



Colombia Program Co-Director, Jessica Garcia on accompaniment in Bajo Calima

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COLOMBIA NATIONAL CONTEXT

COLOMBIAN ELECTIONS

In the second presidential election after the signing of the Peace Accord in 2016, Colombians have gone to the polls three times this year to elect their representatives, on March 13, May 29, and June 19.

On all three occasions, the leftist coalition has been the most voted for, being the first time in Colombia's contemporary history that the left has won an election after an electoral period marked by irregularities denounced by several International Observer Missions.

The coalition Pacto Histórico, the president-elect Gustavo Petro and the vice president-elect Francia Marquez who is the first black woman to take office will form the next government on August 7, 2022.

COLOMBIA: HUMAN RIGHTS



According to the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), between January and April 2022, more than 78,900 people have been victims of forced displacement and confinement at the national level. This has mostly affected Indigenous, Black, and Peasant communities who live in the Pacific region.

At the same time, in this first semester of 2022, 86 social leaders have been murdered, with the department of Cauca (12 leaders) in first place, followed by Valle del Cauca (10 leaders) and Putumayo (9 leaders).

Finally, there have been 44 massacres with a balance of 158 victims, only between January and May 2022, according to data reported by Indepaz. It is worth noting that these massacres have been committed mostly by illegal armed actors that are yet to be determined, with the exception of the one committed by the Colombian army in the rural area of Puerto Leguízamo (Putumayo), last March 28, where 11 people were killed. The same army forms part of the Colombian armed forces which have the blessing of the U.S. government, who this year approved the highest package of resources destined to Colombia in the last decade and includes 40 million dollars for these forces only. It is worth noting that there is still no justice for any of the victims of these crimes.

EMERGENCIES

DISPOSSESSION AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN THE CALIMA RIVER



Bajo Calima Accompaniment

WFPSC visited the communities that are part of the Community Council of the Lower Calima River Basin on April 9 and confirmed the forced displacement that continues without any response from the State, intensifying the process of territorial dispossession of Black and Indigenous communities. We have also learned about the installation of anti-personnel mines and the voluntary and forced recruitment of young people. Despite international conventions and the 2016 Accords requiring it, no comprehensive actions have been taken to guarantee the permanence of the communities. The National Government escalates these dangers by using tens of millions received in U.S. military aid to only further militarize the region.

THREATS AGAINST SOCIAL LEADERS IN THE NORTH OF CAUCA

Cauca has historically been one of the Colombian regions most affected by clashes between different armed groups fighting for the territory's control. After the Peace Accord was signed in 2016, the armed conflict was worsening with armed actors disputing black, indigenous, and campesinxs communities' territories.

The year 2022 has started with a wave of violence that has left in the first 4 months of the year 9 leaders assassinated, 5 massacres with 17 victims, 17 kidnappings, 4 massive forced displacements, 4 accidents caused by antipersonnel mines, and constant threats against communities, social leaders and human rights defenders through leaflets and phone calls. The most affected municipalities are in Northern Cauca; Caloto, Corinto, Buenos Aires, Toribío, and Santander de Quilichao.

PARQUE NACIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WITH NO RESPONSE FROM THE STATE



Minga Indígena in the Parque Nacional, Bogotá

After seven months of resistance and permanent Minga in Bogotá's National Park, families from 15 Indigenous peoples of Colombia, organized in the Autoridades Indígenas en Bakatá (AIB) process, reached an agreement with the District and National Government. However, while the communities fulfilled their part of the agreement and voluntarily left the park, the AIB has denounced the government's failure to comply with the conditions established in the agreement, including temporary housing in dignified conditions and return with guarantees.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE COLOMBIA INTERNATIONAL TEAM

ACCOMPANIMENT

Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective works closely with grassroots organizations and black, indigenous and campesinxs communities. As part of our work and commitments with them, we used to be in accompaniment to be a witness to the situation they are living in their territories.

- Arauca Humanitarian Caravan
- Bajo Calima Humanitarian Caravan
- Putumayo Accompaniment
- Bajo Calima Accompaniment

- Buenaventura Accompaniment
- Bahía de Málaga Accompaniment

ADVOCACY

- Approaching Buenos Aires counterparts with the US Embassy in Colombia
- Approaching Autoridades Indígenas en Bakatá with the IACHR in Washington D.C.
- WfPSC Signed Letters to the U.S. Congress
 - February - Statement by U.S. - Based Organizations calling for a cut-off of Security Aid to Colombia and an end to repression of protest in Colombia. Under Secretary Nuland's travel to Bogotá.
 - April - Letter to Secretary of State Anthony Blinken on Colombia's Humanitarian Situation.



Putumayo Accompaniment with Justapaz