



Josep Borrell Fontelles  
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs  
&  
Eamon Gilmore  
EU Special Envoy for the Peace Process in Colombia

Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Wednesday, 5th of May 2021

Dear Mr. Borrell,

Since 28 April, when social movements called a National Strike against the tax reform that the government of Iván Duque intended to implement, Colombia has been experiencing a very serious human rights crisis. According to figures from the Colombian Ombudsman's Office, 19 people have been killed by the police and more than 800 injured, although other organisations give even higher figures. These killings have led both the United Nations organisation in the country and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to express their concern about police actions and to call for an independent investigation into what has happened in the country.

In the face of legitimate citizen protest, the Colombian government's response has been to frame the protests as a national security problem, which has led to the militarisation of the conflict, with the army carrying out repressive functions. The illegitimate use of violence by the security forces and the army has also been facilitated by irresponsible statements such as those of the former president and current Senator of Centro Democrático, President Duque's party, Álvaro Uribe, who stated on Twitter: "Let's support the right of soldiers and police to use their weapons to defend their integrity and to defend people and property from the criminal action of vandalism terrorism". This tweet was later removed by the social network because it incited and legitimised violence.

The violence takes place in a climate of widespread impunity and lack of implementation of the Peace Agreement that has led the country to high levels of human rights abuses and killings of human rights leaders and defenders in the world. So far this year alone there have already been 161 murders. This climate of impunity is produced by the current government's lack of political will to investigate these crimes. The Colombian people are asking for help. Colombia needs peace and rights.

For all these reasons, the undersigned Members of Parliament request you to:

- Like other international organisations, the European Union should publicly condemn violence and call all political leaders to refrain from further escalating polarisation which generates more violence
- Demand that the Colombian government guarantee the right to protest as well as the impartial investigation of the murders and other violations that have taken place.
- Encourage, as is being proposed by civil society organisations, the establishment of a process of dialogue that will lead to overcoming the current situation.
- Examine the Colombian government's compliance with the human rights provisions of the EU-Colombia Trade Agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA)  
Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left)  
Manon Aubry (The Left)  
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