



MUJERES CONSTRUYENDO EN PAZ:

una alianza para la protección, participación política y acceso a la verdad y la justicia en Colombia

Women Building Peace: An Alliance for Protection, Political Participation, and Access to Truth and Justice in Colombia

Dossier

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY TOUR OF CORPORACIÓN HUMANAS, CORPORACIÓN SISMA MUJER AND RED NACIONAL DE MUJERES

May 2025

Introduction

Within the framework of the International Advocacy Tour carried out by Corporación Humanas, Corporación Sisma Mujer and Red Nacional de Mujeres (RNM), the undersigned Colombian organizations—accompanied by Atelier ONGD and the International Office for Human Rights-Action Colombia (OIDHACO)—present to European institutions the following overview of the situation of women human-rights leaders and defenders in Colombia.

This tour takes place under the development-cooperation programme “Women Building Peace –Phase II: An Alliance for Protection, Political Participation and Access to Truth and Justice in Colombia,” co-financed by the Valencian Regional Government and implemented by Movimiento por la Paz-MPDL and Atelier ONGD (Spain) together with the aforementioned Colombian women’s organizations and MPDL Colombia.

Its purposes are to make visible the risks faced by women defenders, promote concrete protection measures and strengthen the European Union’s commitments on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Peace and Security.

Below we set out the key messages grouped under three headings:

1. Protection

2. Peace

3. Justice

Protection

1 Situation of Women Leaders and Defenders in the Context of the Armed Conflict

Women leaders and defenders in Colombia face heightened risks because they are both women and human-rights defenders and because the armed conflict continues. Threats, forced displacement and gender-based violence remain commonplace. The State must urgently guarantee their protection, recognize their role in peacebuilding and ensure their access to justice and decision-making spaces.

The international community must likewise support these civil-society demands, in line with UNSecurity Council Resolution 1325 and the EU's Women, Peace and Security commitments, which stress safeguarding the lives and integrity of women in conflict settings. According to Indepaz, 22 women leaders were killed in Colombia in 2024. In 2023 there were 436 recorded threats, 135 (30.96%) targeting women; from January to June 2024 there were 211 threats, 75 (35.54%) against women—an increase of 7.5 percentage points over the same period in 2023. The first months of 2025 show the same number of murders as the previous year.

2 Visibility and Recognition of Women Leaders and Defenders

Visibility and recognition are fundamental for the protection of women leaders and defenders and for the strengthening of democracy. Their work in defending human rights and building peace must be respected by the State and backed by the international community, in line with the EU Gender Equality Pact 2021-2030, which seeks to eliminate structural inequalities and promote women's equal participation—including women human-rights defenders.

The EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) likewise calls for empowering women in external action, promoting their acknowledgement and leading role—essential for enabling them to carry out their work free from reprisals, stigmatization or threats.

3 International Commitment to Protecting Women Leaders and Defenders

The international community plays a key role in protecting women leaders and defenders in Colombia. Monitoring, cooperation and diplomatic pressure are essential tools for ensuring their safety and for consolidating a peace with gender justice. GAP III urges the EU to work with international partners to protect women defenders and women's organizations through cooperation and diplomacy.

The EU has also funded projects in Colombia related to the protection of women defenders through various human-rights instruments, consistent with CEDAW principles, which call for full equality for women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination—including the international protection of women leaders.

Peace

4 Effective Implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement with a Gender Lens

The 2016 Peace Agreement contains 122 gender measures. Implementing the gender approach is essential for sustainable peace and requires the inclusion of women in all their diversity in decision-making. It is crucial to strengthen the monitoring work of GPAZ—a group of organizations advocating for the gender approach in the Peace Agreement from the Havana negotiations through to implementation tracking—and of the women's alliance "Cinco Claves," which seeks justice and reparation for women survivors of sexual violence. These efforts are supported by UNSCR 1325, which the EU upholds to guarantee women's participation in peace processes and to reinforce this approach via diplomacy and cooperation.

The latest GPAZ report shows some progress, but it is slow: only 13% of gender commitments have been fully met. The greatest delays are in comprehensive rural reform, ending the conflict, and solving the illicit-drugs problem.

5 Implementation of the Recommendations in “My Body Is the Truth” (Truth Commission Final Report)

The war in Colombia has marked—and continues to mark—the bodies of women, including diverse women: their intimacy, social relations, physical and mental health, and ways of loving and living. This underscores the need to eradicate violence against women, as highlighted by the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which prioritizes sexual violence in conflict situations. The recommendations in the gender chapter of the Truth Commission’s final report represent clear paths toward transformative reparation for women victims.

UNSCR1325 also obliges the EU to foster transformative reparation and the inclusion of women survivors in peace processes.

6 Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding

Women leaders and defenders are not merely victims; they are protagonists whose invaluable contributions are crucial to peacebuilding. Their effective participation in dialogue, negotiation and decision-making processes must be guaranteed as both a right and a necessity for stabilizing the country.

The Total Peace policy is an important initiative, but respect for international humanitarian law must be demanded, multilateral ceasefires sought, and women involved in the talks. Full compliance with international human-rights standards, recognition of victims’ rights and acknowledgement of women’s fundamental role in peacebuilding are also required. This aligns with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reaffirms the need for women to be active and visible in all spheres of public life, including peacebuilding. Creating qualified and permanent spaces for dialogue with Colombian institutions enhances participation and strengthens the construction of an inclusive, sustainable peace.

Justice

7 Ending Impunity and Ensuring Access to Justice

Impunity fuels violence against women leaders and defenders in Colombia. Strengthening access to justice, effectively investigating crimes and sanctioning perpetrators are essential to halt these systematic attacks.

Effective participation of women survivors of sexual violence must be ensured in Macro-Case II of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). GAP III includes actions to promote the rule of law and support institutions investigating and punishing gender crimes, thereby strengthening the JEP’s work on sexual-violence cases.

EU and Member-State support for the JEP contributes to reinforcing transitional-justice mechanisms and the protection of women leaders and defenders in Colombia.

8 Guarantees of Non-Repetition

Women leaders have the right to live in dignity and peace. Achieving this requires transforming the factors that perpetuate violence and fulfilling the recommendations of the Truth Commission’s final report. Implementing the recommendations from “My Body Is the Truth” (gender chapter) and “Resisting Is Not Enduring” (ethnic chapter) is key to ensuring non-repetition.

Developing an action plan to implement UNSCR1325 (2020) was among those recommendations; in October 2023 the government announced that the plan was ready, and on 8 November a draft decree was published on the Ministry of Equality website, though it has not yet been approved. UNSCR1325 obliges the EU to help prevent future conflicts and incorporate specific safeguards for women in peace processes, thereby guaranteeing non-repetition of violence.

Supporting Organizations

From Colombia



CORPORACIÓN HUMANAS

Feminist research and advocacy NGO working for human-rights and gender justice for girls, adolescents and women through legal, psychosocial and strategic-litigation support; research, advocacy and proposals to overcome gender inequalities and build peace.

Representative: Luz Piedad Caicedo

CORPORACIÓN SISMA MUJER

Feminist NGO whose mission is to support the women's movement as a political actor defending women's rights and transforming their status in society. It works to position women as valid interlocutors with the State and society and to secure their participation in decision-making areas.



Representative: Katerin Jurado.



RED NACIONAL DE MUJERES

Feminist, inclusive network committed to diversity, gender and rights approaches, founded in 1991. It works on political participation and citizenship, elimination of violence against women, women's role in peace processes, and sexual-reproductive rights.

Representative: Beatriz Quintero

From Spain

ATELIER ONGD

Valencia-based NGO working in development cooperation since 1989, with programmes in Latin America, Central America and Africa; in recent years it has prioritised Colombia, supporting women's human-rights defenders and the fique-sector economy.



Representative: Consuelo Vidal



MOVIMIENTO POR LA PAZ Y EL DESARME - MPDL (COLOMBIA AND SPAIN)

Development, social-action and humanitarian NGO founded in Spain in 1983, working for global peace and full human-rights compliance. It contributes to social change in Spain and 11 countries in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. In Colombia since 1997, it currently operates on gender, women's rights, rural development, governance and peace education.

With the support of

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-ACTION COLOMBIA (OIDHACO)

Brussels-based advocacy network for peace in Colombia with more than 42 European and international members.

