



MORE LIFE LESS ARMS

Press Release: Monday February 26th, 2018

On February 14, Nikolas Cruz (19 years old) murdered 17 people with an AR-15 rifle at a high school in Parkland, Florida, in the United States. Less than two weeks later in the region of Valle, Colombia, Christian Garcés, a Colombian congressional candidate for the Democratic Center Party for the upcoming 11 March 2018 elections, proposed arming civilian population for their own “protection” as a central part of his campaign platform.

La Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (LIMPAL), the Colombian section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) denounces this call to arms. “We need more life and less arms,” said Katherine Ronderos, President of LIMPAL. “This is the wrong lesson from history.”

The 2017 report by LIMPAL, [“Women for Disarmament: More life, less arms”](#) shows that guns do not provide security. Instead they increase risks of gendered violence, especially violence against women. In Colombia, there are approximately **800,000 legal weapons and between 2 and 4 million illegal weapons in the country**. In 2016, of the 2,626 homicides reported in the region of Valle, 80% were committed with firearms. In Colombia, during the 2014-2016 period, 16,665 crimes were committed with weapons that had legal permit. According to the Legal Medicine Institute data, **the most used mechanism for homicides against women in 2016 was the firearm, with 527 cases**.

LIMPAL has brought attention to how the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the civilian population increases violence. It leads to the death of girls and women, magnifies sexual and psychological violence and trafficking in persons, and augments other crimes.

LIMPAL rejects political campaigns that propose arming the civilian population. This is not the solution to the problem of violence. The US armed culture of violence is not one for Colombia to follow. Garcés’s proposal also runs counter to the 2016 Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP, undermines the Colombian Constitution’s commitment for the State only to have a monopoly of weapons, and ignores the true situation of the proliferation of arms in the country. **LIMPAL reaffirms the need for strict control over the carrying and holding of small arms and light weapons for the prevention of armed violence and the escalation of new local conflicts.**

As part of the National Summit of Women and Peace and the Collective of Thinking and Action “Women, Peace and Security”, LIMPAL defends the policy on human security, that do not focus on the use of weapons but on the guarantee and respect of all rights. As part of the global WILPF network, LIMPAL calls for the Colombian government to take responsibility in guaranteeing the life and security of all people living in the territory, and calls for the Colombian State to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which has been already signed before the United Nations, to regulate the commercialization of weapons, which present a risk, especially for women.

#WomenForDisarmament #GunControlNow

For more information, please contact comunicaciones@limpalcolombia.org