

Press release

Human rights and peace at risk in Colombia following the presidential election

Brussels, 22 June 2026

We, Colombian and international civil society organisations, express our deep concern at the situation unfolding in Colombia following the election of Abelardo de la Espriella as president¹. This new political context raises uncertainty regarding the continuity of progress on human rights, the full implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement and peace-building policies in the country, as well as potential setbacks in relation to the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people.

Throughout his campaign, the president-elect disparaged international and multilateral institutions, stating in an interview with *Semana* magazine that *“the UN and the OAS are political bodies of the left that have served no purpose whatsoever”* and that he would therefore seek to withdraw Colombia from them. He went further, accusing the IACHR of *“supporting the left and (...) persecuting members of the security forces”*. Furthermore, in an interview with France 24, he stated that there would be no peace process under his government and that the only strategy he believes in is *“one that is imposed by force of arms”*.

In recent years, Colombia has faced significant challenges in consolidating peace, particularly in areas affected by the armed conflict. The persistence of violence, the rise in the number of armed groups and the vulnerability of communities, social leaders and human rights defenders call for a decisive response from the State. However, we fear that the government’s new policies may weaken the institutional and political mechanisms needed to advance the protection of fundamental rights.

We warn of the risk of a resurgence of the armed conflict, which will only lead to a significant increase in the number of victims, forced displacement, human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law. We are also concerned about the possible de-prioritisation of the implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement, which constitutes a state commitment and an essential roadmap for the structural transformation of the causes of the conflict.

In this context, we urgently call on the international community – in particular the European Union and its Member States, as well as Switzerland, Norway and the United Kingdom – to step up their support and monitoring efforts.

It is essential to promote the maintenance of effective forums for dialogue and engagement between the Colombian government and civil society organisations, such as the national and regional process on safeguards for human rights defenders and social leaders.

We call on the European Union, its Member States, Switzerland, Norway and the United Kingdom to urge the new government to honour the commitments made by the Colombian State, including the full implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement, and to prioritise negotiated solutions to ongoing armed conflicts. Building a stable and lasting peace requires political will, the effective participation of civil society and full respect for human rights.

We, the undersigned organisations, reiterate our willingness to contribute to dialogue and to the development of solutions that safeguard the lives, dignity and rights of all people in Colombia.

¹ According to the latest preliminary results, with 99,77% per cent of polling stations having reported their figures, pending the final count.

Signatory organisations:

- European Network ODHACO – International Office for Human Rights - Action on Colombia
- ACAT-Francia
- Act Iglesia Sueca
- Agir ensemble pour les droits humains
- Broederlijk Delen
- Comisión Ética Internacional por la Verdad. Sección Madrid
- CooperAcció
- DKA Austria
- FOKUS Forum for Women and Development
- Fondo Noruego para los Derechos Humanos
- Fundación Kallpa
- Fundación Mundubat
- IFSI - ISVI vzw
- International Action for Peace
- kolko- derechos humanos por Colombia e.V.
- Movimiento Por la Paz - MPDL-
- Oxfam
- Pax Christi International
- Plataforma de Derechos Humanos - La Alianza de organizaciones Sociales y Afines por una Cooperación Internacional para La Paz y Democracia en Colombia
- Red EU-LAT
- Solsoc Asbl
- Zehar-Errefuxiatuekin