

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: *National Days of Action for Colombia*

ORGANIZER'S PACKET

A place of diverse peoples, cultures, and ecology, **Colombia is tragically also home to the longest-running internal armed conflict in the Western Hemisphere.** For more than half a century, fighting between government forces, guerrilla groups, and paramilitaries has killed countless Colombians, including large numbers of civilians, and displaced millions. Beginning in 2012, the Colombian government and the country's largest guerrilla group, the FARC, began the process of peace talks. The U.S. Government has made statements supporting this process. **But that is not enough.**

U.S. aid to Colombia, about \$8 billion since 2000, has been overwhelmingly military. Now, with a peace process in motion, more than ever we need aid for PEACE, not for war. The U.S. can play a positive role with regard to supporting truth, justice, and reparations for the civilian victims of the decades-long conflict. To do this, we must stop the militarized aid that's wrought so much havoc, and replace it with support for a truly sustainable peace process that is for all Colombians.

Colombians are calling for a true peace: one with truth and justice.

Now is the time to join them!



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Get Involved in This Year's National Days of Action for Colombia

Create Images of Peace to Display in Your Community.

Ask your student club, church group, or community organization to learn about Colombia and create paper doves to display in your community to make visible the need for a just peace in Colombia.

See page 4 for more info.

Organize a Now is the Time... Public Event

The doves created during educational events will be displayed through public events across the country in April. Organize or join a demonstration in your city.

See page 6 for more info.

Dedicate a Worship Service to Colombia

Ask that your faith community leaders hold a worship service focused on Colombia in April to raise awareness and pray for peace.

See page 7 for more info.

Demand New U.S. Policies towards Colombia

Sign our grassroots petition to President Obama and participate in our video project.

See the previous three & page 9 for more info.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: *National Days of Action for Colombia*

Advocacy Statement



Now is the time for peace with justice.

The Colombian government and the largest Colombian guerrilla group (the FARC) are currently engaged in peace negotiations in Havana, Cuba. This will be a challenging process, but as people of faith and conscience, we are hopeful that these talks will produce an accord that will end over five decades of devastating civil war.

However, we must commit to working with the Colombian people so that civil society, including victims of displacement and other human rights violations, can meaningfully participate in crafting a true, sustainable peace that will be for all Colombians.

For over a decade, the U.S. government has promoted harmful trade policies, supported a toxic aerial spraying program, and given billions of dollars in mostly military aid to Colombia. These policies have deepened the armed conflict instead of reducing violence for the Colombian civilians caught in the middle of it.

It's time for us to try something new, not just in Colombia, but in our relations with all of Latin America. Instead of giving priority to corporate and military interests, we must create policies that support land rights activists, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, human rights defenders, and small-scale farmers who face threats and attacks every day just because they ask for the basic right to live on their lands in peace.

This April, tens of thousands of people will come together to advocate for peace in Colombia and for U.S. policies that will help end, rather than exacerbate, the Western Hemisphere's longest-running armed conflict.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: *National Days of Action for Colombia*

Advocacy Statement

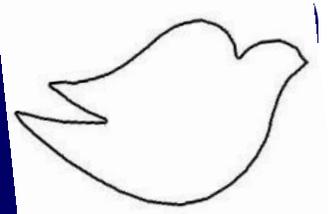


Acting in solidarity with the millions in Colombia yearning for a just peace, we urge U.S. policymakers to press the Colombian government for:

- A bilateral cease fire and a commitment from all parties to respect international humanitarian law even as negotiations proceed so as to protect the civilian populations still caught in the crossfire, especially the most vulnerable – Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, women and children, and farmers in rural areas.
- Greater inclusion of victims of the violence and broad participation of civil society in the peace negotiations and in the implementation and verification of peace accords. Peace must be built from the ground up as well as negotiated from the top down. The engagement of every sector of society – including victims’ associations, displaced communities, civil society organizations, religious communities, and labor unions – is necessary to construct a just and sustainable peace.
- Establishment of an independent truth commission to find and reveal the full truth about those who implemented, ordered, financed and promoted the violence and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law against the civilian population, whether they be guerrillas, paramilitary forces, or the government's own security forces.
- Dismantling of paramilitary and guerrilla successor groups, as well as other illegal armed groups, to ensure the protection of rural communities after a peace accord.
- A commitment to strong measures of justice for those guerrillas, paramilitaries or state security forces who committed atrocities or gross violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. The victims of violence themselves should be at the center of this process giving voice and defining justice for the perpetrators of violence. The restoration of justice should also include fair and meaningful reparations to the victims and programs that support the safe return to their lands.

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**How to Get Involved:
Create Doves to Show Your Support for a Just Peace**



Help us create doves of doves to symbolize the aspirations of millions of Colombians for peace with justice.

How to organize a Now Is the Time for Peace with Justice craft night

1. **Invite friends, family, classmates,** or anyone from your community to a gathering at your house, school, church, or local coffee shop.
2. **Prepare your materials:** scissors, pens, paste, construction or recycled paper, printed copies of the stencil on the next page in this packet, a computer with internet, and a camera to document your process!
3. **Start your gathering by explaining why you are making these doves.** Pass out copies of the fact sheets (on pp. 12-13). Ask people to discuss what they read and to evaluate the role that the United States plays in the ongoing Colombian conflict.
4. **Set a goal** for how many doves your group will make, then use the stencil (on the next page) to trace the shape onto your paper and **cut them out.**
5. **Give wings to the doves of peace!** Have participants write or draw messages of their hopes for peace in Colombia on the wings, and attach them to the doves.
6. **Take photos** of the dove-making process and your finished project with all the participants.
7. **Post your pictures to our Facebook** page at www.facebook.com/DoPAColombia where our Colombian partners will be able to see your work in solidarity with them.
8. **Have the computer handy to record video messages of solidarity with those struggling for peace in Colombia:** see pg. 9 for more information.
9. **Ask each person to sign the petition to President Obama** asking him to change U.S. policy to support a just peace in Colombia. The grassroots petition is online at <http://www.change.org/petitions/president-barack-obama-support-peace-with-justice-in-colombia>, and the deadline is May 15th.
10. **Display your artwork in your community**—see organizing instructions on pg. 6.

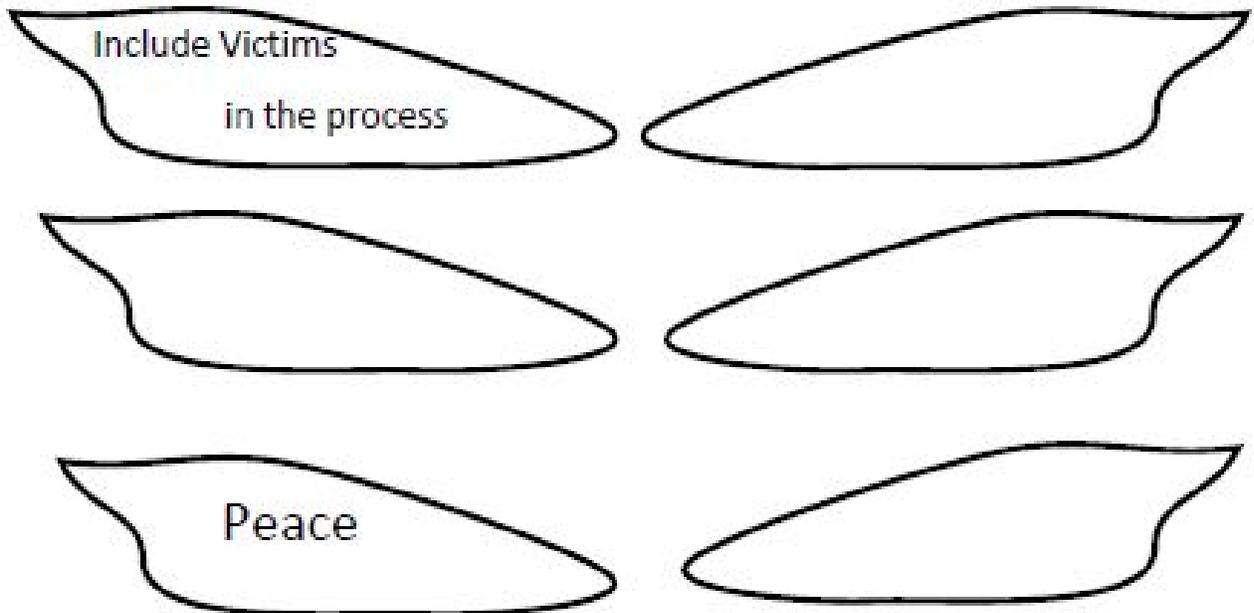
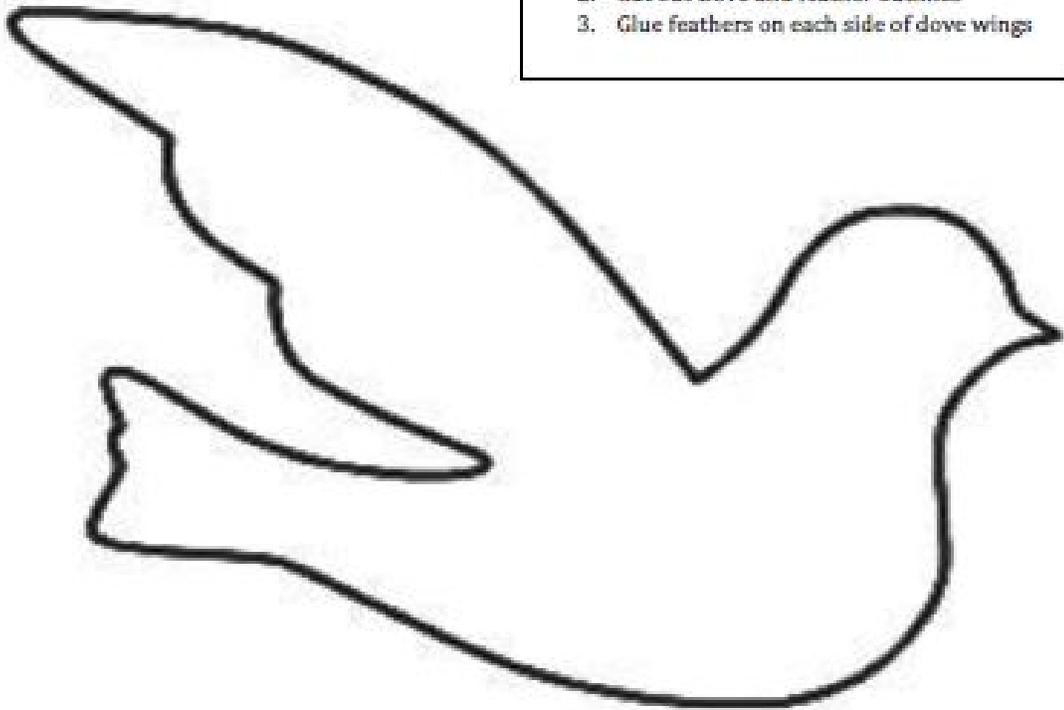
Now is the Time for Peace With Justice

Stencil for Doves

5

Instructions

1. Color Dove and Feathers
2. Cut out Dove and feather outlines
3. Glue feathers on each side of dove wings



NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: National Days of Action for Colombia



How to Get Involved: Organize a *Now is the Time for Peace with Justice* Public Event

By organizing a public event, you'll help shed light on the longest-running armed conflict in the hemisphere while calling for much-needed U.S. policy changes. With public demonstrations, we'll expose an invisible crisis and fuel the movement for U.S. policies that would help end – not exacerbate – the civil war in Colombia. Here's how:

1. Pick a date and a place: in front of your legislator's office, a public park, your church, a public space in your university, etc.
2. Collect as many cut out doves as possible and decide on a creative way to display them publicly. See photos below for ideas from previous years.
3. Bring sign-up sheets to keep attendees in the loop (contact Walker Grooms at walker@witnessforpeace.org for these) and fact sheets (pages 12-13 of this packet) to the event.
4. Invite local media to the event. Send press releases a few days in advance and make media calls the day before. Include facts and messages from this packet in your media materials. [Click here for a sample press release.](#)
5. Take lots of pictures and videos and post them on www.facebook.com/DoPAColombia
6. Have a laptop or other internet-capable device on hand so that participants can sign the petition at <http://www.change.org/petitions/president-barack-obama-support-peace-with-justice-in-colombia> (deadline May 15th).



NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: *National Days of Action for Colombia*

How to Get Involved: Dedicate a Worship Service to Colombia



Colombia's faith communities stand firmly for peace amidst grueling violence. Now they ask faith communities across the U.S. to join them in this year's Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia. Hundreds of faith communities will dedicate part of their worship service that weekend to praying and working for peace in Colombia. Will you join us?

1. Approach your imam, pastor, priest, rabbi, or social justice committee to [ask for a Colombia-focused service in April](#). You could include a Colombia-focused prayer, a candle-lighting, a children's story or a sermon. Or focus the entire service on Colombia.
2. **Click [here](#) to find sample worship materials and a faith community organizing packet.**
3. Encourage Sunday School and Adult Education classes to watch a video on Colombia and then make cut-out doves to stand with Colombian civil society seeking a just peace. [Video 1](#): Communities in Resistance; [Video 2](#): Shoveling Water; [Video 3](#): Land and Territory.
4. Sign onto the grassroots petition (at <http://www.change.org/petitions/president-barack-obama-support-peace-with-justice-in-colombia>) to send a clear message to President Obama, calling for U.S. policy to foster peace with justice in Colombia (deadline May 15th).

"We pray for the peacemakers in Colombia, the churches, and all people who in countless ways seek to right the wrongs, heal the wounded and sick, speak the truth, and protect the vulnerable. We give thanks for those who are empowered by their faith to be peacemakers. We ask that you would protect them from all harm and danger. God, give us strength as we seek to be voices for peace in Colombia, strengthen our efforts to bring forth the words of truth, compassion and peace that we receive from our Colombian brothers and sisters. Bring us all to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly in your ways. Amen."

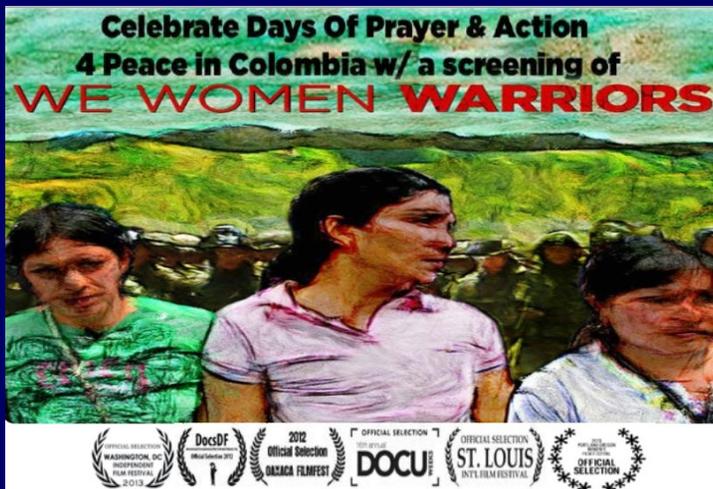
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Host a Screening of the documentary *We Women Warriors*

A screening of the documentary sparks multi-cultural understanding, empowerment, & dialogue. This April, host a screening of *We Women Warriors* in your community to:

- Learn about how native women are assuming leadership roles as peace builders
- Engage in discussion about women's rights, indigenous rights, & conflict resolution
- Inspire acts of solidarity with Colombia's disenfranchised populations to support their voices in Colombia's nascent peace process



Film synopsis:

In Colombia's war-torn indigenous villages, three brave women use nonviolent resistance to defend their peoples' survival. Trapped in a protracted predicament financed by the drug war, native women are resourcefully leading and creating transformation imbued with hope.

The Peace In Colombia Screening Kit costs \$150 USD and includes:

- Public Performance Rights for 2 Community Screenings with DVD
- 2 Posters, Postcards, and Discussion Guide

Interested in Hosting a Screening but have more questions?

Download **Frequently Asked Questions** [here](#).

[Download FAQ](#)

Sign Up to Host A National Days of Action for Colombia Screening [HERE](#)
Or contact our Outreach Coordinator Colleen Young at colleen@wewomenwarriors.com

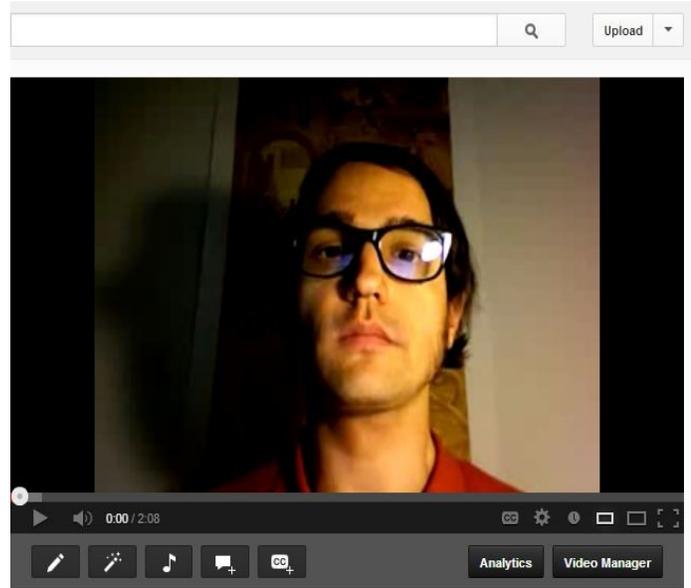
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How to Get Involved: Tell Washington You Want a Just Peace for Colombia



Help us send Washington messages of peace with justice for Colombia! During the National Days of Action for Colombia we will call on our government to push the government of Colombia to negotiate a peace accord, in consultation with civil society, that will protect communities at risk of displacement, small-scale farmers and Colombian human rights advocates.

- **Your congregation, denomination, or organization can make a video expressing why a just peace is important.** Videos can be recorded on a desktop, laptop, iPad, etc. For any assistance, or to submit your video, contact walker@witnessforpeace.org, and be sure that the final video you attach is in one of the following formats: .MOV, .MPEG4, .AVI, .WMV, .MPEGPS, .FLV, 3GPP, WebM. The videos will be added to others in a YouTube channel for “Now is the Time for Peace with Justice,” and presented May 15th, 2013. For a sample video message, see here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRv27PkKlgQ> (your message does not have to be the same length).



Help us get the message of just peace for Colombia to Washington!
Send videos by May 10th, and email Walker Grooms at walker@witnessforpeace.org
with any questions.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE: *National Days of Action for Colombia*

True stories of strength amid war and terror



The Days of Action for Colombia are dedicated to the Colombian people caught in the middle of the armed conflict and the human rights organizations and churches that stand with them. Below you will find two true stories of Colombian women profoundly impacted by the conflict.

Daira Elsa Quiñones Preciado

Displaced Afro-Colombian leader from El Por Venir, Nariño

I left home at the age of 14, and when I decided to return, I found that everything had changed. The crops that had been there for years no longer existed because everything was now African palm oil plantations. So I decided to accompany my community and start a community project to examine how we were being left without land because the land was in the hands of people of bad faith who came to plant palm oil in a very inhumane way. They forced people to sell their land, and some did sell it, but those who did not want to sell their land were killed and thrown into the river with stones on their stomachs. Later on they found mass graves of palm workers who had been killed to avoid having to pay their social benefits and who had been buried in the same palm fields where they worked.

So a group of us from within the community committed ourselves to fighting for this land, given that it was the land where our grandfathers and our fathers had lived. Our first serious struggle for land involved 120 families along the upper part of the Rio Caunapi. It was a process that took place over 7 years, starting in '94, and by '98 we had become a community council. Because of this process, we were threatened and 5 of our leaders were killed. I had to leave in a condition of forced displacement.

I left for Bogota in 2001 and since then I haven't had an easy life. One of the moments that had the greatest impact on my life was the murder of my mother. She was a woman who used traditional medicine. She was a woman who sang and clapped with her hands when she couldn't find an instrument. My mother was raped and then murdered and dumped in a well, which is where her body was found. I could not be at her funeral, nor at the funeral of my father who died a natural death. He died at the age of 86...they told me that he had a long, white beard, but I don't have any pictures of her nor of him, nor of my older sister, Modesta, who was also murdered in my parents' home. They killed her with a knife. That I will never be able to see them again is the hardest thing that I have lived. I have no possibility of having a family. I cannot see my brothers or my sisters who live in different towns. Today I live alone here in Bogota.

I have undergone much persecution because I have not detached myself from working with my people and with Tumaco. Therefore it does not look good to the people who are currently generating the political armed conflict in order to use these lands for other crops such as African palm or even coca leaves for a person like me to be accompanying these community processes over there. I believe that this land is ours and that no one has the right to make us leave what is ours.

Displacement creates injuries so intense that I do not understand how they are able to talk about restitution for a damage so big. I do not understand how money is supposed to be used for restitution when one has a pain so deep that I do not know when it will heal.





Ligna Pulido
Indigenous Nasa Leader from Cauca

In the past years we have seen how U.S. policies such as Plan Colombia and the Consolidation Plan have focused primarily on expanding the military apparatus and presence of the armed forces on the ground, which has led to the militarization of indigenous, Afro-descendant and small-scale farming territories: to the use of weapons to control territory by ever-increasing the number of troops on the ground.

Women's daily lives are affected by this militarization, by the thousands of armed men walking through the territory day and night, controlling what food can be brought home and controlling the movement of people.

The first territory violated as part of a larger strategy of territorial control by armed groups is women's bodies. There are many cases of young girls and women who have been sexually assaulted and abused by different actors in this conflict, and really the access to justice for women is very limited in these types of cases.

U.S. policies have intensified the bombings, militarization, threats and confrontations between armed groups. Women cannot leave their children at home, which makes it very difficult for us to work when we never know when the bullets will hit our homes.

Before this intensification of the conflict, all of us, both men and women, were working to construct our "life plan". This is not a document, but rather entails following a path based on our principles, based on our own worldview. Planning for territorial harmony was difficult work. But now with the increase in militarization, the increased bombings...these policies don't allow us to think! To the contrary...they force us to be so occupied with how to save our lives that there is never time to discuss what is urgently necessary: problems that affect women, such as women's health issues, the education of our children, the respect that women deserve in the family, and many other themes that are very important to us women. These policies have us running, watching to make sure a bomb doesn't fall on our heads. There is no time left to talk about the participation of women, the rights of women...themes that are being relegated not even to second place, but to fifth...tenth place. It is time to stop financing this war so that we can return to being able to think.

NO GUNS, MORE GUARANTEES! THE U.S. & THE LAND CONFLICT

FACT SHEET: National Days of Action for Colombia



“Things became unbearable when our community council, of which I was a part, gained legal access to 182 hectares of land that other people with business interests wanted. The community occupied this territory, but then people started to be violently murdered.”

Daira Quiñones, displaced Afro-Colombian community leader from El Porvenir, Nariño.

U.S. Military Aid to Colombia: Your Tax Dollars at Work

- **Colombia is the largest recipient of U.S. security assistance outside the Middle East and Afghanistan**, and remains the Western Hemisphere’s number one U.S. aid recipient and among the world’s top seven U.S. military and police aid recipients.
- Since 2000, **the U.S. has given nearly \$8 billion to Colombia –mostly military aid** for the so-called war on drugs and the war on terrorism—through Plan Colombia and its successor programs. **Over 5 million Colombians have been displaced during this time.**
- U.S. military aid has been used **to buy helicopters and weapons, fumigate suspected coca plantations and nearby food crops, and train Colombian soldiers** who have, in turn, committed extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations.

Land Restitution: Not Yet Paving the Road to Peace

The first item on the agenda for the Colombian peace negotiations is rural development, a priority that correctly recognizes that issues of land restitution are central to the country’s conflict, and thus to a meaningful peace. The Colombian government estimates that, **between 1980 and 2010, 6.8 million hectares of land changed hands, as mining, agro-industrial, and oil companies took over lands where small-scale farmers had made their living.**

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has touted the recently passed “Victims’ and Land Restitution Law” as a means by which victims may receive restitution and reparation for the forced displacement and violence they have suffered. Unfortunately, though, the law actually protects the businesses that displaced small-scale farmers and is limited in combating impunity of neo-paramilitaries who terrorize in the name of business interests, keeping the driving force of displacement intact. Furthermore, this is only one part of a larger government plan to “modernize” the Colombian countryside. As such, the law is at risk of resulting in land transfers to large businesses, which may be accompanied by militarization of rural areas to “maintain the confidence of investors” and to streamline military efforts and economic development.

The U.S. needs to support land restitution in Colombia that entails:

-Effective protections for land restitution leaders, returning communities, and those accompanying them: **25 land restitution leaders have been killed since August 2010.** Trends since the law was signed indicate that the measure’s greatest impact has been increased danger for land rights activists, with anti-restitution armed groups and internal displacement on the rise in 2012.

- Providing technical assistance for community land titling that involves direct input from victims’ associations and human rights groups.

-Urging the Colombian government to fully dismantle neo-paramilitary groups (and prosecute their members), and hold responsible companies whose Colombian operations employ these groups as private security forces, which is a further blow to restitution and a source of more human rights abuses.

-Abandoning trade liberalization practices under the Free Trade Agreement that have affected the food security of Colombians, particularly the rural population. Without opportunities to compete, campesinos are often forced to turn to coca production or to join armed groups, both impediments to peace and to U.S. policy aims.

FACT SHEET:

National Days of Action for Colombia

Enrique Petro

Displaced family farmer
from Curvaradó, Urabá



“We were really happy on our farm—it was thriving. In 1997, they murdered my two sons and I fled with my wife and children. They stole everything so that they could plant oil palm. Now I am trying to reclaim my land. There are huge threats against my life every single day, but I will never let them displace me again from here. As a small scale farmer, I have no choice—without my land, I am nothing...nothing.”

Colombian Conflict Facts:

-The current Colombian conflict began in 1964. There is no agreed-upon figure for casualties for the entire conflict, but from 1985 to 2005, approximately 240,000 people were killed in the conflict, and 3.5 million were displaced.

-From 2002 until 2010, during the military escalation that was a primary part of the “Democratic Security” policy of the Colombian government, human rights groups estimate that conflict-related violence claimed 14,000 civilian lives (and likely thousands more from combat not involving Colombian security forces), in addition to 21,000 combatant deaths. The U.S. government gave the Colombian government \$7.3 billion in aid (most of it military) during the first decade of the 2000s, and touted the model of Democratic Security as something that could work in other countries such as Mexico.

-During that same period, there were over 3,000 extrajudicial executions carried out by the Colombian military. Known as “false positives,” these crimes entailed the military dressing up innocent civilians as members of illegal armed groups after killing them. And after U.S. officials found out about this abhorrent phenomenon, U.S. military aid to Colombia continued. Tragically, these executions increased dramatically with the largest increases in U.S. military aid during this time period.

-Despite having resulted in immediate amnesty for the vast majority of over 30,000 paramilitary terrorists, and convictions still in the single digits for the serious human rights violations that were ubiquitous among these individuals, the U.S. and Colombia have both applauded the 2006 paramilitary demobilization process as a success. There has been very little in the way of substantive truth, justice, and reparations for the paramilitaries’ victims. This could not be further from a model for a peace process that will produce a just peace for all Colombians.

Further Policy Recommendations for U.S. Aid to Colombia

In addition to our asks in the Advocacy Statement on page 3 and our recommendations for land restitution on page 12, we ask that the U.S. implement aid policies that:

- **Immediately stop the fumigation campaign**, to protect livelihoods and improve the popular imagination of the State.
- **Consult with communities about development needs and work with community organizations that already exist**, rather than creating new structures.
- Ensure that, in rural areas where the military is present, **non-security duties are relinquished to civilians as quickly as possible**.
- Center aid around **food security; basic infrastructure for human development projects, including roads, waterways, schools and technology labs; and on strengthening community structures and processes for territorial governance while promoting cultural identity and the recovery of the social fabric of the community**.
- Conduct aid programs with **direct community oversight and evaluation**.
- Support rule-of-law initiatives and programs should advance **investigation of gross human rights violations (including those committed by state actors) in civilian courts**.
- Provide guarantees of effective protection for **human rights defenders, local peace leaders, and trade unionists**
- Prioritize **strengthening the Ombudsman’s Office (Defensoría)** to help protect rural and other vulnerable populations.

Get involved in the National Days of Action for Colombia
Go to www.facebook.com/DoPAColombia for more information