



WILPF STATEMENT
11 May 2021

Statement to the International Community, Peace organisations, the United Nations and the government of Colombia

WILPF Statement Against the Violence in Colombia

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), in support of our sisters in the Colombian section (Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (LIMPAL) Colombia), condemns the repressive and violent actions of the security forces in response to the National Strike that began on 28 April and continues to this day. On the ninth day of demonstrations against the tax reform proposal, following the repression by the State against the protesters and the militarisation of the streets, the [NGO Temblores reported](#) 1,728 cases of police violence, 234 victims of physical violence by the police, 37 victims of homicide allegedly perpetrated by the police, 934 arbitrary arrests against the protesters, 341 violent interventions by the security forces, 26 victims of eye injury, 98 cases of firearms being shot by the police and 11 victims of sexual violence by the security forces.

We categorically reject the use of weapons to repress peaceful demonstrations, the use of excessive and disproportionate force by the security forces, the silencing of grievances by civilians, sexual violence against women, the militarisation of the streets, the censorship of alternative media, the misrepresentation of information in the traditional media, the complete lack of accountability of the institutions and the homicidal violence by the State.

We urge **the international community** to:

- Carry out rigorous monitoring and reporting of the critical situation of human rights violations;
- Activate protocols for assistance in communication and information on the events that are being silenced by the government and the traditional media;
- Focus on the critical situation of women who have been sexually abused and violated in the demonstrations;
- Demand that the authorities conduct prompt, thorough, impartial, independent and transparent investigations into all cases of excessive and unnecessary use of force against demonstrators, which has led to people being killed, injured, or disappeared



in the midst of protests, and acts of sexual violence and arbitrary detentions; and that the authorities uphold the rights of victims to justice, redress and reparation;

- Urge the government to respect and ensure the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, which are essential to create a space for meaningful pluralistic dialogue, transparency, and accountability.

We urgently call on **the organisations and governments that support the peace process**, to:

- Provide their support in the face of the violence that people in Colombia are experiencing and that is detrimental to what is agreed in the Peace Agreement;
- Urge the government to ensure that a wide range of civil society actors, groups and organisations with diverse views be systematically included in a social dialogue before the adoption of any policy on public tax or other economic reforms and that any such policy/reform be in line with Colombia's human rights obligations;
- Urge the government to urgently undertake gender and human rights impact assessments in the process of planning and undertaking tax policies and other economic processes, taking into account the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its differential impacts, and use the findings to take corrective actions where negative impacts are found, such as direct or indirect discrimination or increase in poverty levels.
- Urge the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund to use available mechanisms to ensure that the loans granted to Colombia are invested in peace and development in line with the country's human rights obligations rather than regressive policies.

We ask the **United Nations** to accompany the demonstrations in person in order to monitor the actions of the security forces.

We urge **the government of Iván Duque** to demilitarize the streets and the lives of people in Colombia, to:

- Stop the violence and repression against the protesters, including the use of live ammunition, military-grade weapons, and other means of lethal and violent force;
- Recognise the atrocities carried out by the security forces,
- Carry out a prompt, thorough, impartial, independent and transparent investigations of the complaints presented by organisations, groups and civil society in general, hold perpetrators accountable for the disappearances, murders and violations in relation to the National Strike, and ensure justice and redress for the victims and their families;
- Dismantle the *Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios* (Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squadron,



ESMAD),

- Attend to the grievances about censorship on social networks in relation to posts on the National Strike and the police abuse. Furthermore, attend to the grievances about the power and internet cuts in areas where there have been higher figures of violence by the security forces. This is essential in order to guarantee the right to freedom to seek, receive and impart information. Not guaranteeing this would be contrary to article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- Open broad dialogue processes with different organisations, groups and civil society to reach a collective consensus on the demands of the National Strike;
- Facilitate the presence of human rights monitors and media in the demonstrations and allow them to move freely, without preventing or obstructing their work;
- Accept and facilitate the visits requested by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

As a feminist, antimilitarist, and pacifist movement, we call for the solidarity of the peoples and the support of the international community, to put an end to these horrible nights of violence and fear, which have taken the lives of young people who dreamed of a peaceful Colombia.

For a Colombia where lives matter, and it is possible to live with dignity.

More life, less weapons!