

Brussels, 28 June 2023

Oidhaco and international organizations launch shadow report on human rights in Colombia for the Universal Periodic Review

Today, 28 June 2023, the shadow human rights report on Colombia, prepared by an ad hoc coalition of 67 international organizations coordinated by the International Human Rights Office – Action Colombia (OIDHACO), has been published.

The report was delivered to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review¹ (UPR) process, to which Colombia will be submitted in November 2023 for the fourth time since the process started. In the 2018 UPR, Colombia received 220 recommendations from other UN Member States aimed at improving the human rights situation in the country. Many of these recommendations insisted on the full implementation of the 2016 peace agreement as a guarantee for human rights.

During the period covered by this round of the UPR (2018-2022), Colombia had three consecutive governments² and faced – like the whole world – the Covid-19 pandemic. The global human rights landscape in Colombia, intertwined with the situation of the internal armed conflict, has not been encouraging in the last five years. After a reduction in violence rates in the years 2012-2016, the situation worsened again.

Between 2018 and 2022, there were 303,881 new victims of forced displacement. Landmine victims rose from 39 in 2017 to 131 between March 2022 and February 2023. Between 2018 and 2023, 845 killings of human rights defenders were recorded³. The lack of social care in the context of the pandemic increased the figures of poverty and inequality dramatically.

During the social protests between 2019 and 2021, as a result of this worsening situation, the excessive state use of force against demonstrators has left a balance of 133 homicides, 5,379 arbitrary detentions and 2,607 people injured. The situation of gender-based violence also worsened. Implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement stalled.

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>

² The last months of the Santos Government (2010-2018), the Duque Government (2018-2022) and the first months of the Petro Government (2022-2026).

³ Figures from annual reports 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and the quarterly bulletin January-March 2023, of the Somos Defensores Program.



However, there has also been progress: the Truth Clarification Commission wrote and published its final report, and the Special Peace Jurisdiction was able to issue its first resolution.

The shadow report written by international organizations for the UPR will be presented to the diplomatic corps in Brussels on 28 June at an event attended by two human rights defenders: Óscar Ramírez, President of the Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners and Marta Giraldo, representative of the Movement of Victims of State Crimes. These defenders and their organizations are part of the coalition of Colombian organizations that also presented their shadow report to the UPR on 21 June.

The new government of Gustavo Petro has announced and shown political will and commitment to the full implementation of the Final Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP, has initiated new processes of dialogue with armed groups outside the law to work on ending the conflict, has initiated social reforms, and has made social justice a priority.

The UPR is an ideal moment to surround and motivate these efforts and insist on filling in the gaps. The international community must use this historic window of opportunity for peace and human rights in the country. These efforts must be supported, through the active participation of the United Nations system Member States in the UPR, in international cooperation with Colombia, and in bilateral relations and multilateral spaces.

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