFOD: Christian Aid UKI, Oxfam GB, SCIAF and Trócaire. Amnesty International and PBI are observers.

⁴ See statement from CIJP: <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Intimidacion-a-defensor-de-7188> and <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Seguimientos-a-abogados-de-7207>

⁵ See statement from CIJP: <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Plan-de-atentado-contradefensores> and <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Salida-temporal-de-Curvarado-de>

⁶ "Guerrillero. Muerte a los de Justicia y Paz": See statement from CIJP: <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Intimidacion-a-defensor-de-ddhh-de>

The Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace has protection measures (precautionary measures) issued by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights. Given the worsening of the situation since 2012, it has asked for additional protection measures from the National Protection Unit (*Unidad Nacional de Protección* - UNP), which we understand were approved on 6 March 2013 at the meeting of the Risk Evaluation and Recommendation of Measures Committee (*Comité de Evaluación de Riesgo y Recomendación de Medidas* - CERREM). However, according to the information received from CIJP, some of the measures have still not been implemented.

As international agencies and organisations, we recognise and support the valuable work of CIJP who, in a context of heightened danger, have accompanied for over 23 years afro-descendent, mestizo and indigenous communities and organisations who are seeking respect for their rights under the principle of non-violence in areas affected by the armed conflict. We therefore recommend:

1. To the Attorney General and the judicial authorities: to immediately investigate these threats and intimidations, taking into account the socio-political context so that all those who are directly and intellectually responsible for these acts can be identified, prosecuted and sanctioned.
2. To the Minister of the Interior and the UNP: to provide immediate and efficient measures in order to guarantee the lives of CIJP members and the continuation of their work. These measures must be consulted with them and in accordance with the precautionary measures granted by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights.
3. To the National and International community, in particular the European Union, its member states, Switzerland and Norway, the United Nations agencies, and Embassies with permanent presence in Colombia: to monitor the security situation of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace and ask the Colombian State to provide quick results in the investigations into all those responsible for these threats.

Bogotá, Brussels, London, 27 August 2013