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First UA: 105/25 Index: AMR 23/0577/2025 Colombia of December 12, 2025

COLOMBIA

THE INTER-CHURCH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE MUST BE PROTECTED

In late November, members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace reported serious attacks while carrying out human rights defence work in southwest Colombia.

According to their reports, unknown individuals pointed firearms at their vehicle and chased them. Although their protection detail was able to prevent physical harm, these repeated incidents highlight the urgent need for stronger and enhanced protection measures for the Commission and its members.

Write to the Colombian authorities urging them to:

- Take immediate action to protect the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace.
- Ensure the provision of effective and strengthened protection measures so the organization can continue its human rights work safely.
- Develop and implement protection measures in consultation with the organization and with its consent.
- Conduct a renewed assessment of the risks faced by the organization and its members.
- Strengthen the security arrangements currently in place for the organization and its members.

Write to:

National Protection Unit's Director
Augusto Rodríguez Ballesteros
Carrera 44 No. 20-21, Bogotá
Email: correspondencia@unp.gov.co

Salutation: Dear Mr. Director

And copy:

His Excellency Carlos Arturo MORALES LOPEZ
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Colombia
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X7
Tel: (613) 695-0152 Fax: (613) 230-4416
Email: ecanada@cancilleria.gov.co

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace has defended human rights in Colombia for nearly three decades. The organization works in several regions of the country, including the departments of Chocó, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Meta, Putumayo and Antioquia.

Many of these areas are among those most affected by armed conflict, inequality, discrimination and other systemic human rights challenges. Through its work, the Commission supports individuals, families and communities seeking the respect and fulfilment of their civil, political, economic, cultural and environmental rights.

Defending human rights in Colombia is a high-risk activity, and the experience of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace reflects this reality. Because of their work, the organization and its members have faced threats and attacks by both state and non-state actors.

The Commission has documented these incidents and repeatedly sought protection from Colombian authorities. It has also been granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Despite this, and despite recent requests to strengthen protection through the National Protection Unit, the organization has reported repeated failures in assigned vehicles, delays in maintenance, and an overall weakening of security measures.

The Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace works in some of Colombia's most marginalized and at-risk regions. The lack of adequate safety guarantees undermines not only the organization's right to defend human rights, but also the rights of the individuals and communities who rely on its support.

These failures form part of a broader pattern of shrinking space for human rights defence in Colombia. Addressing this trend is urgent and essential, particularly in light of the government's stated commitment to protecting human rights defenders.

Please take action as soon as possible until March 31, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.