

BLINDNESS



Annual Report 2019

Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia
-ISAAHRD-



**PROGRAMA
SOMOS DEFENSORES**
PROGRAMA NO GOBIERNAMENTAL DE PROTECCIÓN A
DEFENSORES DE DERECHOS HUMANOS



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The Somos Defensores (We Are Defenders) Program is a protection area that seeks to develop a comprehensive proposal to prevent aggression and protect the lives of people at risk due to their work as human rights defenders, when they protect the interests of social groups and communities affected by violence in Colombia.

The Somos Defensores Program is formed by:



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INTRODUCTION

Colombia undoubtedly experienced a turbulent year during 2019: mass mobilizations, several social protests, ‘Cacerolazos’¹, intensification of violence in many territories and its return to many others, murders and many more aggressions against human rights defenders; controversies of all kinds between civil society, political movements and even the international community and the National Government, given its denial or blindness in the face of multiple problems and the simulation of the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Being the first year of government, one would assume that there would be a margin of “tranquility” in the public debate, while the new president took office and routed his government policies. This was not the case. From the beginning, the controversy was raised by the governing party itself, which ignored the Peace Agreement and reversed what had been achieved through it. It was in this context that the debate on the situation of human rights defenders arose, as from the beginning of 2019 the Councilor for Human Rights, Francisco Barbosa, announced a reduction in the number of murders of leadership representatives without solid arguments, but rather from improvisation and with the

intention of confronting the debate in the media.

Despite these statements, it was impossible to overshadow reality with words, and the hundreds of attacks against human rights defenders moved the sensibilities of society, which in an immense national and international mobilization on July 26, established its voice of rejection and condemnation of criminality against people who defend the rights of their communities. This was just one of dozens of demonstrations that took place throughout the year in defense of life and peace.

So, to give a broad view to different situations occurred during 2019 that are around the attacks against social leaderships in Colombia, this report entitled *Blindness* shows the national panorama and emphasizes the denial that characterizes the National Government, on multiple issues related to the critical situation of security and human rights but, in particular, on the problem of criminality against social leaders.

Blindness, is inspired by the book *Essay on Blindness*, by writer José Saramago, and the disease that in the book spreads throughout the world, making people blind and placing a veil between perception and reality. The same evil that has intentionally settled on the current Government and that, from there, tries to be spread over Colombian society so that only a

¹ A massive manifestation where people take on the streets, pans and pots in hand, and hit these utensils with spoons or other kitchen elements, to express discontent towards specific topics.

speech can be heard, superimposing itself on reality and thus, denying it. One of the facts that this veil is trying to cover up, is the serious situation that those who work to defend the rights of social groups and communities face on a daily basis.

Hence, this report is an effort to analyze the context and expose the critical situation to which those who decide to defend human rights in the country are submitted. For this reason, an important part of this publication is the recognition of the men and women whose lives were interrupted early on, as they were victims of those who saw in them obstacles to the development of particular and different types of interests in the territories. Thus, in the first part called *In Memory*, the profiles of the human rights defenders murdered during the second half of 2019 will be featured.

The first chapter, *At the Rhythm of Pans*, narrates the episode of the social mobilizations at the end of 2019, around the National Strike, where Colombian society, in demonstrations unprecedented in history and with the lucidity of a mature citizenry, showed the world its discontent with the inequality, injustice and corruption they have been subjected to for decades and which has extended throughout the current government. The latter, however, refused to see and, on the contrary, hid behind a thick blindfold to deny reality and dismiss demands that were impossible to ignore.

A second chapter, entitled *Wearing a Well Adjusted Blindfold*, brings together the different statements made by the National Government to address the situation of violence against social

leaders and, consequently, the public policy proposal, which finally vanished like water through the fingers. This chapter also analyses the actions of the State institutions responsible for the matter, which range from actions that are closer to blindness, to some that come close to lucidity, yet not reaching the amount of light required to extinguish the phenomenon of violence against the social movement and its struggles for the rights of the communities. This section also describes the role of other social and political actors who, in their desire to contribute to raising awareness, rejecting and stopping criminal actions against these people, have stood out in actions and campaigns; this is the case of the international community, the media, the artistic world and civil society.

The third part, *A Country between Lights and Shadows*, is based on the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst. It reviews the readings and conclusions of the rapporteur regarding the situation of risk to social leadership in Colombia, which highlights the difficult conditions these people must face in the regions. In addition, it points out the different reactions of the National Government to this report and to that of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia (OHCHR).

Finally, the final chapter contains the statistical analysis provided by the Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia –SIADDHH–. It is based on cases of attacks against leaders, recorded and confirmed by the Somos

Defensores Program, which by 2019 shows the difficult panorama for those who defend human rights in the country, with an unprecedented increase in aggressions in our information system, and which leads to the conclusion that there are still no guarantees for the protection of life in the regions. Therefore, we hope that the assessment can serve as a reference for studies, analysis, monitoring of the phenomenon and, ideally, for the creation of public policies that should be implemented to stop this painful situation.

As usual, we would like to thank all the people, social and human rights organizations that contribute substantially to the implementation of this monitoring from the SIADDHH, especially the Center for Research and Popular Education –CINEP–, the Colombia Europe United States

Coordination –CCEEU– and the Ombudsman's Office; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia (OHCHR), the South Colombian Observatory for Human Rights and Violence (OBSURDH), Colombia Diversa, the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN), the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), the Territories for a Dignified Life Foundation and the Civic Committee for Human Rights in Meta. In addition, we recognize the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombia for its constant political and financial support, and the international cooperation agencies DIAKONIA Sweden, MISEREOR Germany, Amnesty International and Pan Para el Mundo (*Bread for the World*), whose support is fundamental to advancing our work with human rights defenders in Colombia.

IN MEMORY OF THE MURDERED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

(Second semester 2019)

During 2019, Colombia saw the lives of 124 human rights defenders vanish, people who with dedication, wisdom and charisma accompanied their communities. Their voices were silenced, but their legacy and teachings nurture the lives of those who loved, knew, and recognized them. Here we remember their names and profiles, as part of the memory of their collective struggles and resistance in their territories.

July 20, 2019

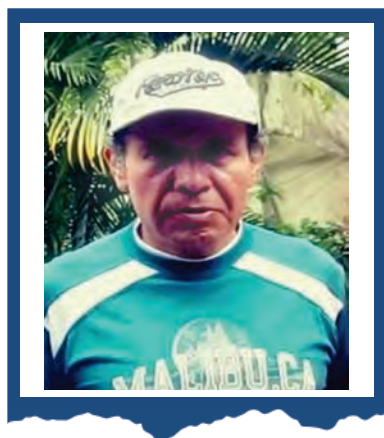
HUMBERTO DÍAZ TIERRADENTRO

JAC President, Guadalupe village

Gigante, Huila

Humberto Díaz, 55 years old, was president of the Community Action Board of the Guadalupe village and worked in the agricultural sector; recognized for leading social and community development processes. The Departmental Federation of Communal Action, which denounced the murder, also reported that the leaders in the municipality of Gigante receive constant threats and extortion calls, and demanded an effective investigation from the entities in charge, in order to achieve the capture of those responsible for the act.

On July 20, 2019, Humberto was at his place of residence. Armed men arrived at the scene and shot him in the presence of family members. According to the same Federation, the leader had received no threats.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

July 27, 2019

JOSÉ DEL CARMEN JARA ARDILA

**JAC member, La Gran Reforma village
Cumaribo, Vichada**

Member of the Community Action Board of the La Gran Reforma village. The leader was reported missing on July 25. Two days later, he was found dead near his place of residence, with signs of torture. In the department, there were two cases of murders of community leaders in 2019.

The Municipal Office of Cumaribo, has made strong complaints against the incursion of illegal armed groups in the municipality.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



July 28, 2019

PABLO EMILIO CAMPO TEQUIA (EMILIO VITUCAY)

**Member of the Alto Andágueda Reservation
Bagadó, Chocó**

On July 28, Emilio Vitucay, an indigenous leader who belonged to the Alto Andágueda Reservation was assassinated. He was leading processes for the preservation of the environment in the municipality of Bagadó. The event occurred at his place of residence. During that same week, the paramilitary group Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia –AGC– threatened 84 indigenous people who were forced to move to a nearby municipality.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



August 1, 2019

GERSAIN YATACUÉ ESCUE

**Coordinator of the Indigenous Guard,
San Julián village
Toribío, Cauca**

The 25-year-old indigenous leader was the village coordinator of the San Julián sector Indigenous Guard. He also led a community project where he served as an advisor on economic and productive issues. He was assaulted with a firearm when he was in the El Pajarito village, in Toribío. The Cauca Regional Indigenous Council –CRIC– reported that a possible motive for the murder is that there is a presence of industries and monocultures in the territory, which do not want indigenous guards to carry out territorial control. The community stated that the Dagoberto Ramos column, which belongs to the FARC dissidence, are considered responsible for the act.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

August 3, de 2019

JOSÉ EDUARDO TUMBO

**Member of the JAC and the Association
of Workers for the Pro-Constitution
of the Peasant Reservation Zones of Caloto
—ASTRAZONACAL—
Caloto, Cauca**

José Eduardo Tumbo, human rights defender in the village of El Vergel, was a member of the Communal Action Board and of the Association of Workers for the Pro-Constitution of the Peasant Reserva-



tion Zones of Caloto –ASTRAZONACAL–. The leader was attacked when he was passing through the El Jagual sector of the municipality of Caloto. There, unknown men repeatedly shot him with a firearm, causing his death. The community affirms that in the department, there is presence of armed groups at the service of drug traffickers, FARC dissidence and a strong presence of the National Army.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

August 4, 2019
ENRIQUE GUEJIA MEZA
Traditional Doctor
Toribío, Cauca

The traditional doctor (Kiwe The) of the Nasa people, was attacked with a firearm by unknown men on a motorcycle. The fact is being investigated by the indigenous jurisdiction. At the time of the murder, the leader was carrying the cane that defined him as an authority, and therefore the community considers that it was not an isolated incident. There is no information on previous threats.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

August 9, 2019

LUIS ALBERTO JUMÍ BAILARÍN

Indigenous Guard

Frontino, Antioquia

The Emberá indigenous guard, Luis Alberto Jumí Bailarín, belonged to the Amparadó Alto community in Dadeiba. He was widely recognized for his discipline and dedication as a guard. He was a 16-year-old adolescent going through his senior year of high school when he was assassinated. The young man was in a public commercial establishment in the municipality of Frontino, when a confrontation between armed groups occurred and he was murdered along with two other people.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

August 10, 2019

KEVIN MESTIZO COICUÉ

EUGENIO TENORIO

Indigenous guards, San Francisco reservation

Caloto, Cauca

In midst of an attack against the Indigenous Guard, Kevin Mestizo Coicué and Eugenio Tenorio, defenders of the territory of the San Francisco Reservation, Toribío, were killed. When members of the Guard were heading towards the municipality of Toribío to attend the Coffee Fair, on the Venadillo de Caloto village, armed men shot at the vehicles in which they were being transported. The two leaders died while being transferred to a hospital. Five more people were injured.



According to the Cauca Regional Indigenous Council –CRIC– this attack against the Guard was the second one in less than 24 hours.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



August 12, 2019

ORLANDO GÓMEZ

**Principal of the Agro Empresarial Huasanó Educational Institution
Caloto, Cauca**

Orlando Gómez, 49 years old, was an academic leader who served as the principal of the Agro Empresarial Huasanó Educational Institution. He completed nearly 10 years of work at the institution, where he also promoted strategic campaigns to prevent young people from engaging in drug trafficking and drug addiction. Orlando had been threatened by the FARC dissidence. Armed subjects kidnapped him in a rural area of the municipality and hours later, his corpse was found.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

August 15, de 2019

WILSON CHARLEY TENORIO

Secretary of the Magüí Payán Ombudsman's Office

Magüí Payán, Nariño

Wilson Tenorio was leading both social and welfare processes on issues related to the presence of illegal armed groups and crops for illicit use. He was head of the program The Voice of the People Does Comply, a platform of the municipal Ombudsman's Office in which news of community interest were broadcast.

On August 15, his lifeless body was found in a public establishment. There is no information on previous threats sent to him.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



August 15, 2019

LUIS EDUARDO CALDERA VILLAMIZAR

Former JAC President, San Jacinto del Cauca
San Jacinto del Cauca, Bolívar

43 year-old Luis Eduardo Caldera Villamizar was a community leader, merchant, farmer, and president of the Community Action Board of the municipality of San Jacinto del Cauca, Bolívar. On August 12, he was reported missing. Three days later, his decomposing body was spotted floating in the Cauca River. The Governor of the department rejected the assassination of the leader and demanded respect for the rights of all social leaders, requesting the Public Force to speed up the investigation process.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



August 18, 2019

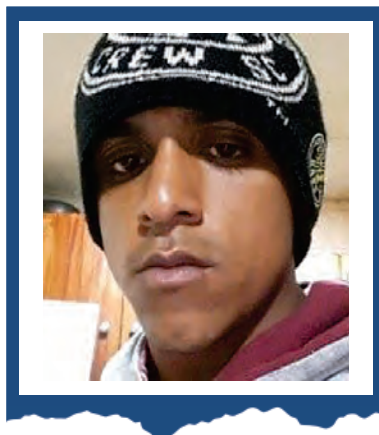
ANDERSON PINO CASTAÑO

**Musician of the “Kódigo Ocho” (Code 8) Band
Medellín, Antioquia**

Anderson was a musician for *Kódigo Ocho*, a band formed by youngsters who worked for the community developing sportive and recreational activities for boys and girls. Anderson’s peers remember him as a dedicated leader in music and art devoted the community.

On August 18, he was found dead with stab wounds on his body, on a public highway in La Sierra neighborhood in Medellín. Apparently, he had received no threats.

Alleged responsible: Paramilitary



August 28, 2019

DANILO OLAYA PERDOMO

**JAC President, Alto Cachaya village
Gigante, Huila**

Danilo Olaya Perdomo was a communal leader, recognized by his solidarity and persistence in the face of collective well-being. He served as president of the Community Action Board of the Alto Cachaya village on several occasions; the community trusted him and felt represented by his work. He also worked as a panela producer (*“Panela” is a product extracted from sugar cane*).

The leader was murdered at his place of residence, where unknown men arrived and opened fire against him. There is no information on previous threats. However, it is stated that there is a presence of the FARC dissidence in the area, who have demanded the payment of extortion from producers.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



September 1, 2019

AYDÉE TRÓCHEZ

**Representative of the Victims' Table,
La Cascada village,**

HÉCTOR GONZÁLEZ

**JAC President, Las Brisas de Suárez
neighborhood**

LADEVIS RAMOS

**Rural leader, Altamira village
Suárez, Cauca**

On September 1 occurred a massacre in which six people were murdered: Four women and two men. Three leaders were among those assassinated: Aydée Tróchez, representative of the Table of Victims of the La Cascada village; Héctor González, president of the Community Action Board of Las Brisas de Suárez neighborhood; and Ladevis Ramos, rural leader of the Altamira village.

The leaders were being transferred with Karina García, a candidate for mayor of Suárez who also lost her life, in a van that was assigned to the latter by the National Protection Unit –UNP–. A group of armed men attacked the vehicle. Approximately 15 days before, the candidate reported a warning about the danger to which she was exposed, due to false statements made about her candidacy.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



September 2, 2019

MAGDALENA COCUBANA

**Member of the Macarieros community,
Makaguán People
Tame, Arauca**

Magdalena, was a 70 year old indigenous leader of the Makaguán People in the Tame municipality. She was fighting for the rights of her community and respect for ethnic traditions. Her dead body was found near her place of residence with a stab wound. There is no information on previous threats.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

September 6, 2019

JOSÉ CORTÉS SEVILLANO

**JAC President, El Carmen village and
PNIS member
Tumaco, Nariño**

José Sevillano was licensed in physical education and he was president of the Community Action Board of the El Carmen village. He worked with peasant communities and exercised leadership in the Program for Substitution of Crops of Illicit Use –PNIS–. He was sharing with friends in a public commercial establishment, when armed men came to the scene and fired against him, thus causing his death. According to his relatives, José had received no threats.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

September 8, 2019

YUNIER MORENO JAVE

**Member of the Displaced Persons Association, Peñas Coloradas village
Cartagena del Chairá, Caquetá**

The community leader was a member of the Association of Displaced Persons from the Peñas Coloradas district and an organization of Afro-descendant communities. Yunier was murdered by unknown men who shot him repeatedly at his place of residence. There is no information on threats against him.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

September 8, 2019

MARIO ALBERTO ACHICUÉ

**Indigenous Guard, Lame Reservation
Páez, Cauca**

Mario Alberto Achicué, 26, was an indigenous leader, defender of the territory and community rights. He was part of the Indigenous Guard of the Lame-north Reservation and carried out community work in his village, Agua Bendita, of the Avirama Reservation. His corpse was discovered at his place of residence.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

September 8, 2019

MIGUEL ÁNGEL SUÁREZ SANTIAGO

**Member of the Catatumbo Peasant Association –ASCAMCAT–
Chimichagua, Cesar**

The peasant leader Miguel Suárez was part of the coordination of the Catatumbo Peasant Association –ASCAMCAT–. He was annihilated at his place of residence, where unknown men entered by force and attacked him with firearm. Apparently, he had received no threats.

ASCAMCAT denounced the event and demanded the government to generate guarantees to exercise social leadership in the country and the creation of conditions for the violence in the Catatumbo region to cease.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



September 13, 2019

JOSÉ MANUEL PANA EPIEYÚ

**Member of the Greater Autonomous Board
of Speakers for Human Rights
Maicao, La Guajira**

José Epieyú, 62, was a Wayuú spokesperson. He participated as a conciliator for the resolution of conflicts in the Jurpimana community. He supported the creation of the Wayuú regulatory system in coordination with the Special Jurisdiction for Peace -JEP-. He denounced the problems of extermination and state corruption before the European Union.

José Manuel was assassinated while driving a vehicle in the municipality of Maicao. Armed men caused him to stop, forced him to get out of the car, and shot him repeatedly. The community highlighted the importance of José's work as a conflict conciliator.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



September 20, 2019

VÍCTOR MANUEL CHANÍ AGUILAR

**Indigenous leader, Aguas Negras Reservation
Solano, Caquetá**

Víctor Manuel Chaní Aguilar, 63 years old, was an indigenous leader of the Aguas Negras Reservation. He also served as governor of the Murui Munina (Huitoto) people. He disappeared on September 20, when armed groups entered his reservation and remained there for two hours. Then they took Víctor against his will. The community began searching for the leader but it was not until two days later that they found half-naked his body, with signs of torture.

It is believed that the alleged perpetrators were members of the National Army, since the body was found 800 meters from a military base. In addition, 40 meters from the body there was a group of military personnel and similar footprints of boots to those used by the Army were found at the scene.

Alleged responsible: Public Force

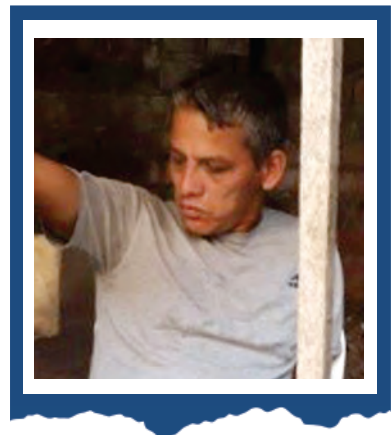


September 26, 2019

JAIRO JAVIER RUIZ HERNÁNDEZ

**Founder of the Peasant Association of Balboa
Workers –ASCATBAL– and Member of the
National Federation of Unitary Agricultural
Unions –FENSUAGRO–
El Bordo, Cauca**

The peasant leader Jairo Ruiz was one of the 32 founders of the Peasant Association of Workers of Balboa –ASCATBAL–, member of the National Federation of Unitary Agricultural Unions –FENSUA-



GRO-. He was also part of the National Association of Peasant Reservation Zones –ANZORC-, of the Process of Popular Unity of the Colombian Southwest -PUP-SOC-, of the Social and Political Coordination of the Patriotic March of Cauca, of the National Coordinator of Coca, Poppy and Marijuana Growers local committee –COCCAM-, and the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use –PNIS-.

Jairo Ruiz was murdered on the road leading to the El Estrecho Township in the El Bordo municipality. He was victim of multiple shots by unknowns actors.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

September 26, 2019

MARLON FERNEY PACHO

**Secretary of the Council, Talaga Reservation
Paéz, Cauca**

The Association of Nasa Cxha Cxha Chapters, denounced the murder of the 24-year-old leader Marlon Ferney Pacho, who served as authority in the position of the Council secretary of the Talaga Reservation in Páez. The Association stated that they reject any act of violence that threatens the lives of defenders of the indigenous people.

Marlon Ferney Pacho was killed by armed men who came to his place of residence and repeatedly shot him, causing the lethal wounds that ultimately extinguished his life. Apparently, he had not received threats, however, it is stated that the alleged perpetrators are part of the Dagoberto Ramos column of the FARC dissidence.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

September 29, 2019

ALEX FERNANDO SALCEDO

**Member of the Cocoa Growers Association
—ACATA—**

CRISTIAN SÁNCHEZ

**Member of the Cocoa Growers Association
—ACATA—**

ALBERT ARMANDO SÁNCHEZ

**Member of the Cocoa Growers Association
—ACATA— and rural promoter
Tarazá, Antioquia**

The Patriotic March organization denounced confrontations in the township of La Caucana and the Las Acacias village in the Tarazá municipality. In a public establishment in La Caucana, the civilian population got caught amidst the bullets of the Los Caparros paramilitary groups and the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. Armed men arrived at this place, shooting indiscriminately, injuring five people and assassinating leaders Alex Fernando Salcedo and Cristian Sánchez. The same day, in the village of Las Acacias, Albert Armando Sánchez was assassinated. The first two were members of the ACATA Cocoa Growers Association and the latter, in addition, was a rural promoter. All three were active members of the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use —PNIS—.



Alleged responsible: Paramilitary

September 30, 2019

ORTIZ ARANCEL AVELINO UL MESTIZO
Founder and member of the Avelino
Indigenous Association UL
Toribío, Cauca

The indigenous leader Ortiz Arancel Avelino UI Mestizo, was a founder and member of the indigenous association Avelino UI, in addition, he was a member of the Popular Unity Process of the Colombian Southwest –PUPSOC– and the Social and Political Coordination of the Cauca Patriotic March. The San Francisco Indigenous Reservation reported that Ortiz Arancel was leaving the fair of the village when unknown men on a motorcycle attacked him with firearm.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



October 4, 2019

DUMAR MESTIZO
Member of the Youth Movement Álvaro Ulcué
Chocué
Toribío, Cauca

Dumar Mestizo, 24, was a member of the Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Youth Movement. He accompanied the defense of the ethnic identity of his community, which he did through artistic wall paintings that mostly represented landscapes of North Cauca and symbolic and spiritual elements of their culture.

In the movement he was an arts teacher, he taught painting, weaving and dance. He offered young people a healthy space and encouraged them to think about life projects. For the leader, art was the defense mechanism against forced recruitment by illegal armed groups. He was murdered in the village of La Despensa, municipality of Toribío, Cauca.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



October 13, de 2019

LILIA PATRICIA GARCÍA

**Secretary of the council, Watsalpí Awá
Indigenous Reservation
Barbacoas, Nariño**

Lilia Patricia García, 43, was an indigenous leader who served as secretary of the council of the Awá indigenous reservation in Watsalpí. She worked, in the company of her husband, also leader and governor of the council, in demanding the legal constitution of the reservation. Her murder occurred in the municipality of Barbacoas, near the Los Telembías educational institution, when gunmen shot her in the back.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

October 13, 2019

TORIBIO CANÁS VELASCO

**Indigenous Guard, Tacueyó Reservation
Toribío, Cauca**

Toribio Canás was a 53-year-old indigenous leader, indigenous guard and defender of the territory. He was killed in a public establishment, when armed men arrived to the scene and shot him repeatedly.

According to the indigenous authorities, the leader had not been threatened, however, the control exercised by the indigenous guard that limits the actions of armed groups, may be the cause of the murder of Toribio and other indigenous leaders and authorities.



The United Nations Organization -UNU- recalled that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights -CIDH- issued precautionary measures in favor of several communities in Cauca, among which is the community of the murdered leader.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

October 17, 2019

CONSTANTINO RAMÍREZ

Founder of the Regional Indigenous Organization of Quindío -ORIQIN- Calarcá, Quindío

Constantino Ramírez was an indigenous leader and defender of the environment, highly recognized by the Emberá indigenous people. He was part of the Board of Directors of the Autonomous Corporation of Quindío and founder of the Regional Indigenous Organization of Quindío -ORIQIN-, where he served as Senior Advisor on several occasions.

The leader was killed when he was traveling by motorcycle on the road that leads from Calarcá to the Dachi Agore Indigenous Reservation, in Quindío. He had denounced several threats against him due to his work as a leader.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

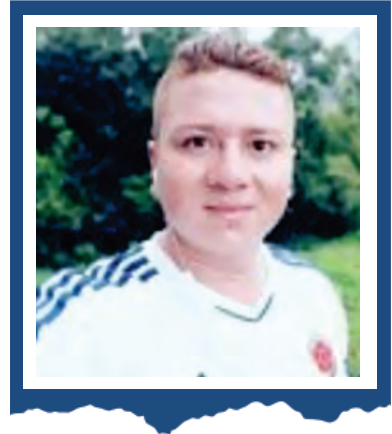


October 19, 2019

NELSON ANDRÉS TRUJILLO

**Founder of the JAS Youth Group
Santa Rosa de Cabal, Risaralda**

22-year-old Nelson Andrés Trujillo was the founder of the JAS Youth Group, a foundation that focused on supporting, teaching, and guiding young people about other life alternatives, in an environment of drug sales, theft, and murder. In addition, he supported a political campaign in the municipality.



On October 19 in the La Trinidad neighborhood, men who mobilized on bicycles shot the leader and his companion several times. Nelson was seriously injured and was transferred to a health center, where he finally passed away. It is known he had received threats weeks before the murder.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

October 22, 2019

MIGUEL CEBALLOS RODRÍGUEZ

**Treasurer of the San Isidro Community Action Board
La Montañita, Caquetá**

Miguel Ceballos Rodríguez worked as treasurer of the Community Action Board of the San Isidro village. He was a member of the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use -PNIS-, in addition, he led community and peasant processes.



Unknown men who approached his place of residence opened fire against him, thus taking his life. Social leaders in the region expressed their concern and rejection of the events.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

October 28, 2019

GUSTAVO MONTOYA

JAC Vice President, La Espensa village

RONALD RODRÍGUEZ

**Member of the JAC Coexistence and Conciliation Committee, La Espensa village
Cartagena del Chairá, Caquetá**

Gustavo Montoya and Ronald Rodríguez were community leaders. Gustavo served as vice president of the Community Action Board of the La Espensa village, while Ronald was a member of the Co-existence and Conciliation Committee of the aforementioned village. Their leadership focused on ensuring the well-being of the community and developing initiatives to improve their conditions. According to the community and some media, they were executed by FARC dissidents.



Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

October 29, 2019

CRISTINA BAUTISTA TAQUINÁS

**Governor of the Tacueyó Reservation
Toribío, Cauca**

In midst of a work to control the territory, a vehicle in which the Nasa governor Cristina Bautista was transported along with other members of the Indigenous Guard, was ambushed by armed men while passing through the La Luz village of the Tacueyó district. For several minutes, armed men on board of a black pickup truck attacked the leaders. The governor and four guards were killed in the spot.



Weeks before the massacre, Cristina Bautista stated, "If we remain silent they will kill us, but they also will if we talk... So, we talk." The governor was characterized for being a defender of the rights of her community, especially the freedom of women.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence

October 29, 2019

ASDRUVAL CAYAPU

ELIODORO FINSCUÉ

JOSÉ GERARDO SOTO

JAMES WILFREDO SOTO

**Indigenous Guards, Tacueyó Reservation
Toribío, Cauca**

Members of the Dagoberto Ramos column of the FARC dissidence, opened fire against the group of indigenous guards who were carrying out territorial control work in the Tacueyó Reservation. The events ended with the lives of the indigenous authority Cristina Bautista and the guards Asdrual Cayapu, Eliodoro Finscué, José Gerardo Soto and James Wilfredo and left the indigenous authority Crescencio Peteche and four other guards wounded.

In the Reservation there is presence of illegal armed groups that constantly threaten and attack the community, especially the indigenous guard that exercises control and defense of the territory.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



October 31, 2019

GILBERTO DOMICÓ DOMICÓ

**Indigenous guard, Polynes Reservation
Chigorodó, Antioquia**

Gilberto Domicó Domicó, 50, was an indigenous guard of the Emberá Eyábida people, in the Polines Reservation. The Indigenous Organization of Antioquia –OIA– affirms that there is a strong presence of illegal armed groups in the area, in dispute over territorial control and, consequently, the community is threatened and assaulted, with no possibility of exercising its ethnic autonomy in the midst of submission by these groups.

Members of paramilitary groups assassinated the indigenous guards, by repeatedly shooting at them with firearm.

Alleged responsible: Paramilitary



November 3, 2019

JESÚS EDUARDO MESTIZO YOSANDO

**Integrante de la Asociación Indígena Avelino UI
Toribío, Cauca**

Jesús Eduardo Mestizo Yosando, was a 43-year-old indigenous leader and member of the Avelino UI Indigenous Association. The leader was assassinated in the presence of his wife and son when he was going out of their home.

Regarding the murder of the indigenous leader, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights –CIDH– condemned the violence against authorities and members of the Indigenous Guard in the Department of Cauca.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



November 3, 2019

LUIS EUGENIO MUÑOZ DUQUE

President of JAL in Pereira and JAL

National leader

Pereira, Risaralda

63-year-old Luis Eugenio Muñoz Duque was a community leader, president of the Local Administrative Boards –JAL– of Pereira and leader of these, nationally. In addition, he was an advisor of the Arabia Township.

The leader was at his place of residence, in the company of relatives, when a gunman on a bicycle arrived at the scene and shot him several times. Luis Eugenio was seriously injured and was transferred to a healthcare center, where he was finally declared dead.

The leader had received different types of threats. In fact, he had already been the victim of an attack in 2018.

Alleged responsible: Paramilitary



November 8, 2019

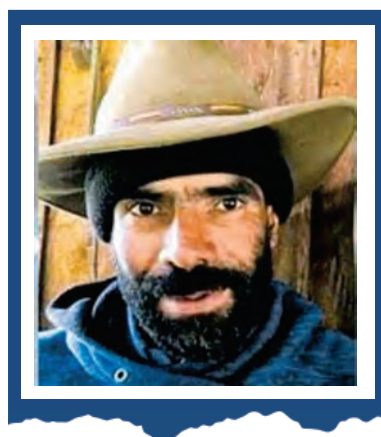
CARLOS ALDAIRO ARENAS SALINAS

Promoter of the Condor Route

Santa Isabel, Tolima

The Condor Route (*Ruta del Cóndor*) is a communal and rural tourism route that goes through the municipality of Villa María in the department of Caldas, a prime coffee-producer department.

Carlos Aldairo Arenas Salinas, 44, was an environmental leader and defender who worked as a promoter of the Condor Route, raising awareness among residents and tourists about the importance of caring for nature. The ecotourism project



that was in development encouraged the protection of the natural resources of the Los Nevados National Natural Park. It focused mainly on the protection of Frailejón plants and endangered animals.

His murder took place in the Totare village of the Santa Isabel municipality, when gunmen shot him multiple times. The environmental defender had received threats from armed groups present in the area.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

November 18, 2019

WALTER ENRIQUE RODRÍGUEZ PALACIO
JAC President, San Miguel sidewalk
Member of the Bajo Cauca Peasants
Association –ASOCBAC–
Tarazá, Antioquia

On November 18, 2019, 48-year-old Walter Enrique Rodríguez Palacio, president of the Community Action Board of the San Miguel village, La Caucana township, was assassinated. The leader was also a member of the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use –PNIS– and of the Bajo Cauca Peasants Association –ASOCBAC–, where he had been working as a promoter of productive programs in the territory.



Armed men who arrived at Walter's place of residence on the San Miguel village, seized and transported him to the La Esmeralda village, where they subsequently assassinated him. The community found his body in the La Piedra sector and transferred it to the morgue in the municipality of Tarazá.

Alleged responsible: Paramilitary

November 19, 2019

EMILIANO CHOCUÉ

Indigenous Guard

Morales, Cauca

Emiliano Chocué was a Nasa indigenous guard in the Chimborazo Reservation. He was assassinated while he was in a territorial control meeting in which the eradication of 45 hectares of illicit crops was discussed, which generated conflict and tension between families who oppose the eradication because they have no other option of sustenance. In midst of the altercation, someone attacked and murdered Emiliano. Following the division of opinions and after the homicide, several indigenous families were displaced.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

November 23, 2019

HERNÁN ANTONIO BERMÚDEZ ARÉVALO

Member of the El Eneal Community Council

Riohacha, La Guajira

Hernán Antonio Bermúdez Arévalo, was an Afro-descendant leader in La Guajira. He carried out his work focusing on strengthening the cultural and traditional values in the territory, in addition, for three years he had led a process of land restitution.

The leader was assassinated in the farm where he resided in the Mundo Nuevo village in Riohacha, when armed men arrived onboard of two motorcycles, shooting against him in several opportunities.



Alleged responsible: Paramilitary

November 26, 2019

BERNARDO DE JESÚS CHANCI

**JAC President, San Agustín de Leones village
Ituango, Antioquia**

On November 26, Bernardo de Jesús Chanci was assassinated. He was the president of the Community Action Board of the village of San Agustín de Leones and had connections with the Comprehensive National Plan for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use –PNIS–.

The annihilation of the leader took place when he was in the Santa Lucía Township, where three people intercepted and shot him repeatedly.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



December 3, 2019

ELICERIO MENDOZA PALOMINO

**JAC President, Casas Grandes village
and treasurer of the Guacamayo Trunk
Roadway Committee
San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá**

Elicerio Mendoza Palomino, 45 years old, was president of the Community Action Board of the Casas Grandes village and treasurer of the Guacamayo Trunk Roadway Committee. His murder occurred when he was on the move with his wife in a rural area of the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán, where they were approached by subjects who shot them repeatedly. The leader lost his life while his partner was injured.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



December 3, 2019

JOSÉ HUMBERTO RODRÍGUEZ QUIROGA

Elected Mayor of Sutatausa

Sutatausa, Cundinamarca

51 year-old José Humberto Rodríguez Quiroga, was president of the Association of Community Action Boards –ASOJUNTAS–. He was elected mayor of the Sutatausa municipality for the period 2020-2023, but he could not exercise the position because he was assassinated before taking office. Before the elections, he denounced corruption in the allocation of houses and lots for victims of the armed conflict. The murder happened when he arrived at his place of residence in Sutatausa.



Alleged responsible: Unknown

December 6, 2019

HUMBERTO DE JESÚS LONDOÑO

**Coordinator of the Conciliation Committee
in the El Socorro village**

Member of the Bajo Cauca Peasant

Association –ASOCBAC–

Tarazá, Antioquia

Humberto de Jesús Londoño was a peasant leader, coordinator of the Conciliation Committee in the village of El Socorro, Tarazá, and was also a member of the Bajo Cauca Peasant Association –ASOCBAC–. Armed men assassinated him when he was traveling by motorcycle on the road that leads from Tarazá to La Caucana Township.



Alleged responsible: Paramilitary

December 10, 2019

JHON JAIRO BALLESTEROS BALAGUERA

JAC Prosecutor, Alto Satoca village

Saravena, Arauca

Jhon Jairo Ballesteros Balaguera, 38 years old, was prosecutor of the Community Action Board of the Alto Satoca village and made a living out of construction work.

He was kidnapped between the neighborhoods La Unión and La Cumbre de Saravena on December 3 and murdered on December 10. His murder was the third recorded in the municipality during one week. There is presence of armed groups in the area, such as the National Liberation Army –ELN– and FARC dissidence.

Alleged responsible: FARC dissidence



December 12, 2019

LUIS CARLOS HERNÁNDEZ SANTIAGO

Representative of the Departmental Table of Victims Participation

Curumaní, Cesar

Luis Carlos Hernández Santiago was a candidate for the Council, legal representative of the Association of Farmers Producers and Ranchers of Santa Isabel –ASOCAPROGA– representative of the Departmental Table of Participation of Victims, and member of the Regional Peasant Table of Perijá –MRCP–. He was 42 years old by the time of his decease. He had been leading land recovery processes in the Township of Santa Isabel since 2016.



He was murdered while he was riding a motorcycle with a family member. Men with firearms shot against them repeatedly, thus causing his death and injuring his relative in the act.

The Human Rights and Territories table stated that Luis Carlos Hernández and other representatives of Cesar, received threats from illegal armed groups of a paramilitary nature.

Alleged responsible: EPL

December 13, 2019

YERSON OSWALDO ZUÑIGA ANACONA
Founder of the Los Pinos village
Bolívar, Cauca

Unknown persons took the life of Yerson Oswaldo Zuñiga in the municipality of Bolívar, Cauca. Yerson was a peasant leader, defender of community rights and founder of the Los Pinos village. He was part of the Community Action Board of the La Caldera village.

The murder occurred when he was in his place of residence, accompanied by family members. Armed men arrived at the scene and attacked them with a firearm. The leader and his brother died instantly, while a pregnant woman was injured.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



December 15, 2019

CRISTIAN ANDRÉS VITONAS YATACUÉ

**Member of the Avelino UI Indigenous Association
Toribío, Cauca**

21-year-old human rights defender Cristian Andrés Vitonas Yatacué was a member of the Avelino UI Indigenous Association, an organization that articulates the Popular Unity Process of the Colombian Southwest –PUPSOC– and the Cauca Patriotic March Social and Political Coordination.



Cristian Andrés Vitonas Yatacué was in a community celebration, when three unknown men broke in, opening fire against him, thus causing his death. Cristian Andrés became the third member of the Avelino UI Association executed in the course of three months.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

December 20, 2019

NATALIA JIMÉNEZ

**Member of the Natura Foundation
Santa Marta, Magdalena**

Natalia Jiménez, 35, was an anthropologist, ecologist, leader and environmental defender, who belonged to the Natura Foundation, where she was the director of the Magdalena Cauca Vive project (*Magdalena Cauca Lives*).



On December 20, when Natalia and her husband were mobilizing through the Palomino Township in La Guajira, unknown persons approached and kidnapped them. On December 23, their lifeless bodies were found, displaying obvious signs of torture.

Alleged responsible: Unknown

December 21, 2019

JAIRO ORTIZ

**Indigenous guard
Iquira, Huila**

Jairo Ortiz worked as a NASA indigenous guard of the Huila reservation, Río Negro Township.

Armed men on motorcycles arrived at his workplace in the urban center of Río Negro with the intention of murdering him. The leader was shot multiple times while trying to escape.

The Association of Traditional Authorities of the Regional Indigenous Council of Huila –CRIHU–, reported that Jairo Ortiz, as well as the coordinator of the Huila regional guard and directors of the organization, had received threats and been victims of attacks by members of the Dagoberto Ramos column of the FARC dissidence.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



December 22, 2019

MARTHA CECILIA PÉREZ GIRALDO

**Member of the AMAR Association
Saravena, Arauca**

40 year-old Martha Cecilia Pérez Giraldo focused her work on defending the rights of women and children affected by domestic violence. She was a member of the Association Amanecer de Mujeres por Arauca –AMAR– (*Women's Daybreak For Arauca Association*) and of the Departmental Network of Entrepreneur Women.

The leader was killed with a firearm and her body was found in the La Unión sector. The same day, in different events, her sister was also murdered in Saravena.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



December 22, 2019

NILSON RICHARD CAICEDO

Member of the Community Council for the Development of Black Communities Mocoa, Putumayo

Nilson Richard Caicedo was a member of the Community Council for the Development of Black Communities in La Cordillera, teacher and social leader in the Bajo Patía region.

In the exercise of his leadership work, he was threatened and attacked on several occasions. Months before his murder, he denounced threats against him and was forced to leave his territory, which is why protection measures were assigned to him.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



December 23, 2019

LUCY VILLARREAL

Member of the Indoamerican Cultural Foundation Tumaco, Nariño

Lucy Villarreal was a 32 year-old artist, activist, member of the Indoamerican Cultural Foundation and one of the promoters of the Black and White Carnival. In her activity, she highlighted and vindicated the work of human rights defenders in the territory. She was murdered in the Llorente Township, when she was leaving the place to teach an art workshop with children from the area.

There is presence of different armed groups in the zone which dispute over the control of the territory.

Alleged responsible: Unknown



December 25, 2019

REINALDO CARRILLO VERA

**National Association of Peasant Users
of Colombia –ANUC–
Pitalito, Huila**

Reinaldo Carrillo Vera was a peasant leader, member of the peace committee of the National Association of Peasant Users of Colombia –ANUC–. In addition, he accompanied a group of families in the process of land allocation by the government.

The leader was assassinated at the age of 38 in the Los Pinos neighborhood, municipality of Pitalito, when he was sharing with family members at his place of residence. Armed men on motorcycles disrupted the scene and shot against him.



Alleged responsible: Unknown



CHAPTER 1 To the rhythm of pans

On November 21, 2019 –*A date later reminisced as 21N*– a new story was written in the history of social mobilization in Colombia. Social organizations and civil society centered disagreements and frustrations accumulated for a long time around something they called **Paro Nacional** (*National Strike*), a citizen demonstration that aroused an unprecedented expectation and that sprouted amidst a wave of protests in different countries of the continent. Although initially it emerged as a protest against some economic measures of the Iván Duque government, in particular, a possible labor, pension and tax reform, and due to the non-compliance of agreements with students against the budget of public universities, it quickly added many more voices from all the sectors that adhered to the same call, demanding to be heard.

Like no other demonstration in Colombia, the National Strike succeeded in uniting diverse social and political groups, both those who have been demanding rights for decades and thousands of people who were taking on the streets for the first time. They all did so out of a common feeling: Discontent and disappointment over a government that is suffering blindness, a government that is reluctant to see what is really happening in the country, and over policies that have historically left a large part of the population on the margins of the country, in the grip of inequality and violence.

Thousands of people, in different cities of the country, took to the streets on November 21, in massive and peaceful marches that showed the geography of inequality in Colombia². From north to south, the lack of the social rule of law in the regions became visible. Abandoned communities, unsatisfied basic needs, a degraded armed conflict, a confined civilian population at high risk and a government with policies disconnected from reality, administering for the economic elites, but showing in the speeches of high officials, empty words for a country that exists only in their imagination. These were some of the causes that fed the dissatisfaction and the urgency to go out and be finally heard.

Although the history of inequality became the main driving force behind the protests that originated with the National Strike, the feeling of misgovernment since the change of presidency was the trigger. Since 2018, with the beginning of the new administration, a feeling of unease has spread among the population, a feeling that has increased with the passing of the weeks and with each new decision made by President Du-

² BBC NEWS. November 30, 2019. *National strike in Colombia: how the protests are being experienced (and what they are asking for) in some of the most neglected regions of the country*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50606535>

que. Contradictory speeches by his officials, an image of inexperience to rule, political decisions that speak of a government working behind the backs of the population and the non-explicit but clear position of ignoring the Peace Agreement with the demobilized FARC guerrillas, resulted in all the historical demands being personified in Iván Duque³, which, by the way, was reflected in his low popularity according to surveys, such as the one carried out in December, in which his approval rating was 28%, the lowest for a president in the last two decades⁴.

During the months prior to the 21N mobilization, several events occurred that accelerated an already convulsed reality. Among them, the resignation of District Attorney Néstor Humberto Martínez, who was involved in corruption controversies: The revelation of directives in the Army to double the number of casualties, which generated the conditions for extrajudicial executions. The indigenous and peasant Minga in Cauca that took place for over a month. The bombing by the Armed Forces in Caquetá against a camp of a FARC dissidence group in which at least eight minors were killed and that led to the resignation of Defense Minister Guillermo Botero and a significant increase in attacks

against human rights defenders, in the absence of guarantees to protect their lives.

Among all of the motivations for the 21N mobilization, one that with no doubt strongly encouraged it was the denunciation of the constant aggressions and murders against human rights defenders. During the previous months, several demonstrations for the same cause were held inside and outside of the country, adding up solidarity and voices in the defense of life and demanding guarantees of security that have not existed in the territories. Since the beginning of the strike, many more people joined this same call, with an unexpected intensity and will.

The initial mobilization reached out to millions of people with an unusual spirit for claiming their rights and, by all means, expressing their voice of discontent. That energy fueled what was to come after the march on 21N. Within hours after the end of the manifestations, the sound of pots and pans began to invade the streets. The repression of the police and the ESMAD against the protesters that was experienced during the day in a large part of the country, drove people in different cities, in all sectors, to go out to their parks, doors and windows with kitchen elements in hand, to join a spontaneously occurring ‘Cacerolazo’⁵, which, for several hours, summoned thousands of people who

³ El País Newspaper. Noviembre 23, 2019. *Why did Colombia start burning?* Available at: https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/11/22/america/1574397449_439486.html

⁴ CNN Español. December 4, 2019. *Iván Duque is Colombia's most unpopular president in decades.* Available at: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2018/12/04/ivan-duque-es-el-presidente-colombiano-mas-impopular-en-decadas/>

⁵ El Espectador Newspaper. November 21, 2019. *Historic National 'Cacerolazo'.* Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/bogota/noche-de-cacerolazos-en-bogota-ciudadanos-respaldan-el-paro-nacional-articulo-892276>

in addition to demonstrating against the government, conferred great legitimacy to the strike.

Although many had expected that, as it usually happens in Colombia, the demonstration would die out as quickly as it started, against all odds the streets were filled again the next day and in the days that followed. Permanently for a month, the mobilizations broke out spontaneously and the pans continued to rattle every night attracting more and more people, until it took on a festive tinge amidst the indignation.

The pots and pans marked the history of a country without a tradition of massive manifestations, especially for such a long period, and turned an action that at first was thought to be momentary into something historical⁶. Something awakened within Colombians on the 21N, a strength that allowed them to think about collective work as something possible. During the following weeks in the streets, houses, corners, at any moment, a subtle or massive demonstration could appear, tens or hundreds of people were in charge of keeping alive every day the desire of millions to raise their voices and finally be heard.

However, what was inevitable for many not to hear, for a government submerged in blindness it was just a distant and uncomfortable noise, easy to ignore. Since October, when

the strike was first announced, different sectors that were afraid of the demonstrations have concentrated on stigmatizing the march on November 21, by linking the strike and its organizers to other types of interests and to illegal armed groups, and by trying to delegitimize it, denying all the reasons for it; what this denial really reflected was fear of society. The great acceptance supporting the strike caused the Government to react disproportionately. Days before it began, Bogotá was militarized, 350 military personnel from different parts of Cundinamarca arrived to the city apparently to support the National Police⁷. To this image of a capital city full of armed men, prepared for the worst, was added disinformation about the reasons for the strike on WhatsApp threads, messages on social networks and speeches by politicians claiming that social protest was at the service of violence and was part of a wave of demonstrations to destabilize the region⁸.

Although the 21N march occurred peacefully, in several cities clashes with the police and the ESMAD made it to the headlines. The excessive use of force also appeared in the middle of a journey in which people were protesting in the streets until

⁶ BBC World News. November 22, 2019. *National Strike in Colombia: Three unprecedented factors that made November 21 a historic day*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50520302>

⁷ O70. UniAndes. Tania Tapia Jaúregui. November 18, 2019. *Why are they so afraid?* Available at: <https://cerosetenta.unian-des.edu.co/paro-nacional-miedo/>

⁸ Semana Magazine. November 20, 2019. *What is the Sao Paulo Forum, which is linked to the protests in Chile or Colombia?* Available at: <https://www.semana.com/mundo/articulo/que-es-el-foro-de-sao-paulo-al-que-vinculan-con-las-protestas-en-chile-o-colombia/640982>

late at night. The next day the energy of the previous day was still alive, and people again took to the streets, however, in Bogotá, messages began to circulate early on about possible looting in residential and commercial areas. There were videos, calls, publications on social networks that warned of a wave of massive robberies that would occur in different neighborhoods, as was the case in the city of Cali⁹ the day before. In addition to the alerts that generated collective panic, the National Government¹⁰ declared a curfew in Bogotá and thousands of military personnel patrolled the streets supposedly to control acts of vandalism in the city, which were never confirmed.

Many doubts remained about this decision, an extreme measure supported by unverified facts and that apparently aimed, in the process, to lower the intensity of the demonstrations. Even so, they did not achieve their purpose either, because that same night, from their homes, the people made their pots and pans heard again, to tell the Government that it was not a temporary demand. The energy was concentrated on claiming their rights and removing the thick blindfold that covers the eyes of the Government.

Although the same night of the curfew the president announced the possibility of dialogue with the protesting sectors of the strike, a meeting that he called the Great National Conversation, this space in which the sectors that convened the strike participated and that was marked by their resistance and differences with the government¹¹.

What would come days after curfew would be much more complex. The next day, on November 23, in the middle of a peaceful demonstration, the student Dilan Cruz was hit in the head by a gunshot fired directly and intentionally by an ESMAD¹² agent, which would leave him in a critical state and days later cause his death. This fact, added to the other complaints of excessive use of force by the public forces, gave many more reasons for people to go ahead and pursue their demands; an impulse that allowed the pots to go off during the following weeks. The streets to continue to be full of people who went out every day during mornings and nights to march, to make sit-ins, to demonstrate with music and dance. The NASA Indigenous Guard themselves joined the strike and 150 of its members traveled

⁹ El Espectador. November 27, 2019. *The aftermath of the collective panic in Cali and Bogotá*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/investigacion/la-trasescena-del-panico-colectivo-en-cali-y-bogota-articulo-893174>

¹⁰ El Tiempo. November 22, 2019. *Live: Curfew in Bogotá; Duque calls for National Dialogue*. Available at: <https://www.eltiempo.com/vida/educacion/en-vivo-siga-el-estado-de-las-principales-ciudades-del-pais-tras-el-paro-nacional-436190>

¹¹ El Espectador. March 18, 2020. *The Great National Conversation: What has happened four months later?* Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/la-gran-conversacion-nacional-que-ha-pasado-cuatro-meses-despues-articulo-909816>

¹² El Tiempo. November 23, 2019. *The Prosecutor General's Office Opens Investigation after a young man was injured during Marches Bogotá*. Available at: <https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/video-del-joven-herido-en-protestas-de-bogota-autoridades-investigacion-el-hecho-436704>

led to Bogotá to take part in the demonstrations¹³, support that invigorated the reason for those who had not stopped protesting for days. Apparently, the premise was to not stay at home and be part of the change.

The government's silence in the face of this outburst of voices was the most shocking and disconcerting. Evasiveness, lack of response, insufficient and superficial measures in the face of the background of the demands and disregard for the mobilizations¹⁴ characterized the institutional position. An arbitrary attitude in the face of transcendental concerns that affect the lives of people and communities throughout the country, and even more unfair, if one considers the dimension of the demonstrations and the high effort of the participants to make all the demands around peaceful expressions. Despite the disconnection between the reality that is lived in the streets and the reality that the Government wants to see, the millions of voices added over time to an unprecedented mobilization, have demonstrated unknown capacities to unite a country around the demand for collective rights.

Although there are many sectors present in the demonstrations and many requests, there are two underlying issues: inequality and peace, which have been at the heart of social mobilization in Colombia for decades. This is not the first time that these issues have been raised, but it is the strongest time that the voice of a society exhausted by social injustice has been heard. Peace, in particular, has been one of the most important concerns for civil society, especially in recent years, after signing the Peace Agreement with the FARC, a pact that the current government is simulating to implement, affecting entire regions, their communities and leaders, who saw in it the possibility of improving living conditions and security. It is clear to Colombian society that failure to comply with the Agreement has a direct impact on the escalation of the conflict in the territories and the unstoppable violence against human rights defenders. These latter sentiments were undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the National Strike, despite the deep blindness in which the National Government lives.

¹³ Semana Magazine. December 4, 2019. *In photographs: The Indigenous Guard marches against violence*. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/galeria/guardia-indigena-se-suma-en-bogota-al-paro-nacional/643413>

¹⁴ Vanguardia Newspaper. December 1, 2019. *"This is not a matter of giving in": President Iván Duque about the National Strike*. Available at: <https://www.vanguardia.com/politica/este-no-es-un-asunto-de-ceder-presidente-ivan-duque-sobre-el-paro-nacional-XD1731303>



Blindness

1. There is nothing left from “The Pact for Life”

“Pact for Life” is how the Government of Iván Duque called its mandate; consequently, both the inaugural speech on August 7, 2018 and the Development Plan bore that name. However, one year and eight months later, neither concept has managed to mature.

At the time of writing this report, no pact called for by the current Government has crystallized and it could not have been otherwise, because the governing party, the Democratic Centre, knows nothing about alliances and agreements, basic precepts for democracy and understanding with other political parties and sectors, and social movements. In fact, the proposed agreements were left in the Development Plan. This is the case of the “Pact for the Life and Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders”, signed in San José de Apartadó on August 23, 2018. Of this pact, only the name survives. A pretext for the title of some documents published by the Department of Human Rights and the Ministry of Interior the previous year.

A pact for life is, in essence, a call to stop violence. All kinds of violence. In this case, the one exercised against human rights defenders, and given that the initiative was led by the National Government and some State entities, such as the Prosecutor General’s

Office and the Ombudsman’s Office, its implications go beyond a simple statement. This means that the Government is the first to be called upon to set an example in the fight against crime, against the corruption that favors violence, and to put entities such as the Public Force and policies of guarantees in the different territories of the country at the service of peace and tranquility. However, such has not been the case and, on the contrary, a detailed reading of the context of 2019, indicates that the Public Force is not acting to prevent the exponential growth of paramilitary groups and FARC dissidence, which has allowed contexts of violence favorable to the attack of social leaderships, as it will be shown later.

Within the framework of the *Pact for Life of social leaders*, it would be expected that cases of aggression against these people would decrease substantially. However, this was not the case, despite the insistence of the National Government; in the words of President Iván Duque himself: *“We had a year with great advances in security. It was the year with the fewest kidnappings since 1984. We had one of the lowest homicide rates in years, and although all the murders hurt us, especially those of people who dedicate their lives to working for others, I want to emphasize that in 2019 we had a 25% reduction in the murders of social leaders and that in 94% of the municipalities there were no*

crimes against them¹⁵. Moreover, the then Human Rights Advisor and now Attorney General of the Nation, Francisco Barbosa, went even further by stating that the reduction in the murder of social leaders was 47% between January and October 2019¹⁶, to show that the Government's policy was working very well and thus underestimate the seriousness of the phenomenon. Even at the beginning of 2020, against all evidence, the Government continued to insist on a substantial decrease of 25%, and even showed itself to be dissatisfied with that percentage, as reflected in this statement: "a reduction of the murders of social leaders close to 25%. That figure, of course, does not exactly fill us with contentment"¹⁷.

However, everything turned out to be false, as evidenced in the various reports, such as the one from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (official sour-

ce of the Government and the Prosecutor's Office): In their report on the human rights situation during 2019 documented 108 cases of murder, 2 less than those recorded in 2018, which means that the reduction did not even reach 2%¹⁸.

Meanwhile, for other sources of information monitoring that reality, the situation was even more critical. This is the case of the Ombudsman's Office, which recorded 134 cases of murder in 2019¹⁹, and the Somos Defensores Program, which confirmed 124 cases, as described later in this report. In any case, these are dishonorable figures for a country that is supposed to be moving towards post-conflict.

2. Public policy: The Blindness of a Conpes

Furthermore, within the framework of the Pact for Life, the Government committed itself to developing a public policy to protect social leadership. However, this step was not necessary, since the Peace Agreement includes in its content a public policy framework for the guarantees of these people, vulnerable communities and ex-combatants, as we have explained several times in these pages.

¹⁵ RCN Radio. December 31, 2019. *Duque says that by 2020 the number of troops to ensure security in the cities will increase*. Available at: <https://www.rcnradio.com/politica/duque-dice-que-en-2020-se-aumentara-el-pie-de-fuerza-en-las-ciudades>

¹⁶ Presidency of the Republic. October 23, 2019. *The Counselor for Human Rights revealed that there is a 47% reduction in homicides of social leaders in Colombia*. Available at: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2019/reduccion-del-47-homicidios-lideres-sociales-Colombia-Consejero-Defensa-Derechos-Humanos.aspx>

¹⁷ Semana Magazine. September 1, 2019. *Duque declares himself dissatisfied with the 25% reduction in murders of social leaders*. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/duque-se-declara-no-complacido-con-reduccion-de-25-en-asesinatos-de-lideres-sociales/647501>

¹⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights *Annual Report 2019*. February 25, 2020. <https://www.hchr.org.co/index.php/informes-y-documentos/informes-anuales/9136-informe-del-alto-comisionado-de-las-naciones-unidas-para-los-derechos-humanos-sobre-la-situacion-de-derechos-humanos-en-colombia-durante-el-ano2019>, Chapter III, paragraphs 16 and 17.

¹⁹ Intervention by the Vice Ombudsman, Jorge Enrique Calero, in a virtual session of the Peace Commission of the Senate of the Republic on 2 April 2020.

In spite of this, human rights platforms and other social sectors made an effort and agreed to sit down to discuss a comprehensive policy for human rights defenders with the Ministry of the Interior, with the idea that it would reflect what was established in the Peace Agreement. From the beginning of the process, dissent rather than identities stood out. With difficulties, progress was made in the methodology, but in the end, it was not achieved for many reasons (which will be explained later). Above all, because it was ethically impossible to work with a government that was contrary to the demands of the human rights movement, such as to not militarize the territories anymore, and to stop the war and the violence. The Government, on the contrary, bombed a camp where minors were being held in Caquetá, did nothing to stop the massacre of the NASA indigenous people in Northern Cauca where Governor Cristina Bautista Taquinás was murdered along with the guards accompanying her, and furthermore, criminalized social protest.

In addition to this context, there are other reasons that motivated human rights platforms and other sectors of the social movement to interrupt the dialogue:

First, the Ministry of Interior imposed from the beginning that the policy should be a Conpes, there was no possibility for the organizations to propose their claims, even though the platforms and social sectors considered that it was a very weak and “toothless” political instrument and that it would not have the legal muscle to confront criminality against human rights defenders. Conpes is

a tool for developing economic and social policies, consisting mainly of programs, which in this case, will not affect in any way the insecure territorial contexts where social leadership is exercised. It is necessary to remember that the Ministry of Interior and many mayors’ offices and governorates have prevention plans on file, elaborated by experts with much dedication and international cooperation support; however, the magnitude of violence in the territories, left these instruments without value or capacity.

Second, the government also imposed the time frame, since Conpes had to be elaborated with low participation and in a short period of time. For the Government it was more important to publish Conpes on December 10, the International Human Rights Day, than its content itself. This implied planning in record time territorial workshops, meetings and discussions without enough time to study, analyze, propose and collect information; a really “schizophrenic” process, which generated unnecessary wear and tear both in the organizations and in the Ministry itself.

Thirdly, the Government centred the arguments for the value of Conpes on two theses: one, that certain economic resources could be gathered for its implementation, given the presence of the National Planning Department and, two, for the same reason, Conpes would be fulfilled, as it would have management indicators. To this the organizations responded with two counter-arguments: first, the dismantling of crime depends more on the political will and focus of a government than on the economic resources it has, and Conpes is not the normative

instrument to confront it. Second, the Peace Agreement also had a Conpes document (3932) and yet this government did not implement it, so its execution depends more on political will than on indicators of execution and appropriation of resources.

However, the scope of Conpes is quite limited, both for other State bodies such as the Attorney General's Office, but also for other ministerial levels, for example, the Ministry of Defense and the Public Force. Consequently, it is not understandable how a Conpes would influence a criminal policy and the generation of public policy capacity to create the guarantees for the exercise of the defense of human rights.

Fourth, in the development of the express process, the Ministry prepared a base document (diagnosis of the situation, causes generating criminality, violent actors) to be discussed and to find contributions from society. The basic differences were substantial and, of course, the organizations wanted their opinions and statistics to be taken into account as well. The government decided not to give in, because, supposedly, only official figures can be included in a Conpes document and other non-governmental sources had no place in it. In addition, the document could have a maximum of 10 pages, a summary that left out the contributions of the organizations. The solution proposed by the Government was to make an annex, which would not be part of Conpes. In reality, the greatest concern of many organizations was, from the beginning, that the participation of the territorial organizations would be exploited through the workshops. That is to

say, that the Government had accepted this social exchange to comply with the requirement of participation in the construction of a public policy, rather than from a sincere and genuine feeling of what this should mean for the construction of such policies. From the beginning, it was clear that the Government intended to maintain its own unchangeable vision of the problem, and that the structural proposals for social participation would have no effect on the outcome of Conpes. This hypothesis can be corroborated by reading the *Framework of the Policy of Guarantees* published by the Ministry of Interior in December 2019²⁰.

Fifth, the Ministry sets as a precedent and positive reference the Conpes 3955²¹ (Communal Conpes) *Strategy for strengthening Community Action in Colombia*. However, there is nothing special or exceptional about this Conpes, its content is the extension of existing ordinary policies for all citizens of popular sectors in the country. It is a compendium of common statements that in no way will strengthen the Community Action Boards and even less will it provide them with the integral protection or guarantees to avoid their high criminalization. In other words, it is a compendium of proposals and possibilities so that the communal people can access issues

²⁰ Ministry of Interior. *Public policy framework of integral protection and guarantees for social and community leaders, journalists and human rights defenders*. Bogotá. National Press. December, 2019.

²¹ Conpes document 3955 "Strategy for the strengthening of Community Action in Colombia". National Planning Department, Ministry of Interior. Approved version, Bogotá, December 31, 2018.

such as competitions for allocations in the SENA, credits in the National Savings Fund, incentives for the leadership of women and young people, technical assistance for two productive projects per year. In conclusion, a document with few strengths to be considered a reference in the construction of a policy of guarantees for other social leaderships and for journalists.

Regarding the issue of protection, the community-based Conpes promises the same institutional offer for all sectors at risk: prevention from the Timely Action Plan –PAO–, risk studies by the National Protection Unit, National Police rounds, attendance at working tables to identify the problem, etc. In other words, nothing different from what already exists, which for the community members has not been effective, as this is one of the sectors most affected by violence against human rights defenders. In fact, in 2019 it was the type of leadership with the most cases of murder, (based on the figures in our Information System) with 33 cases out of a total of 124 registered.

To summarize, a Conpes does not go beyond the level of physical and material protection that the Colombian State has today, and no matter how much that policy framework is strengthened (for example, with more resources for the UNP) it is no more than that, physical protection. This, as it has been mentioned so many times before, does not solve the problem because it does not generate the conditions of human security guarantees that the country requires. In other words, it does not stop the phenomenon of criminality and can instead

contribute to prolonging it. An example of this situation becomes evident in the words of the former Minister of the Interior, Nancy Patricia Gutiérrez, when she said “At this moment there are 7,400 people with security schemes, **including 4,500 social leaders**” –the use of bold format is ours–²² and it is estimated that between 2016 and early 2020, at least 515 leaders have been murdered.

Sixth, to these differences in form and content was added the deterioration of territorial contexts, especially due to violence against indigenous peoples and peasants, closely linked to the substitution of illicit crops; in addition to humanitarian crises, the exponential growth of armed groups (paramilitarism and dissidents) with the passivity or complicity of the National Government and the Military Forces, and the corruption scandals of the latter. The human rights platforms, the Agrarian Summit and other social sectors were clear from the beginning of the process, and stated that in parallel to the process, the Government should show its democratic calling, which would be reflected in the improvement of the territorial contexts in terms of human rights²³. However, the opposite happened.

²² Presidency of the Republic. *The Interior Ministry reported that 4,500 social leaders have security schemes from the National Protection Unit*. May 6, 2019 Available at: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2019/190506-Un-total-4500-lid-eres-sociales-tienen-esquemas-seguridad-Unidad-Nacional-Proteccion-Ministerio-Interior.aspx>

²³ Confluence. *The Confluence suspends its participation in the process of formulating the Integral Public Policy of Respect and Guarantees for the work*

For the social and human rights movement, the Peace Agreement signed between the government and the former FARC guerrillas has a more far-reaching public policy framework (decree-laws), which is binding and focuses on guarantees of human security, to deal with organized crime that attacks social leadership. Moreover, it could be understood that the Conpes under construction should develop this peace policy framework. However, the National Government dismisses these instruments of the policy of guarantees of the Peace Agreement. And if they happen to mention them in the framework of the policy, they do so in an instrumental way to simulate that they indeed take them into account, but in practice, they do not implement them. This is the case with the National Commission on Security Guarantees, which took away its character of public policy constructor for dismantling paramilitarism, and now considers it as a merely consultative commission, even below the PAO, which is a simple plan with no binding conditions.

3. The blind accounting of the National Government

In order to face the debate publicly, the National Government decided, through the Department of Human Rights, to carry out its own diagnosis of the situation of aggression against social leaders, without having its own

information system, but based on the figures provided by the Attorney General's Office. At the same time, they take those from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia –OHCHR–. Nevertheless, the analyses they present are far from those carried out by other state institutions such as the Ombudsman's Office, civil society organizations and even begin to differ from the OHCHR.

The first observation to mention is that, for the national government, there is only one aggression against human rights defenders, and that is murder. The rest of the aggressions are left out of context, which has implications for public policy, since no priority is given to the prevention of other types of violence such as threats, attacks, theft of sensitive information, legal proceedings or sexual violence. This point is very important, since limiting the harassment suffered by human rights defenders exclusively to murder means that the policy is reduced and directed only to a problem of physical security. Particularly, military and police security, thus depoliticizing the problem of more structural contexts and social injustice, which are precisely the generators of this violence, and which must therefore involve basic measures (guarantees). This is also evident in the Government's insistence on reducing the problem to 75 municipalities out of Colombia's 1,103, where cases are murders, exclusively. Consequently, the policy would be directed solely at these few municipalities, leaving aside a broader approach to it.

A second problematic issue in the reading made by the Government is

of the Defense of HUMAN RIGHTS. November 5, 2019. Available at: <http://www.comitedesolidaridad.com/es/content/la-confluencia-suspende-su-participaci%C3%B3n-en-el-proceso-de-formulaci%C3%B3n-de-la-pol%C3%ADtica-p%C3%B3blica>

that it limits the risks to social leaders in a territory, exclusively to three factors: presence of Organized Armed Groups, illegal mining and drug trafficking. This is undoubtedly a very partial diagnosis, given that they do not present other important variables in the territorial contexts. There is no analysis about disputes over land and its use, the exploitation of other resources (including legal mining), megaprojects related to hydroelectric plants and dams, and serious allegations of corruption.

We insist, the arguments are very narrow, because by limiting exclusively to reasons of drug trafficking, illegal mining and Organized Armed Groups, the complexity of the territories is disregarded. Territories where the struggle for land is central and the defense of the communities against the very great voracity of extractive activities is enormous. Nor is there any mention of the role of the State in its responsibility by omission for not guaranteeing the lives of the people in the territories. It is a reductionist vision of the problem that, without a doubt, directs the measures to be taken within public policy towards one side alone, which as we have already seen is reduced to militarization, police actions and restrictions of freedom, leaving aside integral guarantees and important investments to attack the factors that generate structural and cultural violence, which also provoke the direct violence experienced by the leaderships and communities.

Regarding what they call Organized Armed Groups –GAO–, it should be noted that if these groups have grown and become exponentially stronger, the responsibility falls directly on the

National Government, to the extent that it does not show concrete results to combat or dismantle them. On the contrary, there are facts in some territories that would show some complicity with them carried out by the Public Force. Therefore, to accuse drug trafficking of criminalizing social leadership, evading its responsibility to combat the scourge, is questionable and empty²⁴.

As for the phenomenon of illegal mining, it is also a very limited reading and does not take into account various studies on the many environmental conflicts in Colombia, which are not exclusively subject to illegal mining, such as those conducted by the Rosario University under the direction of the expert Gloria Amparo Rodríguez. She has documented 230 cases of environmental conflicts with official sources and communities in the national territory, which have dossiers²⁵. Thus, in many territories, diverse conflicts (over land, corruption, exploitation of natural resources) are overlapping with drug trafficking, and the government only refers to it as the trigger for violence in order to provide anti-narcotic treatment and avoid the

²⁴ Colombia Europe United States Coordination. *Militarization, paramilitarization and denial of protection of the economic and social state of emergency*. April, 2020. Available at: <https://coeuropa.org.co/militarizacion-paramilitarizacion-y-negacion-al-amparo-del-estado-de-emergencia-economica-y-social/>

²⁵ El Espectador. "Colombia is the country with the most environmental conflicts in the world": Gloria Amparo Rodríguez. October 17, 2019. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/medio-ambiente/colombia-es-el-pais-con-mas-conflictos-ambientales-del-mundo-gloria-amparo-rodriguez-articulo-886458>

remaining tensions affecting social activists.

In the face of drug trafficking, the Government places all the emphasis on the murder of social leaders, but says nothing about its direct responsibility in this regard. On the one hand, it is clear that the Government of Iván Duque has failed to implement the Peace Agreement, point four of which was aimed at transforming the conditions of the illegal economy resulting from drug trafficking. In this sense, an essential issue is that related to the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops -PNIS-, to which many families in the country adhered in hope of making a transition and accessing plans that would allow them to improve their living and security conditions. But, contrary to expectations, the communities have had to face a slow implementation of the Program and a lack of financing that complicates the situation even more, since by 2020 the budget has been allocated around one billion pesos less than what is required for its implementation²⁶.

On the other hand, there is a growth in the number of actors who thrive on drug trafficking and encourage it. This is the case of paramilitary groups and FARC dissidents, which, as already mentioned, execute their activities in highly militarized territories such as Cauca, where these groups have been expanding their radius of action both in the south of the department and in Algeria, El Tambo, Balboa,

Patía, but also in northern territories such as Suárez, Buenos Aires, Santander de Quilichao, Caloto, Toribío, Corinto, Jambaló and Tacueyó. In all these municipalities the number of murders and threats against social leaders is very high. An example of this violence is the massacre of the indigenous Nasa governor Cristina Bautista Taquinás and four members of the indigenous guard in 2019. Also, it is necessary to point out that during 2019, at least 18 Nasa indigenous leaders were murdered. Given this panorama, it is worth asking this question: what is the role of the Public Force? Now, if it is true, as the Government states, that the problem is limited to a small number of municipalities, why are they unable to control it?

4. The usual short-sighted proposals

One would think that with the signing of the “Pact for Life” in August 2018, the policy of guarantees for human rights defenders would improve, so that the indicators of violence would decrease. A year and a half later there is nothing new, the same measures and proposals remain as always and the indicators keep moving up. The militarization of the territories and the material and police protection are reaffirmed as the only ways to guarantee the life of human rights defenders, without good results, as analyzed in this section.

The militarization of the territories was the first measure implemented by the Government, despite coming from a period of signing a peace agreement that sought just the opposite, to reduce the military footprint in the territories, lower the defense bud-

²⁶ Ideas for Peace Foundation: *How to achieve the reduction of illicit crops in 2020?* January 7, 2020. Available at: <http://www.idea-spaz.org/publications/posts/1806>

get and strengthen political and social powers in the regions. One of the first announcements made by the Government of Iván Duque was to reinforce the region of Catatumbo²⁷ with five thousand more men. It did the same, with at least 2,500 military personnel, for Northern Cauca, when FARC dissidents assassinated Governor Nasa, Cristina Bautista and four indigenous guards in October of 2019²⁸. However, these regions have not ceased violence or the expansion of drug trafficking, leaving more questions than certainties about the usefulness of militarization and defense expenditure. According to the OHCHR, quoting the Institute of Forensic Medicine, 66 members of the Nasa indigenous people in northern Cauca were murdered in 2019²⁹, an increase of 52% in the number of murders in this community, compared to 2018.

Even with these disastrous results of the National Government facing violence against social activists and manipulated figures, President Duque announced the increase of the military footprint for the whole coun-

try during 2020: *"We are aware that we must work with greater energy to have safer cities. For this reason, in 2020 we will increase our support in the cities and we have proposed a Policy of Coexistence and Integral Citizen Security, which, rooted in the Constitution and human rights, will address the challenges that come with being a more urban, more modern country with new social aspirations"*³⁰.

Thus, he insists on presenting it in more recent documents such as the aforementioned policy framework for social leaders, according to which the State will be brought to the territories in an "integral" manner. However, it only mentions the policies of defense and national security and of coexistence and citizen security, as stated in the National Development Plan in a prose that is more discursive than real, of development with equity, etc. It mixes in an improvised way the policies of the Peace Agreement with those of this Government, with results that will surely not be the best for the social leaderships. For example, it speaks of the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach –PDET–, but in the following line it evokes Law 1941 of 2018 (of public order) and its Strategic Zones of Integral Intervention, –ZEII– or future zones. Up to this point, the novelty is that the PDET

²⁷ El Heraldo Newspaper. *Duque orders 5,000 soldiers to be deployed to the Venezuelan border to fight drug traffickers*. October 26, 2018. Available at: <https://www.elheraldo.co/colombia/duque-ordena-desplegar-5000-soldados-en-frontera-con-venezuela-para-combatir-narcos-559374>

²⁸ El País Newspaper. *With 2,500 uniformed personnel, they will reinforce security in Cauca after the massacre of indigenous people*. October 30, 2019. Available at: <https://www.elpais.com.co/judicial/mejoraremos-la-articulacion-de-las-autoridades-para-defender-la-region-duque.html>

²⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Op.cit., Chapter VII, paragraph 82.

³⁰ Presidency of the Republic. *President Duque announces that in 2020, there will be an increase in the number of troops to ensure security in the cities and highlights the policy of Coexistence and Citizen Security*. December 31, 2019. Available at: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2019/Presidente-Duque-anuncia-que-en-2020-habra-aumento-del-pie-de-fuerza-en-ciudades-y-destaca-politica-de-Convivencia-191231.aspx>

territories keep their names and become ZEII, making a mockery of the Peace Agreement. However, there is nothing new regarding the guarantees of social leadership.

Meanwhile, the Government continues to focus on physical protection as the only option for guaranteeing the lives of human rights defenders, and this is confirmed in documents such as the National Development Plan, the Timely Action Plan, Conpes 3995 (communal) and the public policy framework for social leaders. To this end, it carried out a re-engineering of the National Protection Unit, a proposal analyzed in the report *“Defenders - The End Game?”*³¹ which

has not had any impact on reducing violence against these people, but it is assumed that there is a focus of corruption within the institution.

In this aspect, there is nothing new. The human rights movement insists on the urgency of moving from the policy of physical and material protection, which does not solve the basic problem and on the contrary helps to perpetuate it, to the guarantees of human security, which imply transformation of the contexts, dismantling of paramilitarism, in-depth investigation of the cases to identify intellectual authors and dismantling of all organized crime, as was ordered in the Peace Agreement.

Between blindness and lucidity of the Colombian State

Regarding the role of Colombian State entities with responsibility for crime against human rights defenders, the management and handling of the situation oscillates between good intentions, media actions and awareness-raising, but also between the timidity and ambiguity of moving decisively towards identifying the powers that move behind such criminal behavior.

5. Attorney General's Office

As it has been stated so many times in these reports, the Attorney General's

Office is the entity with the power and mandate to contribute to the identification of those responsible for violence against human rights defenders and to dismantle criminal groups. However, the results continue to be more mediatic and impactful than effective, to the extent that the problem does not stop and the permanent announcements by the Attorney General's Office do not contribute to clarify the picture, but rather, to make its understanding more complex, as one thing is what makes it to the headlines and another is what emerges in the analysis of figures from investigations, in addition to the questioned concept of clarification formulated by the entity in recent years.

The biggest difficulty is that, every time that an officer of the Attorney General's Office offers a statement for the media and/or with the release

³¹ Somos Defensores Program. *Half yearly report January - June 2019. Defenders: The end game?* Page 70. Available at: <https://somosdefensores.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/informe-Somos-defensores-ENERO-JUNIO-2019-oct-8-web-final.pdf.pdf>

of official documents, the figures vary and are therefore difficult to read. Added to this is the politicized use of the results of investigations into the murders of social leaders, according to the situation or government interest.

According to different simultaneous pronouncements by the Attorney General's Office, the cases investigated for the murder of human rights defenders between 2016 and 2019 would be between 308 and 321³². Out of these prioritized cases, between 174 and 180 would have progress in clarification (between 58% and 60%), according to the same sources. But in reality, between 13% and 14% of these cases have been cleared up by the courts, since only 42-47 cases have been convicted. This being the case, the Attorney General's Office maintains its policy of showing convincing results to the public, which in practice are not so strong.

Of this universe of cases, by December of 2019, according to the above-mentioned Public Policy Framework document, 22 were under investigation with an arrest warrant, 22 with charges, 69 with a trial, 47 with a sentence, and 2 were precluded due to the death of the accused³³. But something different is reflected in the report submitted by the Public Prosecutor's Office and transmitted by the FM radio station, according to which

41 were under investigation with charges, 40 with arrest warrants, 42 with sentences, 125 with judicial police orders and 3 declared precluded³⁴.

Added to these usual differences in the results of the Attorney General's Office, as it has been emphasized in previous reports, are the headlines with a political background that can serve to keep up with media and social pressure, but do not strictly correspond to the figures.

Both the Government and the Attorney General's Office frequently announce that the greatest aggressors against social leaders are the "Gulf Clan", the ELN, the EPL and the Caparros. However, statistics from the same entity do not account for such headlines. If we take the mentioned universe of cases of 321, it is necessary to see the percentage participation of each one in the cases investigated,

According to the Special Investigation Unit for the Dismantling of Criminal Organizations of the Prosecutor's Office, since its creation in May 2017, it has conducted 31 investigations into violence against leaders and human rights defenders attributable to a criminal organization, of which two are in execution of sentences, 8 in trial, 7 under investigation, 13 under inquiry with an arrest warrant, and 1 precluded³⁵.

³² Ministry of Interior. Op.Cit., page 75 and following. See also: *La FM. Attorney General's Office Reports Clarification of 58% in Homicides of Social Leaders*. Available at: <https://www.lafm.com.co/judicial/fiscalia-reporta-esclarecimiento-del-58-de-homicidios-de-lideres-sociales>

³³ Ministry of Interior. Op. Cit., Page. 77

³⁴ La FM Radio. Op. Cit.

³⁵ Attorney General's Office. Information provided by the Special Investigation Unit for the Dismantling of Criminal Organizations of the Attorney General's Office, in response to right of petition No. 20206110117542

According to the same unit³⁶, the responsibility of the criminal groups in these 31 cases is the following: Gulf Clan (9), ELN (9), EPL (6), Caparros (5) and Residual Groups (3). Thus, if the universe is 321 cases, among all these groups there would be a responsibility of (9.6%), therefore it cannot be said that most of them are attributable to these groups, as it has been titled since 2018³⁷. Now, if we take the participation of each one the responsibility is reduced even more: Gulf Clan, 2.8%; ELN, 2.8%; EPL, 1.8%; Caparros, 1.5%; residual groups, 0.9%. In other words, there is no concordance between the official statements and the real figures, which denotes a use of information with political interests to show some groups as the biggest perpetrators, even though they are not.

Now, if we take the information published in the already mentioned document³⁸ issued by the Ministry of Interior, on this same subject and with reference to the same period of analysis 2016-2019, we obtain different figures and therefore the percentage of responsibility of the illegal groups varies significantly. However, again, this does not constitute a majority: Gulf Clan, 20; ELN, 14; the "Pelusos" (understood to be the same EPL), 6; Caparros, 5; GAOR (dissidents or residual groups), 24. This amount would give these groups a responsibility of **21%**. If the responsibility were differentia-

ted, it would be Gulf Clan 6.2%, ELN 4.3%, EPL 1.8% and dissidents 1.5%.

With the previous comparison of figures referring to the results of the investigations carried out by the Attorney General's Office against those who attack social leaders, we want to draw attention to the weak handling of the figures at the time of their public presentation, which generates serious doubts about such a delicate and sensitive problem in the country.

In connection with the dismantling of criminal groups based on this alleged clarification, the information is even more confusing.

Dismantling organized crime

The Peace Agreement signed in 2016 contributed to the creation of new institutions responsible for investigating and helping to dismantle organized crime and, thus, guaranteeing the life and physical integrity of vulnerable communities, ex-combatants and social leaders. To this end, the Special Investigation Unit for the Dismantling of Criminal Organizations was created, attached to the Attorney General's Office, by Decree Law 898 of 29 May 2017. Since then, national and international eyes have been attentive to the progress of the investigations in order to find out who is behind the crimes, both material and intellectual authors. But we also hope that once they are identified, progress will be made in dismantling them, especially because of the percentages of clarification presented since then by the Attorney General's Office, which are close to 60%. However, the results do not correspond to each other, that is, clarification vs. dismantling.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ RCN Radio. ELN and Gulf Clan, main perpetrators of crimes against social leaders: Attorney General's Office July 6, 2018. Available at: <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/eln-y-clan-del-golfo-principales-autores-de-crmenes-de-lideres-sociales-fiscalia>. See also: La FM. Op. Cit.

³⁸ Ministry of Interior. Op. Cit., Page 78.

The Administration of Iván Duque, has said through their Peace Advisor Miguel Ceballos, that they have succeeded in dismantling important criminal groups that attack social leaders, and this result is particularly attributed to the work performed by the National Commission for Security Guarantees (CNGS)³⁹. Among the groups that stand out as dismantled, he cites: the Topos, the Plumas, the Dandi, the Rebelión, the Paisanos, the Ronda, the Mercenarios, the Pradera⁴⁰ and that these would be behind the assassination of social leaders, but that, in reality, according to the press search, are minor groups, quite local and conformed by a few felons, but that cannot be considered as structures dedicated to assassinating social leaders. In the same sense, the Ministry of Interior says in the Public Policy Framework document: *“transcendental results have been obtained in terms of the dismantling of structures responsible for homicides and threats against social leaders and human rights defenders; highlighting 305 captures, 2 arrests, the issuance of 47 arrest warrants, 1 neutralization and 30 indictments...”*⁴¹.

Regarding the organized armed groups, previously cited by the Government as having been dismantled, it should be noted that these names do not correspond to those provided by the Special Investigation Unit, already referred to⁴², in relation to the fact that

the 31 investigations against organized armed groups involve the *Caparrós*, *Clan del Golfo*, *ELN*, *EPL*, *GAOr Columna Móvil Teófilo Forero*, *GAOr E-62*, *GAOr Frente Martín Villa* and the *organized crime group La Agonía*⁴³.

In conclusion, according to the Attorney General's Office, there is a clarification of about 60% in the murder investigations of social leaders. However, the criminal groups that (supposedly) attack them are not dismantled (Gulf Clan, ELN, EPL). But, according to the National Government, there are groups that would also attack social leaders, although in the information from the Investigations Unit these groups are not registered as relevant. In total, there is no orderly, clear and reliable information officially available, despite the striking headlines in the press like these, to show that the situation is under control:

COLOMBIA CONFLICTO

La Fiscalía colombiana ha esclarecido 177 homicidios de líderes sociales

EFE | Bogotá - 21 ago. 2019



EFE Agency. Headline: The Colombian Attorney General's Office has clarified 177 homicides of social leaders. Bottom line: The Colombian Attorney General's Office has clarified 177 homicides of social leaders. Banner in the Picture: No more assassinated social leaders.

³⁹ Attorney General's Office. Op. Cit.

⁴⁰ Session of the Peace Commission of the Senate of the Republic. Intervention of the Counselor of Peace, Miguel Ceballos. April 2, 2019.

⁴¹ Ministry of Interior: Op. Cit., Page 79.

⁴² Attorney General's Office. Op. Cit.

⁴³ Attorney General's Office. Ibid

It is also important to note that State agents could be involved in some of these events, given that the Specialized Directorate against Criminal Organizations has 169 open investigations against public officials suspected of being linked to criminal organizations, out of which 104 are under inquiry, 35 are under investigation and 30 are on trial. Likewise, in the document issued by the Ministry of Interior⁴⁴ when they analyze the figures of the Attorney General's Office, in the footnotes they mention other cases investigated by different courts such as the Special Indigenous Jurisdiction (11) and the Military Criminal Justice (6). The latter refers to military agents who were implicated in the assassination of social leaders.

6. Ombudsman's Office

Undoubtedly, the current management of the Ombudsman's Office, headed by Carlos Alfonso Negret, is the State entity that has accompanied communities, social movements, and social leaders in their search for guarantees for the exercise of their work and the struggle for peace and social justice. This mission was carried out from several central axes. On the one hand, by visiting them in their normally distant territories, in what is known as *deep Colombia*, where the political and economic elites refuse to develop the State as a whole. These lands are inhabited by ethnic, indigenous, black, mestizos and settlers peoples, many of whom reflect the profiles narrated in Alfredo Molano Bravo's book, *Desterrados* (Exiled).

On the other hand, with the diverse early warnings carried out to draw the attention of government and state authorities to the great dangers and risks posed to communities and human rights defenders in the territories, which are not necessarily answered in an efficient and timely manner by the responsible bodies, despite the strengthening of the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings (CIPRAT)⁴⁵. During 2019, the Ombudsman's Office followed up on Early Warning 026 of 2018 on social leaders, and frequently emphasized the need to address these emergency calls, which should not generate debates but rather prompt action by the institutions. This was reflected in the high media exposure of the Ombudsman, and even in the controversies over the figures that emerge from the Information System of the state entity, which are not recognized by the National Government, and are not rarely the object of inter-institutional tension.

Different from the denialism and disregard of the growth in the phenomenon of criminality against the social leadership of the current National Government, the Ombudsman's Office permanently focused the attention on the problem and documented 134 murders of these activists⁴⁶ during 2019. A figure that the Government

⁴⁵ The Inter-Institutional Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings was created by Decree 2124 of 2017, which develops point 3.4 of the Peace Agreement, to strengthen the Early Warning System, including the former SIAT.

⁴⁶ Intervention by the Deputy Ombudsman, Jorge Enrique Calero, during a virtual session of the Peace Commission of the Senate of the Republic on April 2, 2020.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Interior. Op. Cit., Page 76.

refuses to acknowledge, as evidenced in all the documents cited in this report, where is no reference at all to the statistics of the Ombudsman's Office.

7. Prosecutor General's Office

As part of one of its three missions, prevention, the Attorney General's Office launched a campaign for social leadership throughout the country during 2018 and 2019, which was called *Lidera la Vida* (Lead Life). For this purpose, the Attorney General's Office made an alliance with different public, private, national and international actors⁴⁷. During this time, the institution and its allies carried out a series of public actions promoted by the media and social networks.

The central objective of the campaign was to raise awareness in the country about the tragedy experienced by social leaders, and the need to reject and prevent the advance of criminality against these important human rights defenders. Without a doubt, this was an important initiative, especially since it originated within a state entity. It is clear that the different forums, territorial hearings, the murals carried out in Bogotá, Cartagena, Buenaventura, Ibagué and Pasto with the vindication of the

work of social leaders, the trends in social networks and other actions of positive affirmation and generation of public opinion, contributed to raise awareness in the country.

As is the case with all other campaigns from civil society, the media and the international community, a greater sensitivity is assumed in society in general and in national and local government in particular. However, the figures speak for themselves, which would indicate the low responsiveness of national and local governments.

It is important to point out that in addition to this campaign, the Prosecutor General's Office must move forward with certainty and rigor in disciplinary investigations against state and government agents who, by action or omission, allow attacks against human rights defenders, as it has often been insisted on throughout these pages, but which has had little receptivity. If no progress is made in this regard, this state institution is not contributing in any way to the clarification of those responsible for acts of violence against social leaders, as established by its mandate, nor does Directive 002 of 2017 created to support human rights defenders make sense.

⁴⁷ Office of the Prosecutor General of the Nation, Ombudsman's Office, Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement -CODHES-, the National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians -AFRODES-, National Indigenous Organization of Colombia -ONIC-, Sisma Mujer, Pastoral Social, Noticias Caracol and El Especta-

dor, UN Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Mission to Support the Peace Process of the Organization of American States -MAPP-OAS- and the United States Agency for International Development -USAID-.

The Lucidity

8. International Community

In contrast to the National Government's denial, the international community as a whole: the diplomatic corps, United Nations agencies (Peace Mission, OANCHUD, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders), the European Union, MAPP-OAS and international organizations were highly concerned about the critical situation of social leaders during 2019. Consequently, they made statements, campaigns, meetings, handed out awards and put a lot of pressure on the Colombian government and state to provide guarantees to these human rights activists.

The Delegation of the European Union in Colombia launched in June the campaign named *Defendamos la Vida*⁴⁸ (Let's Defend Life), an initiative that seeks to make the problem visible, to raise awareness about them and to make public the recognition and esteem that European countries have for the country's social leaders. Consequently, both the EU Ambassador, Patricia Llombart, and other heads of diplomatic delegations, deployed territorial visits⁴⁹, forums, meetings,

recognition and messages on social networks to make the campaign effective. The campaign is still active, as demonstrated by the meeting at the District Centre for Memory and Reconciliation in March 2020, where EU ambassadors sponsored a defender and planted trees in his or her honor and recognition, and where they categorically said, "If you murder a social leader, you are picking on us"⁵⁰.

This campaign was joined by the now traditional presentation of the French-German "Antonio Nariño" Human Rights Prize on December 10 by the German ambassador, Peter Ptasek, and the French ambassador, Gauthier Mignot, to defenders who were nominated and chosen by the qualifying jury.

Also noteworthy is the also now traditional National Human Rights Award, granted by the Swedish Cooperation Agency Diakonia, which is conferred every year on September 10, the National Day of Human Rights in Colombia.

On the other hand, the European Union donated 2 million Euros to the Special Investigation Unit for the Dismantling of Organized Crime, to investigate crimes against social leaders⁵¹.

⁴⁸ El Espectador. June 11, 2019. *Social leaders embrace European Union campaign to protect them*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/lideres-sociales-abrazan-campana-de-la-union-europea-para-protegerlos-articulo-865396>

⁴⁹ Zona Cero. January 17, 2020. *European Union concerned about killings and threats to social leaders in Colombia*. Available at: <http://zonacero.com/politica/union-europea-preocupada-por-asesinatos-y-amenazas-lideres-sociales-en-colombia-141367>

⁵⁰ El Espectador. March 13, 2020. *"If you murder a social leader, you're picking on us": International community*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/si-matan-un-lider-social-se-estan-metiendo-con-nosotros-comunidad-internacional-articulo-909050>

⁵¹ EFE. July 8, 2019. *European Union grants two million euros to investigate crimes of leaders in Colombia*. Available at:

In addition to the aforementioned, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia has issued various statements during the year and its annual report 2019, which contains conclusive qualitative and quantitative information on the situation of human rights defenders in the country.

The report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst, analyzed in a separate section of this report, deserves a special recognition.

9. The media and the art world

Another positive aspect is the space given by the mass and alternative media to the issue of the situation of social leaders. Campaigns such as *A Leader in My Place* where journalists and columnists granted space to defenders in written columns, on radio and television news, and numerous interviews, had a great impact on raising awareness and recognition of human rights activists. Today, the reviews of social leaders in the media are not only limited to the sad news of the violence against these people, but also include their voices, their proposals, their complaints and their community searches. A special recognition to the section *Colombia 2020* of the *El Espectador* newspaper for dedicating time, chronicles and many pages to the work of these people daily, who in addition to being defenders of rights, are workers for peace.

Many men and women, opinion makers, writers, novelists, poets, cartoonists, visual artists and muralists, have dedicated gallons of ink and paint, newsprint sheets and virtual pages, to draw attention to the tragedy that continues to color red the life of communities.

Quebrantos (Breakdowns), the work of artist Doris Salcedo, was perhaps the one that most sensitively represented the sacrifice of nearly five hundred men and women in the country, whose names were written on glass shards, in a square as challenging as Bogotá's Plaza de Bolívar (Bolívar Square, in the historical center of the city), with the support of the Commission for the Truth and the direction of Cultural Heritage of the National University⁵².

All these efforts and initiatives have contributed to surround those who defend human rights and support their demands, managing to put their presence and names in public opinion. In this way, Colombian society has come to know the desires for peace and the construction of a better society, which hide behind each of the country's social leaders.

10. The mobilization of society

The role of the different civil society platforms and networks in drawing attention to the criminalization of human rights defenders is very pro-

<https://www.efe.com/efe/espana/mundo/la-union-europea-da-dos-millones-de-euros-para-investigar-crmenes-lideres-en-colombia/10001-4018550#>

⁵² Canal Trece (Channel 13): June 10, 2019. *Doris Salcedo's 'Quebrantos', a tribute to murdered social leaders*. Available at: <https://canaltrece.com.co/noticias/doris-salcedo-quebrantos-lideres-sociales-asesinados/>

minent. The emotional and powerful mobilization on July 26 called by the movement *Defend Peace*, with resonance around the world and a massive mobilization throughout the country, is an indicator of the value given today to the role of social leadership in Colombia.

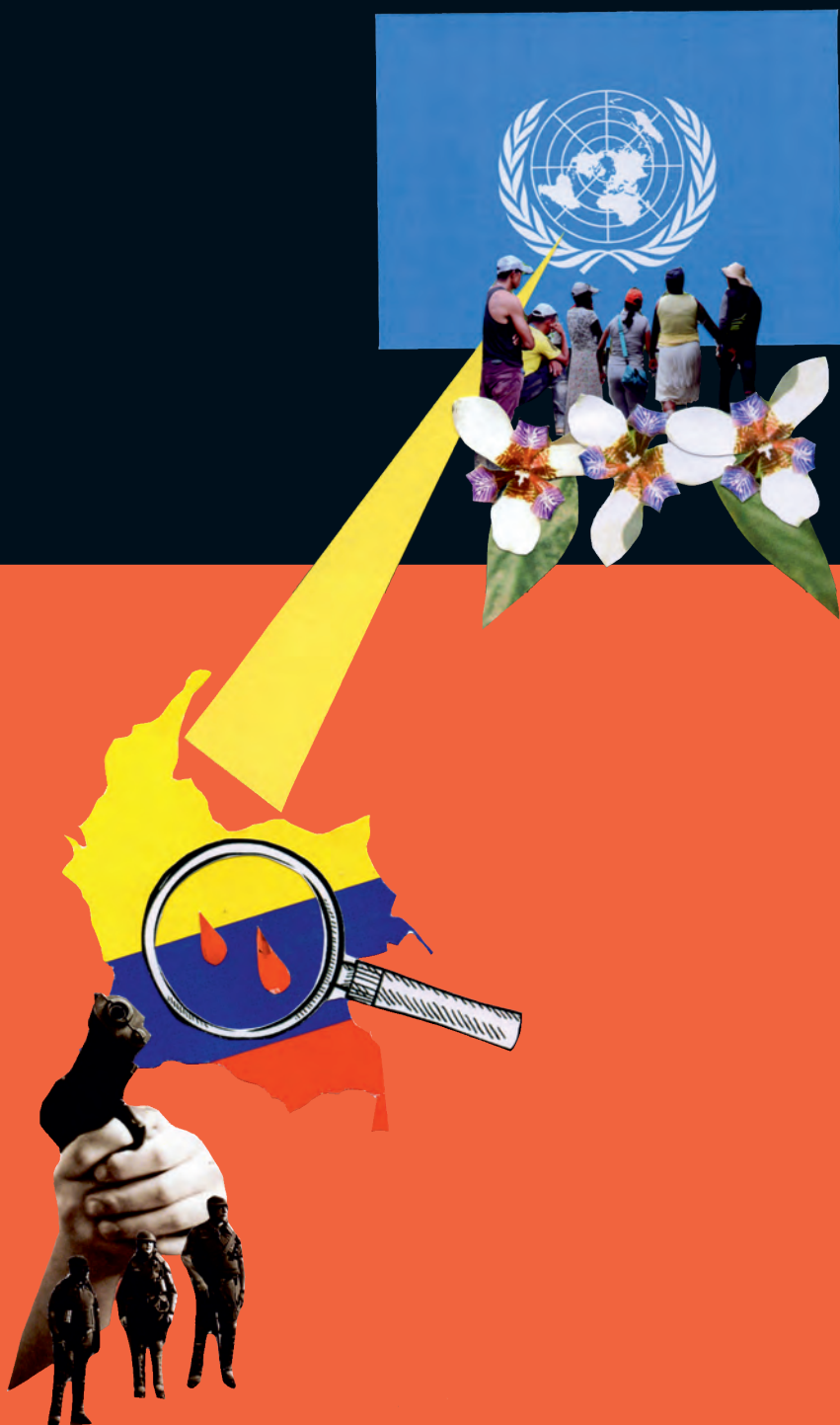
It also highlights the relentless work of the human rights platforms: Colombia Europe United States Coordination; the Alliance of Social and Related Organizations; and the Colombian Platform for Human Rights, Democracy and Development; which for nearly three decades has been fighting for rights in the country to stop being commitments signed on paper by the Colombian State and become a reality and, particularly, to demand and present proposals for guarantees, which the National Government refuses to recognize. The National Guarantees Process, which has been going on for over a decade, is undoubtedly a valuable initiative, with no response from the Government.

Society, along with social and political organizations were very active throughout the year, seeking to contribute to stopping the tragedy suffered by social leaders and, especially, motivated by seeing government and state agencies inoperative. With these reasons in mind, more than a thousand people marched to the headquarters of the International Criminal Court in the city of The Hague in the Netherlands to tell the Attorney General's Office of this international justice entity that in Colombia, human rights defenders continue to

be assassinated in the face of an indolent state⁵³.

Civil society, which is highly active, has understood that, in the face of selective violence such as the one faced by human rights defenders and the lack of effective responses from the Government, all that remains is to join forces to raise our voices and demand guarantees, so that one day being a social leader in this country will finally cease to be a high-risk occupation.

⁵³ Verdad Abierta (Open Truth). April 5, 2019. *Tragedy of social leaders in Colombia reaches the International Criminal Court*. Available at: <https://verdadabierta.com/tragedia-de-lideres-sociales-en-colombia-llega-a-la-corte-penal-internacional/>



CHAPTER 3: A Country between lights and shadows

Michel Forst, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, visited Colombia between November and December 2018 to determine whether “the Colombian State has been able to provide a safe and conducive environment for human rights defenders throughout the country”⁵⁴, and guide the government to improve its protection. For 10 years, the country had not received a visit from a rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and this time, the findings were dramatic.

For 14 days, Mr. Forst traveled to different regions of the country to meet organizations and social leaders and witness first-hand the reality in the territories and the risks they face, a situation he described at the end of his visit as “the most horrific I have seen in my whole life”⁵⁵. This tour and the dialogue with people who suffer violence for defending human

rights, allowed him to assess the situation faced by this population and identify responsibilities and issues that encourage aggressions against them. These issues were reflected on a partial report published at the end of his visit⁵⁶, which revealed issues that had been denounced by human rights defenders for many years, the lack of security guarantees for the communities in which they live, and the regressive proposals of the new government (which were already a cause for concern barely 3 months after the start of the visit).

Despite the permanent insistence of the communities, their voices have not turned out to be very effective in the face of officials who are not very willing to listen to and see reality. Yet, this time reality was in the hands of the Rapporteur and through his words, not only was the human rights crisis in Colombia acknowledged, but it also became an echo for the world. Although Michel Forst expressed his commitment to follow up on the situation and the recommendations set out in the progress report in a visit to be organized during 2019, no such

⁵⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst visit to Colombia, 20 November to 3 December 2018. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23960&LanguageID=S>

⁵⁵ El Espectador. December 3, 2018. *What I saw in Colombia is dramatic: UN Human Rights Rapporteur*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/lo-que-vi-en-colombia-es-realmente-dramatico-relator-de-la-onu-articulo-827177>

⁵⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. End of Mission Statement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst visit to Colombia, 20 November to 3 December 2018. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23960&LanguageID=S>

visit took place. The reasons for this were recently revealed in an interview with *Semana* magazine, in which the same Rapporteur stated that the Government had never authorized a new official visit, even though he had insisted on it, sent letters and met with officials to arrange for the invitation⁵⁷.

This obstruction to the follow-up of the Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in the country seems to indicate that there was little to no pleasure in reading the situation as it was reflected in the document presented after the visit in 2018. Otherwise a new visit which would provide more input for the drafting of the final report would not be avoided, and which, moreover, was presented as an opportunity for the Government to implement recommendations that would lead to an improvement in human rights conditions in the country, especially for the social leadership.

Defenders at high risk

The Special Rapporteur's paper, which became known at the beginning of 2020, showed a reality that communities, human rights defenders and civil society organizations have been trying to demonstrate for years in order to demand guarantees, but which the institutions have radically ignored, even to the extent that the current Government has imposed

a speech on the protection and reduction of violence, which has little to do with what human rights defenders have to face every day.

Due to all the difficulties faced by those who defend rights, the report of Mr. Forst becomes a very important document, because it explicitly states that the risk for human rights defenders has not diminished, on the contrary, it states that it has increased since the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Government and the FARC guerrillas, a situation that becomes even clearer when one considers that Colombia is the country in Latin America with the most murders of human rights defenders, which is also characterized by its stigmatization and criminalization and by a high level of impunity⁵⁸. These conditions, as recognized in the report, prevent the existence in the country of a favorable and safe context for the defense of human rights.

The scenario is much more complex, because, as the report states, in addition to the identified issues, there are structural factors that feed selective violence and make it more complex, the most central of which is the historical land problem: on the one hand, the State's debt to peasants and ethnic communities for recognizing their rights and providing access to land, and on the other hand, the lack of agrarian reform. Added to these historical causes is the difficult security situation in a large part of the coun-

⁵⁷ *Semana Magazine*. February 29, 2020. "They wanted to erase my report completely": UN rapporteur on the government. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/michel-forst-relator-de-la-onu-habla-del-de-saire-del-gobierno-colombiano/654179>

⁵⁸ United Nations. December 26, 2019. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.1>. Page 1

try, with the escalation of the armed conflict after the demobilization of the FARC guerrillas, and the dispute over the territories of dissidence of this guerrilla and other armed groups.

With all this, human rights defenders have been put at risk because of their visibility within communities, which exposes them to armed actors. Hence, as the report states, threats and intimidation have increased between 2016 and May 2019⁵⁹, according to sources such as the Ombudsman's Office and the Somos Defensores Program. Behind these aggressions and murders, the Rapporteur finds that motivations are mainly "implementing peace, opposing the interests of organized crime, illegal economies, corruption, illegal land tenure and protecting their communities"⁶⁰; in general, watching over the good for their territories and making sure their rights are respected. This means that those who attack them, seek above all to silence their voices, because these prove to be inconvenient to develop their particular interests, which go beyond the civilian population.

People who defend rights in rural areas and who have community, communal and ethnic leaderships are especially at risk. This has been confirmed by the Somos Defensores Program in the records of aggressions, and the report also points out the additional danger faced by those who promote policies derived from the Peace Agreement, particularly those related to land issues such as

the replacement of illicit crops and agrarian reform⁶¹. In these scenarios, they are forced to interact with the armed groups that have a presence in the territory, a situation that exposes them much more. Unfortunately, this situation occurs in all areas where armed actors are present, and has an important cause highlighted in the report, which is the "complete absence of the State"⁶² and the lack of effective protection by the public forces present in the territories.

This statement points to an important element emphasized by civil society, which is that the great responsibility for violence against human rights defenders lies with the State. Governments seem to know this but do not admit it and continue to pursue policies and measures that do not resolve essential demands. This is demonstrated by the current risk scenario, which is largely due to the low capacity of the State since, as Rapporteur Forst states, the integral State presence did not occur after the demobilization of the FARC guerrilla groups and their departure from the territories, "which allowed the reorganization of power at the hands of illegal armed groups and criminal groups around illicit economies"⁶³.

As the report implies, the difficulties in implementing the Peace Agreement have a direct influence on the current situation of risk for human rights defenders. The Rapporteur hi-

⁵⁹ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 7.

⁶⁰ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 7.

⁶¹ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 10.

⁶² United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 10.

⁶³ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 18.

ghlights that there is a lack of political determination and insufficient funding for issues that have also been denounced by communities, leaders and civil society. These responsibilities are transferred directly to the government in office, which is in charge to continue with the implementation of the Agreement in order to comply with all the therein-established agreements.

However, contrary to what should happen, the position of Iván Duque's government has been controversial regarding the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The decisions that have been taken around several points agreed upon, show that there is a disagreement that, unfortunately, becomes an obstruction to its implementation. This has been mentioned since President Duque came to power, and although the Government itself has denied that it is happening, the actions reveal the opposite⁶⁴. In fact, it is significant that instead of referring to the Agreement signed in Havana, there is now talk of a policy of Peace with Legality that seems to overlap with the Agreement⁶⁵.

One of the issues in the Agreement related to human rights defenders that has attracted the most attention

is the National Commission for Security Guarantees (CNGS), created with the aim of building strategies that will lead to the dismantling of criminal groups that attack communities and human rights defenders. This space, in which government and civil society entities participated, was highly valued by leaders and social organizations because of its importance in providing a solution to violence in the territories. Nonetheless, with the change of government, this space was transformed. This is how Michel Forst identified it during his visit to the country, since in the report he states that although by decree the CNGS must meet once a month, it had only been summoned twice since the change of government⁶⁶. In addition, Iván Duque decided to publish the Timely Action Plan –PAO– which, as the report states, was elaborated without the participation of civil society or the international community⁶⁷. Social organizations and defenders interpreted this as a proposal to replace the CNGS, ignoring needs and reality and ignoring the Decree that regulates the Peace Agreement.

In a scenario where the aggressions do not stop, these decisions are interpreted as an attack on peace and on all the efforts of civil society to transform the violent reality that has marked them so much. In addition to this, the report also mentions other issues of concern to Rapporteur Forst, one of

⁶⁴ Semana Magazine. May 31, 2019. A change of course? Duque's dilemma after his resounding defeats. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/el-dilema-de-ivan-duque-por-reformar-el-acuerdo-de-paz-de-colombia/617897>

⁶⁵ Presidency of the Republic. December 17, 2018. *Presentation of the Stabilization Policy 'Peace with Legality'*. Available at: <https://id.presidencia.gov.co/Paginas/prensa/2018/181217-Presentacion-Politica-Estabilizacion-Paz-Legalidad.aspx>

⁶⁶ United Nations Organization. December 26, 2019. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.1>. Page 5.

⁶⁷ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 6.

which is the high level of impunity in the country regarding investigations into the murders of human rights defenders. As stated in the report, the rate of impunity is around 95%⁶⁸ and there are particularities in the methodology of the Attorney General's Office, which investigates a universe of cases that is smaller than the real one and uses a broad definition of clarification, which allows them to refer to a high number of "clarified" cases, when they really have no sentence and are in a different stage.

Another concern expressed by Rapporteur Forst involves the stigmatization of human rights defenders. It is not enough that violence is relentless. They must also confront the accusations made by government officials, political leaders and public figures who link the defense of rights with illegal activities or who minimize the seriousness of the attacks⁶⁹, in several cases with versions expressed in public scenarios that risk becoming a reality in the imagination, expanding the stigmatization and increasing the danger. In addition to this, there is the criminalization of leadership, which, according to the report, has led to the detention and prosecution of defenders, who are accused, among other things, of belonging to illegal armed groups in connection with their defense activities⁷⁰.

In order to stop violence against human rights defenders, Michel Forst ends the report with a series of recommendations to the government, which to a large extent reflect what has been demanded in each space generated by civil society to surround these activists, and most of the time these demands are led by the implementation of the Peace Agreement. To this list, the rapporteur also adds key issues such as the recognition of the important role of leadership, the fight against impunity, the ratification of protocols and the adoption of an Integral Public Policy of Respect and Guarantees for the Work of Human Rights Defense with the participation of civil society. This is undoubtedly a small part of a long pending list that the State has with the people who defend rights, so that their vulnerability is not intensified and to generate guarantees for them to develop their life and work for their communities in a safe environment.

Slamming the door on the UN

After the publication of Michel Forst's report on the situation of human rights defenders in Colombia by February 2020, a great deal of controversy was generated in the country, particularly by the reaction of the government of Iván Duque, which did not receive the rapporteur's findings and recommendations in a good way. The first manifestation of this disagreement was the official response sent by the Government to the Rapporteur on 27 January 2020, in which it commented on the document⁷¹. In 20 pages,

⁶⁸ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 8.

⁶⁹ El Espectador. December 17, 2017. *Assassinations of leaders due to "love triangles": Minister of Defense*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/asesinatos-de-lideres-son-por-lios-de-faldas-ministro-de-defensa-articulo-728893>

⁷⁰ United Nations Organization. Op. Cit., Page 9.

⁷¹ National Government of Colombia. January 27, 2020. *Comments by the Colom-*

the arguments presented in the final report are strongly questioned, and they reveal a clear disagreement with the rapporteur.

This annoyance came from months ago, after the Rapporteur's visit by the end of 2018, which although it was never expressed directly, it was deduced by the subsequent blocking of the monitoring visit by government officials, planned to take place in 2019 to complement the final report and review the implementation of the first recommendations. In fact, this went beyond a more problematic issue, which was the interruption of future visits by other UN rapporteurs such as "women's rights, business and human rights, the right to water and the arbitrary detentions work groups"⁷². This is a serious matter, because it sends the message that the human rights situation in the country is intended to not be reviewed by such an important and necessary international body as the UN.

One of the Government's main complaints in the document was that the terms of the visit had allegedly been changed, a matter that the Special Rapporteur denies⁷³, stating that the

methodology was the same as that used in visits to other countries. In addition, the government accuses him of making statements that are not part of the national context and of using "most of its content to make accusations"⁷⁴. Furthermore, they deny and refute central issues that are recorded thanks to the versions given to the rapporteur directly by human rights defenders during his visit in 2018 and with data from institutions of the State itself, such as the Ombudsman's Office, and from organizations that monitor violence against these activists.

Thus, in the face of the claim that the country has the highest number of murders against human rights defenders in Latin America, and the warning of the risk in which these activists find themselves in a context such as Colombia's, the government simply rejects what has been said and describes it as serious and irresponsible, with little support and which "does not reliably reflect the current situation in the country"⁷⁵. This response is disconnected from reality and contradicts findings such as those of the international organization Front Line Defenders, which in its latest global report states that in 2019 Colombia will be the country with the highest number of murders

bian State on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his Mission to Colombia. Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.4>

⁷² Semana Magazine. February 5, 2020. *Government controverts the UN and downplays the situation of social leaders.* Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/gobierno-cuestiona-informe-del-relator-de-la-onu-sobre-situacion-de-lideres-sociales/650674>

⁷³ Semana Magazine. February 29, 2020. "They wanted to erase my report completely": UN rapporteur on the government. Available at:

<https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/michel-forst-relator-de-la-onu-habla-del-de-saire-del-gobierno-colombiano/654179>

⁷⁴ National Government of Colombia. January 27, 2020. *Comments by the Colombian State on the Report of the Special Rapporteur, about the Situation of Human Rights Defenders on his Mission to Colombia.* Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.4>. Pág. 2.

⁷⁵ National Government of Colombia. Op. cit., page 2.

involving human rights defenders in the world⁷⁶. Furthermore, although in the report the Rapporteur uses the figures of the OHCHR to point out the high rate of killings between 2016 and June 2019, the Government asks him to withdraw this information because they consider that “it does not provide a reliable source to support this very serious claim”⁷⁷. The latter is a particular point, taking into account that the same Government has used the figures from the same source⁷⁸ on many occasions, especially and paradoxically, to argue for a decrease in the number of murders.

A similar contradiction occurs when the Government, in its response, emphasizes that the rapporteur must make use of data collected by State entities, “which support advances in the protection of their lives and work, contrary to what is wrongly argued with figures of another kind”⁷⁹.

However, one of the main sources of the report is precisely the Ombudsman’s Office, a State control body that is part of the Public Ministry. The Government’s concern with the sources used has its origin in the dilemma of the figures, since despite the findings of the organizations that monitor aggressions (including the Ombudsman’s Office), Iván Duque has tried to position a discourse in which he argues that there is a decrease in violence against human rights defenders, that is occurring thanks to the implementation of the Timely Action Plan –PAO–.

Thus, in its response to the Rapporteur, the Government insists on a reduction in the number of murders and even ventures to state that the number of attacks in general has fallen by between 25 and 30 % since the implementation of the PAO⁸⁰. Although it is true that during 2019 the murders decreased a little, this does not respond to the implementation of the Government’s strategies, but to the dynamics of the armed conflict in territories where, after a dispute during 2018, the armed groups control was already being strengthened, hence, contrary to what the Government states, other types of aggressions such as threats increased alarmingly and that, despite the decrease in murders, the figure remains very high, since according to our records 124 defenders were killed. In this sense, it is impossible to find a link between the PAO and a decrease in violence that only exists in the official discourse.

⁷⁶ Front Line Defenders. *Front line defenders global analysis 2019*. Ireland. Available at: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/spanish_-_global_analysis_2019_web.pdf p 4

⁷⁷ National Government of Colombia. January 27, 2020. *Comments by the Colombian State on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his Mission to Colombia*. Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.4>. Page 5

⁷⁸ Caracol Radio. December 26, 2019. *Government reports 25% reduction in murders of social leaders*. Available at: https://caracol.com.co/radio/2019/12/26/politica/1577375322_650656.html

⁷⁹ National Government of Colombia. January 27, 2020. *Comments by the Colombian State on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders on his Mission to Colombia*. Available at: <https://undocs.org/es/A/HRC/43/51/Add.4>. Page 20

⁸⁰ National Government of Colombia. Op. Cit., Page 20.

Another comment in the report that denotes a disconnection from reality is the criticism made against the rapporteur for speaking of risks for defenders in a post-agreement context, in which conditions in the territories have evidently undergone profound changes: territorial disputes have become more acute with the demobilization of the FARC, there are shortcomings in the implementation of the Agreement and the risks for the communities have increased. However, in the comments, the Government tries to disassociate the implementation of the Peace Agreement from issues such as the presence of armed groups and the economies of criminal groups⁸¹, when in fact the behavior of these factors is directly related to the post-agreement context and are even a consequence of the low capacity of the State to implement what was agreed upon.

In addition to what is mentioned in his comments, the Government focuses on denying a number of other issues such as impunity, stigmatization, corporate responsibility for human rights violations and other findings of the rapporteur based on different sources from organizations that monitor violence and on the same testimonies he heard from people who suffer aggression in different regions. Hence, the feeling the rapporteur got from the observations was that “they wanted to erase my report completely”⁸². The tone of the response, plus the government’s silence in order to establish

direct contact with Michel Forst, despite the rapporteur’s public request to restore dialogue⁸³, became a wasted opportunity to work together to generate better guarantees for human rights defenders in the different regions, a historic demand of those who defend human rights and communities.

This position of the Government did not stop with the comments on the work of the rapporteur. Weeks later with the presentation of the annual report of the Office in Colombia of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN –OHCHR–⁸⁴, a new tension arose again with this organism in the same sense that the disagreement with the rapporteur had been established. The permanent presence in different regions and the missions during the year to various territories of the country led the Office to make a worrying diagnosis in the area of human rights, with an upsurge in violence that left, among other things, 36 massacres, violent actions by various armed groups, forced recruitment of minors, 108 murders of human rights defenders, an increase of 50% in murders of female defenders and 15 arbitrary detentions.

⁸³ El Colombiano Newspaper. March 7, 2020. *UN rapporteur suggests the government to “restore dialogue”*. Available at: <https://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/paz-y-derechos-humanos/michel-forst-relator-de-la-onu-propone-al-gobierno-restaurar-el-dialogo-GO12581575>

⁸⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Annual Report 2019. Available at: <https://www.hchr.org.co/index.php/informes-y-documentos/informes-anuales/9136-informe-del-alto-comisionado-de-las-naciones-unidas-para-los-derechos-humanos-sobre-la-situacion-de-derechos-humanos-en-colombia-durante-el-ano2019>

⁸¹ National Government of Colombia. Op. Cit., Page 6.

⁸² Semana Magazine. February 29, 2020. Op. Cit.

In addition, the OHCHR highlighted shortcomings and made recommendations on issues such as impunity, implementation of the Peace Agreement, and extralimitation of actions by the Army and the ESMAD. All this poses a difficult panorama in the country⁸⁵, which is in line with the analysis made by Rapporteur Michel Forst. Growing violence, permanent violent actions, high presence of armed actors, deficiencies in institutional actions and in the implementation of the Peace Agreement; issues that lead to a high risk of communities, especially those in rural areas, with a weak presence of the State.

The Government's reaction was swift, and several institutions and officials demonstrated their displeasure with strong words and statements. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed concern because, according to it, the conclusions exceed the scope of action of the OHCHR and generate opinions that can be considered political, furthermore, it mentions that it is not a comprehensive and updated report⁸⁶. On his part, the Presidential Advisor for Stabilization, Emilio Archila, criticized the fact that the progress made in the PDET was not recognized and even referred to the report as a "*chambonada*"⁸⁷ (colloquial term for 'medio-

cre'). President Iván Duque also reacted by expressing his concern that the report did not tell the truth, and that it was considered an interference in the country's sovereignty by recommending the transfer of the police to the Ministry of Interior⁸⁸.

This excessive reaction to the conclusions and recommendations of the UNHCHR transcended in the public opinion, to the extent that the Office began to receive attacks from different sectors, which criticized the report and its mission in the country. Even in social networks the hashtag #FueraONUdeColombia (#UNgetoutofColombia) became a trend, which with hateful words and using the arguments of the Government asked for the departure of the UN from the country.

In addition to the opinions on the reports developed by the OHCHR and Mr. Michael Forst, these disagreements between the Government and the UN have several antecedents, such as the uncertainty regarding the renewal of the mandate of the High Commissioner's Office in the country⁸⁹, which did finally occur at the

⁸⁵ France 24. February 27, 2020. *2019, a violent year for Human Rights in Colombia*. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/es/20200227-2019-un-a%C3%B1o-violento-para-los-derechos-humanos-en-colombia>

⁸⁶ Semana Magazine. February 27, 2020. *Colombia attacked UN Human Rights Office report*. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/on-line/nacion/articulo/colombia-arremetio-contra-informe-de-la-onu--semana-noticias/653755>

⁸⁷ WRadio. February 27, 2020. *Emilio Archila refers to the UN Human Rights Office*

report as mediocre. Available at: <https://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/emilio-archila-califica-de-chambonada-informe-de-la-oficina-de-ddhh-de-la-onu/20200227/nota/4018277.aspx>

⁸⁸ El Espectador. February 28, 2020. *The tensions that are accentuated by the UN report*. Available at: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/las-tensiones-que-se-acentuan-con-el-informe-de-la-onu-articulo-906813>

⁸⁹ WRadio. October 29, 2019. *Organizations ask Duque to expedite the renovation of UN Human Rights office*. Available at: <https://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/organizaciones-piden-a-duque>

very last moment, after pressure from civil society organizations, and the cancellation of the agreement that the Government had with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that monitored the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS), during the year. These, among other actions by the Government, have made evident an opposition to the mission from different UN offices in the country. It seems that what has caused discomfort is that the difficult situation for human rights currently experienced in Colombia is being made public. But the government forgets that, as Alberto Brunori, the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia points out, the role of this international body is to “say the hardest things”⁹⁰.

Aware of the repercussions that these obstructions against the UN in Colombia can have on the work of its agencies in the country and even on its permanence, civil society organizations have been alert to the positions that the current government can take. These have surrounded the entity to support its mission and shield it from attacks that possibly seek its exit from the country, which would have serious consequences for the monitoring and visibility of human rights violations. For example, in the case

of the OHCHR report, in the face of harsh reactions, social and human rights organizations collected more than 1,600 signatures from platforms, individuals and national and international organizations to support the report, which is considered to be in line with the reality of the country, since it is consistent with the complaints that have been repeatedly made⁹¹.

The absolute rejection of conclusions and recommendations on the situation of human rights in Colombia shows the denialist discourse of the Government that civil society is facing and, in particular, the people who have to deal with the consequences of violence and the armed conflict every day, including human rights defenders. Denying the unquestionable and ruling with a blindfold has become the trend of the current Government. Despite the voices of agencies such as the UN and the very people who are clamoring for guarantees for their lives, officials are determined to see what is in their interest and to legislate on what they consider appropriate, in a fabricated reality that ignores the needs of the regions. Meanwhile, all over the country, those at risk continue to work for their territories and to insist for one day their demands to be heard and for the inequality and bleeding of their territories to stop.

[agilizar-renovacion-de-oficina-de-la-onu-para-ddhh/20191029/nota/3972759.aspx](https://www.eldespectador.com/noticias/politica/los-choques-entre-el-gobierno-y-la-oficina-de-dd-hh-de-la-onu-articulo-906711)

⁹⁰ El Espectador. February 27, 2020. *The clashes between the Government and the UN Human Rights Office*. Available at: <https://www.eldespectador.com/noticias/politica/los-choques-entre-el-gobierno-y-la-oficina-de-dd-hh-de-la-onu-articulo-906711>

⁹¹ Semana Magazine. March 2, 2020. *The 1,600 signatures that went out to support the UN report*. Available at: <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-1600-firmas-que-salieron-a-respaldar-el-informe-de-la-onu/654548>



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia
—ISAAHRD—

According to the case records of the Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders -SIADDHH- of the Somos Defensores Program, 2019 continued to be as violent for social leaders in the country as 2018. During 2019, 844 individual aggressions were registered, equivalent to the violation of the right to live, liberty and integrity of 835 people with different types of leadership: indigenous, community, peasant, environmental, communal, educational, afro-descendant, trade union, victims and LGBTI. This figure reveals an increase of 39 cases, compared to 2018, when 805 aggressions were documented. This means an increase of 4.8% in acts of violence that hindered the work of defending human rights.

In summary, 1649 attacks against human rights defenders in the last two years demonstrate, once again, that in the post-peace agreement period, leaders continue to face distressing situations together with their families and members of their collectives, organizations or communities, even more so than during the time of negotiation or the internal armed conflict itself a decade ago. Similarly, if we look at the figures for 2015, when **682** attacks were recorded, it is clear that violence has increased by **24%** in the last four years.

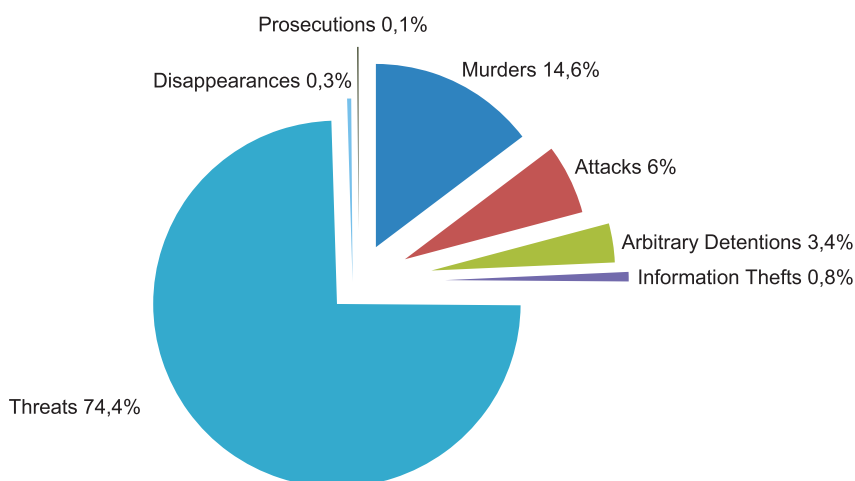
On average, 2.3 people were attacked per day during 2019, which makes it the most aggressive year of the de-

cade. In addition, it is evident that the months with the most cases of aggression were: May (150 cases), February (117 cases) and April (112 cases). Likewise, the quarter in which most attacks were recorded was April-June with 337 cases, followed by January-March with 253, then July-September with 130 and, finally, October-December with 124.

Type of Individual Aggression	2018	2019
Threats	583	628
Murders	155	124
Attacks	34	52
Arbitrary Detentions	4	29
Disappearances	4	3
Prosecutions	19	1
Information Theft	0	7
Sexual Violence	6	0
Total individual Aggressions	805	844

Of the total number of attacks in 2019, 74.4% were threats, 14.6% were murders, 6% were attacks, 3.4% were arbitrary detentions, 0.8% were information thefts, 0.3% were disappearances and 0.1% were prosecutions. One of the issues of concern is the increase in cases against the right to integrity and freedom of human rights defenders, with 18 attacks and 25 detentions more than in 2018, as well as threats, which went from 583 in 2018 to 628, an increase of 7.7%.

Percentage by type of aggression
SIADDHH figures January-December 2019

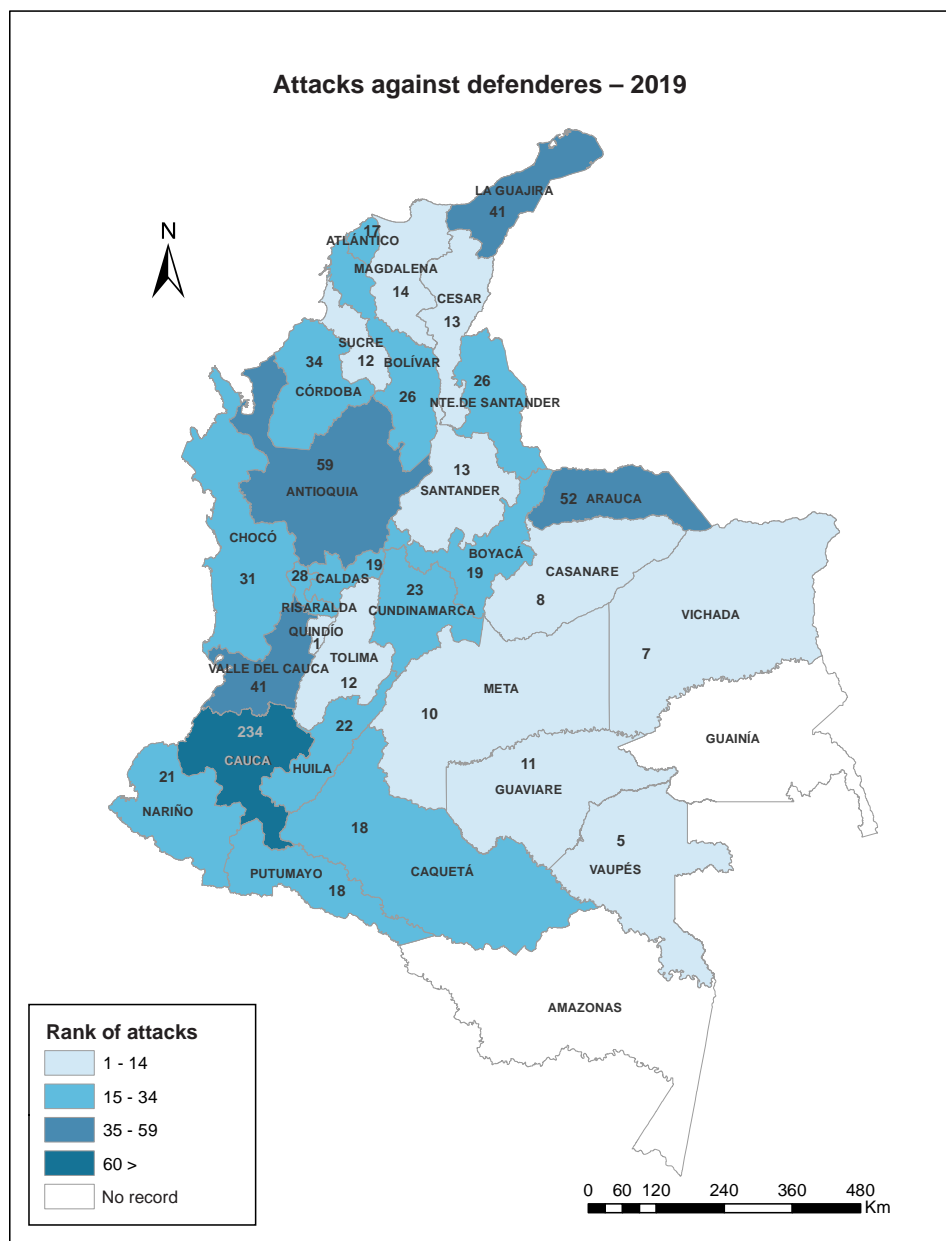


The systematization results also show that the greater the presence of leaders in a territory, the greater the likelihood that violence will arise there, since these indicate that leaders have a greater capacity to confront local and regional powers, as well as greater participation and demand for rights from the State.

Aggression Zones

The departments where there is a greater intensity and concentration of aggressions are at the same time areas where the demobilized FARC-EP guerrilla groups controlled social, economic and political life. However, after the departure of the group from these territories, which are strategic places for the legal and illegal econo-

mies, there has been an increase in disputes over control of production and markets, an increase in the cultivation of illicit crops and the processing of drugs (particularly cocaine), the presence of illegal mining, and the reconfiguration of paramilitary and drug trafficking structures, despite the significant presence of the military forces in these areas. As a result, there is an increase in violence against leaders who defend the territory from all types of interference. Added to this is the lack of protection of the peasant leaders who supported the substitution of illicit crops, after the government of Iván Duque failed to comply with the execution of the aforementioned program, and at the same time, they were left with no security guarantees.



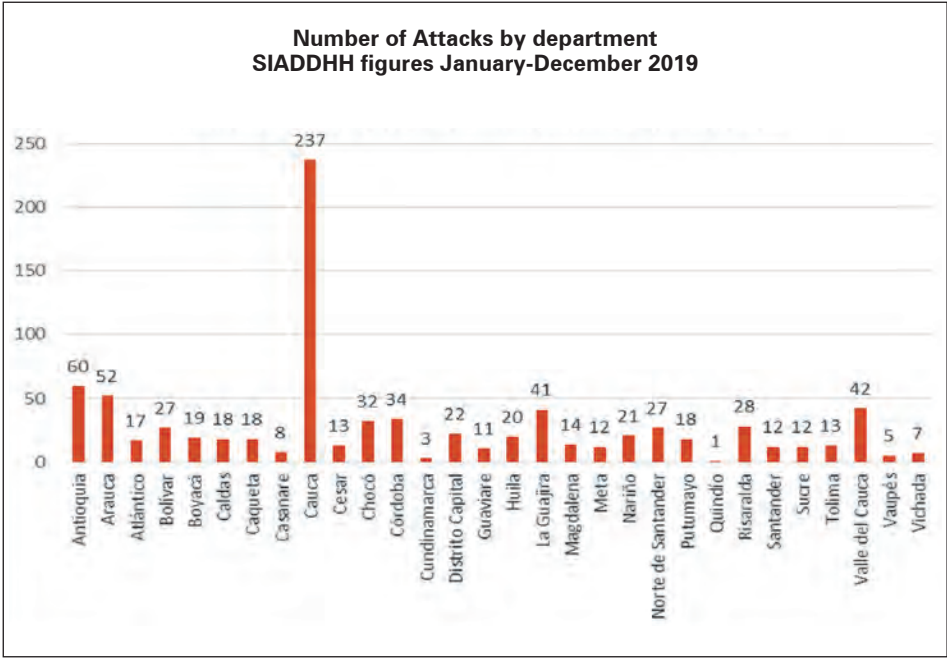
Source: SIADDHH - Somos Defensores Program 2019

Thus, out of the 32 departments in Colombia, in 30 of them there was at least one type of aggression against

the fundamental rights of human rights defenders. It is necessary to draw attention to 11 from the 30 de-

partments with cases of aggression, where a high number of human rights violation acts and political abuse against social leadership occurred: Cauca (237), Antioquia (60), Arauca (52), La Guajira (41) Valle del Cauca (42), Chocó (32), Córdoba (34), Risa-

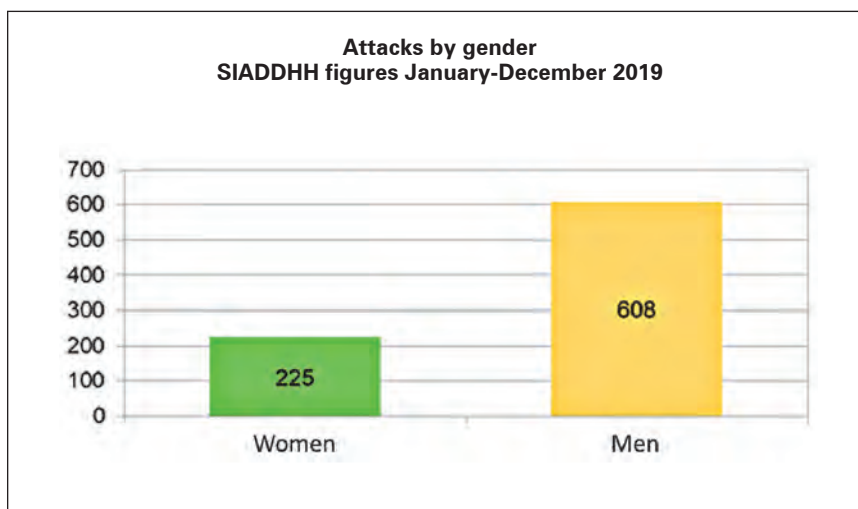
ralda (28), Bolívar and Norte de Santander (27 each), Capital District (22), Nariño (21) and Huila (20). In the other departments, between 3 and 19 cases were recorded, as shown in the following graph.



Attacks by Gender

Regarding the count of attacks by gender, the 844 cases of attacks occurred against 835 people, corresponding to 73% against men and 27% against women, as well as two cases of defenders with no identification of their gender. Compared to 2018, attacks against women show a slight decrease (10 cases less), as in the previous year, the percentage of assaulted women reached 29%. For men, there was a 7% increase compared

to 2018, with 39 more cases. What is striking is that during the first half of the year there were more assaults with 590 between January-June and 254 between July-December, and there were approximately 132.2% more assaults during the first half of the year compared to the second. There was a report of 173 assaulted women during the first semester, compared to 52 during the second one. In the case of men, 419 were assaulted during the first half of the year and 189 during the second.



Attacks by Type of Leadership

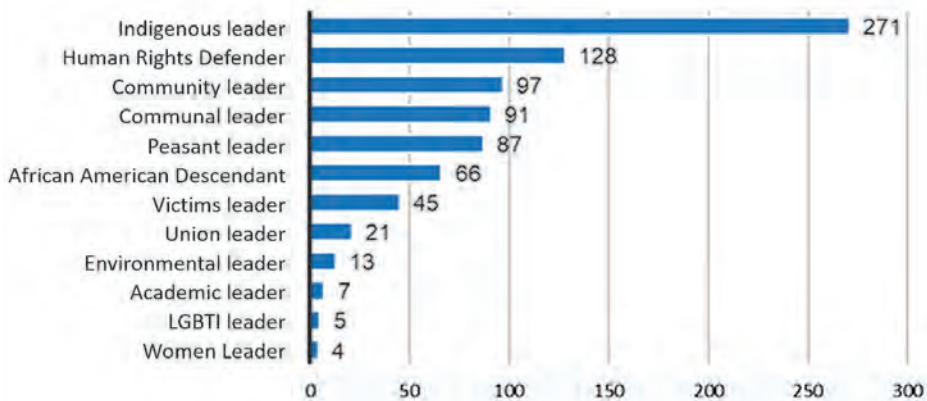
During 2019, 12 types of leadership were affected. Thus was it found that, out of the 835 leaders attacked, 271 were indigenous people, 128 human rights defenders⁹², 97 community leaders, 91 communal leaders, 87 peasant leaders, 66 leaders of African descent, 45 victims' leaders, 21 union leaders, 13 environmental leaders, 7 academic or student leaders, 5 leaders of the LGBTI population and 4 female leaders.

The attacks against the indigenous leadership is quite evident, of which

148 aggressions were recorded in Cauca, mostly in the north and east of the department; followed by La Guajira, where 22 aggressions were reported; Antioquia with 14 cases and Chocó with 13 cases. These places are marked by historical disputes over land, territorial control exercised by armed groups (paramilitary groups, ELN and residual groups of the former FARC) over the legal and illegal economies of mining and narcotics production, renewable and non-renewable resources such as water, and infrastructure works that benefit transnational companies providing goods and services.

⁹² This category refers to activists, who through their daily work in a human rights organization, contribute to the promotion, respect and protection of human rights.

Attacks according to Type of Leadership
SIADDHH figures January-December 2019



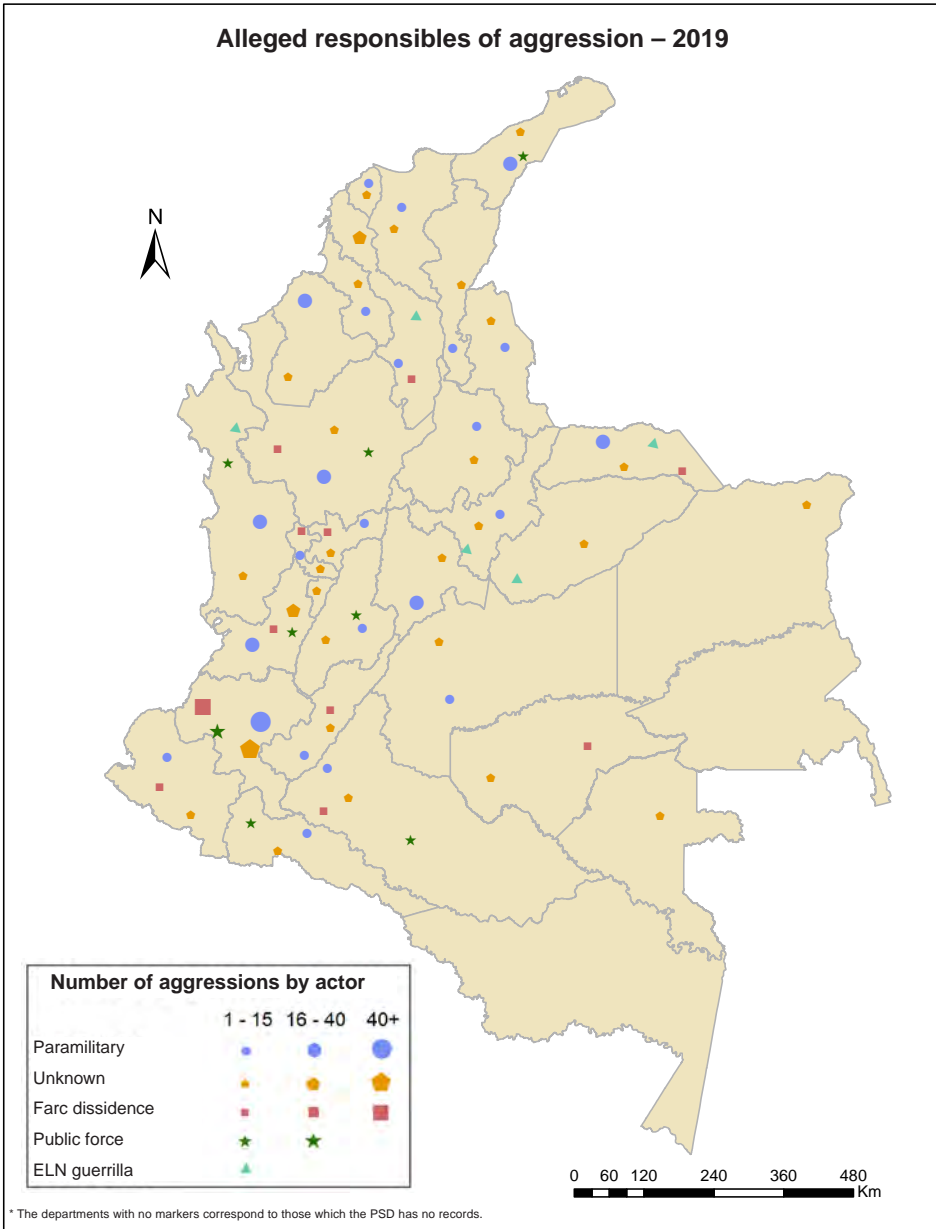
Alleged Responsibles

Out of the 844 assaults registered by the Information System of the Somos Defensores Program, the following presumed responsibilities have been identified: 47% correspond to paramilitary structures or groups, 34.2% to unknown actors, 13% to FARC-EP dissidents, 4.2% to ELN guerrillas and 3.5% to members of the Public Force. These figures, in the context of the illegal revenues described above, which eclipse other more structural conflicts (land, mega-projects), reveal how the territorial dispute directly affects leadership and organizational processes.

Nevertheless, it is not a question of reducing the phenomenon of violence against human rights defenders to this equation of the search for profit in illegal markets and armed presen-

ce. These issues are relevant because they have facilitated the circumstances for those who establish, define and delimit the norm and procedure of the communities and even impose the law; participate in the construction, consolidation and maintenance of the social and political order, thus constituting authority.

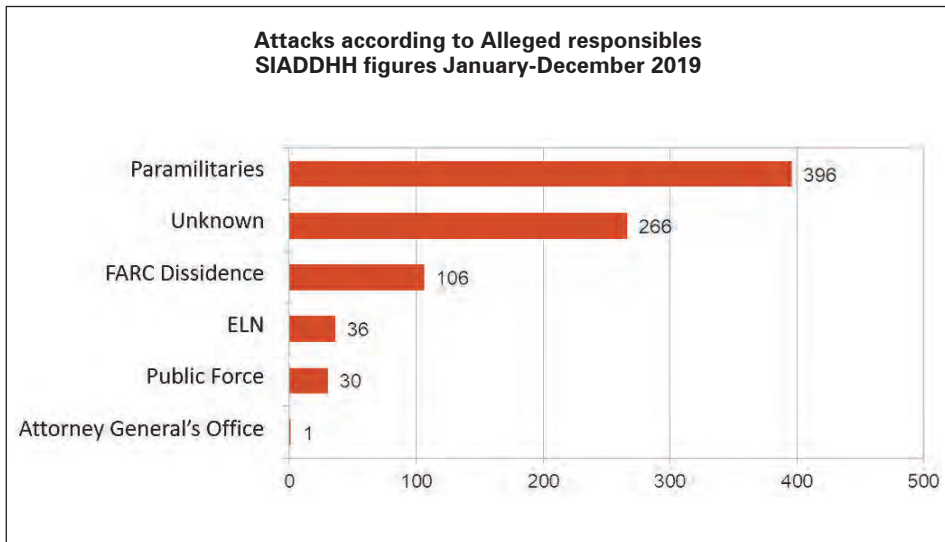
Likewise, the high number of attacks committed by unknown or unidentified actors is distressing. In 2019, 265 cases were registered in which it is not clear who could have perpetrated the attack. There are several reasons that cause this phenomenon. One is that fear of denouncing in order not to increase the risk and be able to remain in the region, leads victims to avoid identifying the perpetrators. Another hypothesis is related to the *hitman* operation mode, where the person responsible for the aggres-



Source: SIADDHH - Somos Defensores Program 2019

sions is on board of a motorized vehicle and hidden behind a “hood”. They shoot and escape without claiming their acts, hired by other actors as an

intermediary, in order to succeed in silencing the leaders without leaving any traces nor suffering any consequences whatsoever.



Assassination of human rights defenders

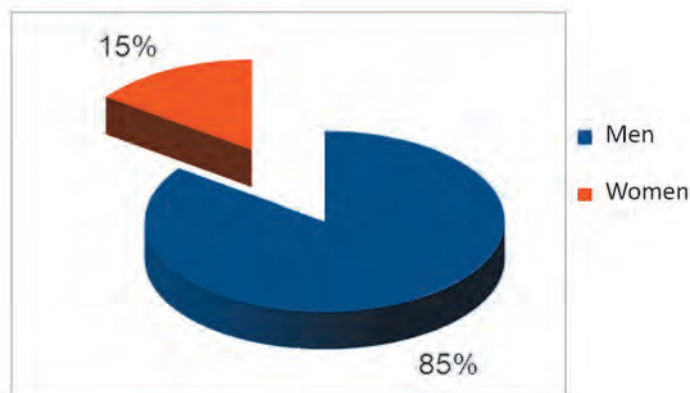
Undoubtedly, in terms of murders of human rights defenders, 2018 was the worst in the last decade, in a context of high polarization resulting from the legislative and presidential electoral processes, but also the debate between defending the Peace Agreement and turning it into ashes. Therefore, it would be expected that in 2019, the figures would drop substantially, given the “peace of mind that a new government can bring”. However, it was not quite so, because although it decreased by 24% compared to 2018, it is still high, as there were 124 confirmed cases, many more than 2016 with a record of 80 and 2017 of 106.

These figures suggest that from 2018 onwards, there has been an upsurge in attacks against the civilian population but above all, against the basic

leaderships. Those which are close to the elementary defense of life: the indigenous, peasant and maroon guards in the territories, the Community Action Boards, land claimants, displaced people and those returning to their lands, victims’ organizations demanding justice, environmental defenders. Women, the LGBTI population and young people.

According to what has been mentioned above, in the quarterly distribution of information we find that during the first quarter there were 31 murders, 29 in the second quarter, 30 in the third quarter and 34 in the fourth quarter. The months with the highest number of murders were: May (18), September (16), October (15), December (13), January (12), August (11) and March (10).

Murders according to Gender
SIADDHH figures January-December 2019



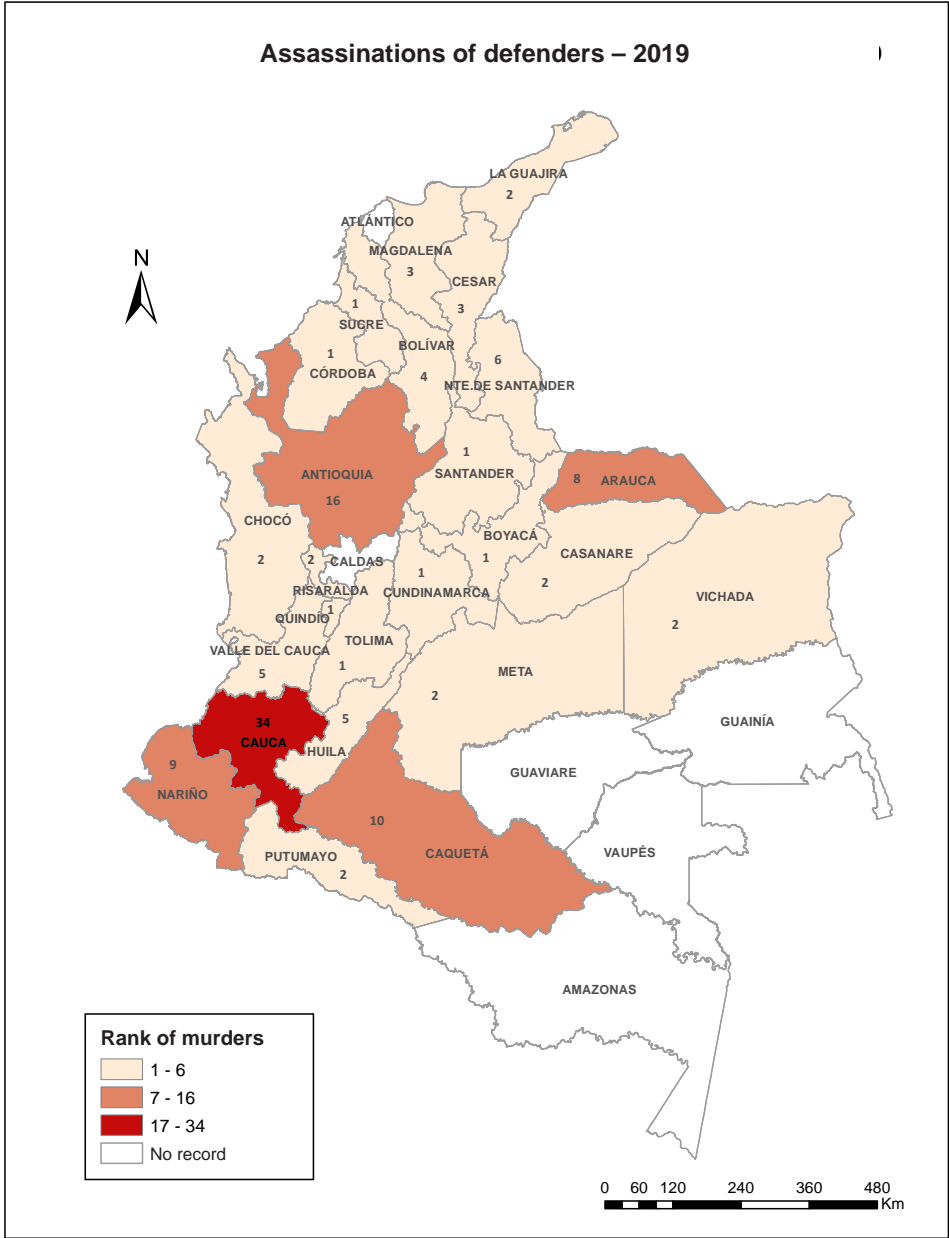
As already stated, the figures show that during 2019 the murders against leaders in Colombia decreased compared to 2018, however, in the second half of 2019, a greater number of these aggressions were recorded. Just counting the months of August, September, October and December there are 56 cases, which indicates that 45% of the murders of that year were concentrated in those months alone.

Murders by department

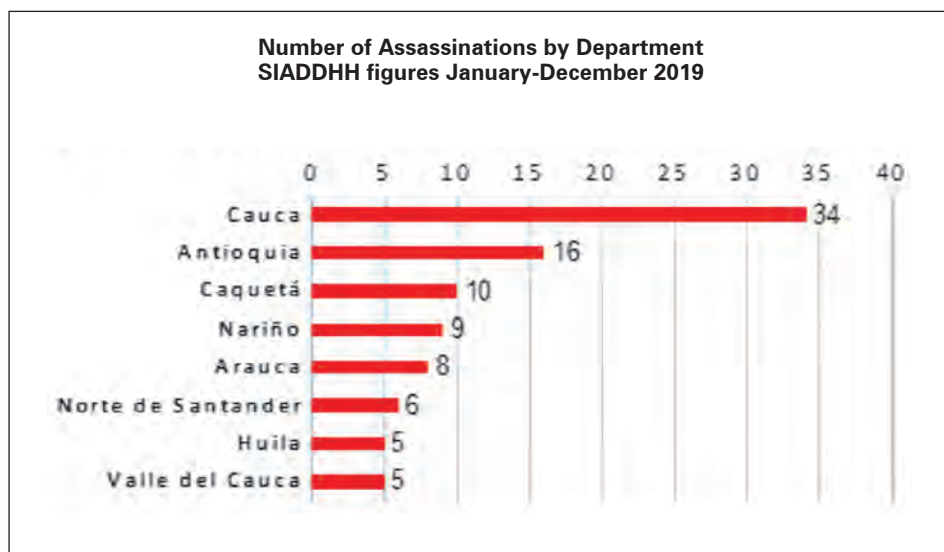
According to the documented and systematized data, the 124 assassinations of human rights defenders known by SIADDHH took place in 25 out of Colombia's 32 departments, which means 78% of the regions. The departments with the highest number of cases were Cauca, Antioquia, Ca-

quetá, Nariño, Arauca, Norte de Santander, Huila and Valle del Cauca.

The departments of Cauca (34 cases) and Antioquia (16 cases), continue to head the list of the most violent regions for the exercise of leadership. On this occasion, these departments are followed by Caquetá (10 cases), an issue that is noteworthy because it is not usual for this territory to appear in the first places of the departments with the most murders. Cauca had an increase of 21% compared to 2018, going from 28 to 34 cases. Thus, the Southwest region continues to be the most affected by the murders of social leaders, since out of the total number of these aggressions registered by SIADDHH in 2019, 42% (52 cases) occurred in the departments of Putumayo, Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca and Chocó.



Source: SIADDHH - Somos Defensores Program 2019



Assassinations by cities

According to the information documented and confirmed by the Somos Defensores Program, the cities or municipalities that reported the highest number of murders are Toribío (11 cases), Caloto (5 cases), Corinto (5 cases), Suárez (5 cases), Tarazá (5 cases), Saravena (4 cases), Cartagena del Chairá (4 cases) and Tumaco (3 cases).

The violations surrounding the murder of a human rights defender are multiple and, on several occasions, the aggressions that occur around the same event are diverse. Thus, for example, in 2019 there was a murder case that was preceded by disappearance in the municipality of San

Jacinto del Cauca, Bolívar; in another case, which occurred in the municipality of Solano, Caquetá, the body of the leader showed signs of torture, indicating that before his death he was subjected to **cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment**, but not before arbitrarily detaining him and momentarily disappearing him. There is also a case of an indigenous leader in the municipality of Barbacoas, Nariño, where her family had to leave their ancestral territory to protect their lives. In other cases, the families, communities or members of the organization to which the social leaders belonged are threatened by the actions of the armed forces, as occurred in several cases in the municipality of Toribío, Cauca.

**Cities with highest Number of Assassinations
SIADDHH figures January-December 2019**



Murders by type of leadership

Regarding the type of leadership, profile and social belonging of the murdered people, the trend in attacks on members of the Community Action Boards continues, who again lead the deplorable list of murders with 33 cases; 31 were working in rural contexts, while 2 were in urban contexts, and among these, 3 women were affected. The list is continued by 32 indigenous leaders or authorities, with an increase of 8 cases, compared to 2018, even surpassing the previous year as the highest record in the last 10 years. Next, we find community leaders with 29 murders, 5 more than in the previous period. Finally, Peasant leaders, with 17 cases, 2 less than in 2018.

If we take into account the total figure of these four social sectors of

reference, which corresponds to 111 cases, it is a fact that they represent 89.6% of the 124 murders registered by the SIADDHH during 2019. This situation shows that most of the murders were committed against people dedicated to the defense of land and territory.

The situation mentioned above refers to the historical conflicts and disputes over access, permanence and distribution of land, which are even included in Point 1 of the Peace Agreement. This shows that the land problem persists as the fundamental axis of the war in the country, taking into account that the assassinated leaders and defenders are located in the majority of the PDET municipalities. It should also be noted that out of the 32 indigenous leaders or authorities murdered, 77.7 % were concentrated in the department of Cauca, with the

northern zone being the most affected. The same is true of the peasant sector, where 47% of the murders occurred in the north and south of this department. While in the communal and community sectors, the distribution is more diversified.

Type of leadership of murdered defenders	
Communal leader	33
Indigenous leader	32
Community leader	29
Peasant leader	17
Afro descending	5
Environmental leader	2
Victims leader	2
LGBTI leader	1
Union leader	1
Academic leader	1
Women's leader	1
Total	124

Alleged responsible for the murders

Concerning the authorship or the alleged perpetrators of the annihilation of social leaders or human rights defenders, documented and registered by the SIADDHH, it was found that most of the murder events were committed by unknown persons with 82 cases, followed by dissidents or post-demobilization FARC groups with 21 cases, paramilitary groups with 16 cases, the ELN guerrilla groups with 4 cases and in 1 case, by the National Army. It is important to remark that in 121 cases, the deaths were caused by firearms, in 2 cases by white weapon and in

1 case by blunt object. Also, in one case, two relatives of the defender were also victims of an attack.

The high number of acts committed by unknown persons is of great concern. Some of the explanations for this type of offender, which is hidden in "anonymity", are related to the naturalized practice of "hit men", which generates a strategic distance between intellectual authors and executors. This relationship is mediated by money, with a rather "business-like" structure and operational logistics (usually high cylinder motorcycles, escort and high caliber firearms, etc.).

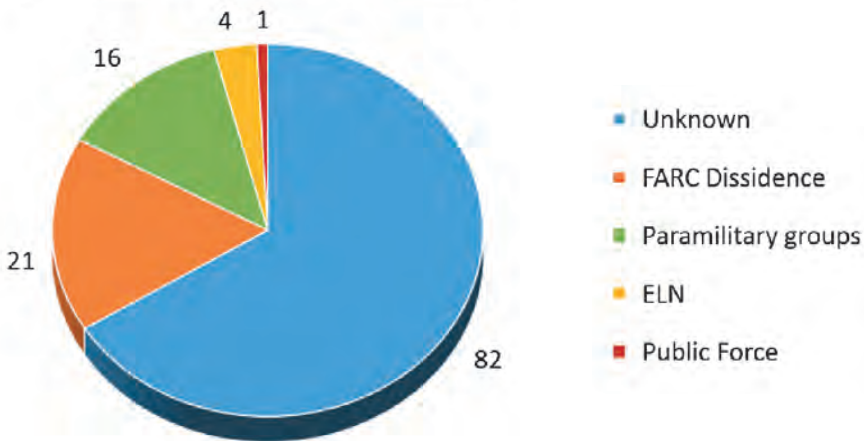
The increase in the number of murders committed by FARC dissidents or post-demobilization groups is also noteworthy. In 2019 the number doubled from 12 cases in 2018 to 21 in 2019. Cauca and Caquetá appear to be the departments with the highest number of murders in which this type of group is allegedly responsible. In Cauca the cases are registered in the north, while in Caquetá they occur in the northeast.

As far as the paramilitary groups are concerned, it is evident that their actions are concentrated in the departments of Antioquia, Córdoba, Cesar, La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Risaralda and the Pacific coast of Nariño. There, the most affected leaderships were the communal, the community and the peasant, locating the majority of the events in the sub-region of Bajo Cauca, in acts committed by paramilitaries of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia and the Isaza Clan.

When the data on the actions of these groups in the municipalities is disaggregated, the result is that the highest incidence of murders is in the municipality of Tarazá, Antioquia, where violence is associated with illegal mining and coca leaf production, extractive activities that are controlled by these groups, as a way of building and sustaining local social orders. According to the web portal of the alternative press agency *Análisis Urbano* (Urban Analysis), the homicide rate in the sub-region

is one of the highest. Furthermore, it is one of the PDET's and the Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops – PNIS– zones, where people who work in their defense end up being the target of attacks by paramilitary structures; in addition to this, there is the forced recruitment of minors. Finally, in this sub-region of the department of Antioquia, the control of the dynamics of illegal economies (mining and alkaloid production), is not only deteriorating social life but also the environment.

**Alleged responsible for assassinations
SIADDHH figures January-December 2019**



Individual Threats

Threats appear in 2019 as the most common type of aggression used to attack human rights defenders in Colombia. In the SIADDHH, 628 individual threats were registered, re-

presenting 72.6% of the total aggressions of the period, and an increase of 7.7% in relation to 2018, making 2019 the year in which the Information System has registered the most threats

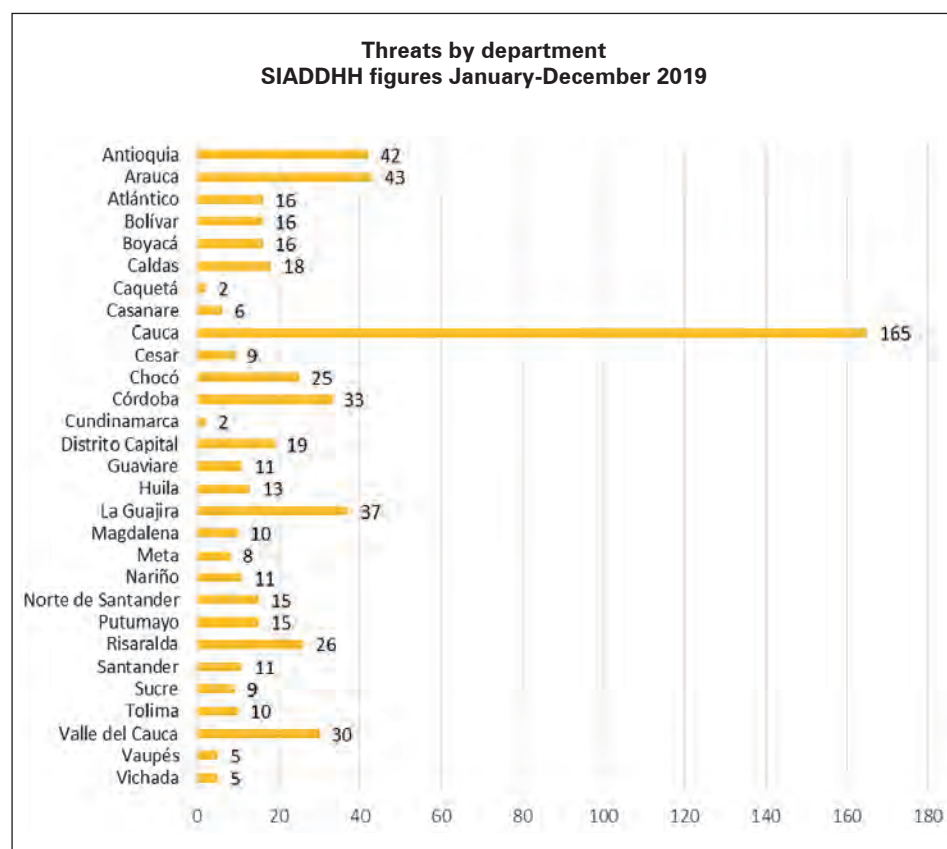
in the last 10 years. The occurrence of threats throughout the country averaged 1.7 people per day, and was present in 29 of the country's 32 departments, with 45 more cases than in 2018.

Threats by department

Although the threats took place in 29 departments, their characteristics are not all the same. Those with the highest incidence and number of cases are highlighted below: Cauca with 165 cases, Arauca with 43 cases, Antioquia with 42 cases, La Guajira with 37 cases, Córdoba with 33 cases, Va-

lle del Cauca with 30 cases, Risaralda with 26 cases and Chocó with 25 cases, for a total of 399 cases of threatened defenders.

In this type of aggression, the department of Cauca continues to show high rates of persecution against social leadership, with an increase from 118 threats in 2018 to 165 in 2019, representing a 39% increase. Indigenous leaderships continue to be the most affected, with 108 leaders or authorities affected by threats, followed by Afro-descendant leaders with 31 cases, peasants with 20 cases, victims' leaders with 4 cases and finally community leaders with 2 cases. Of

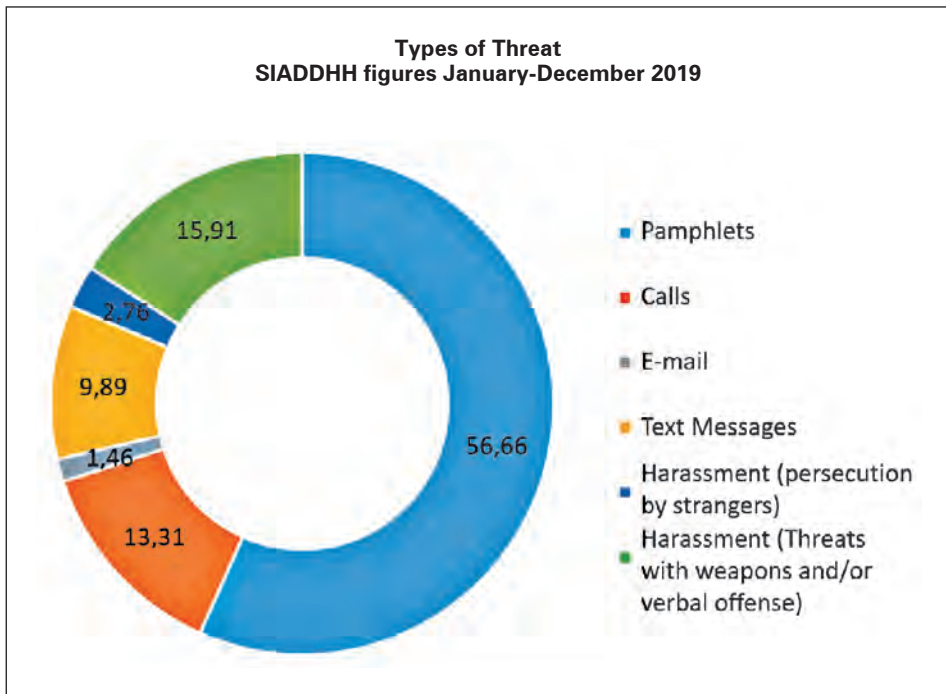


these threats, 96 were allegedly perpetrated by paramilitary groups, 47 by FARC dissidents, 19 were unknown or unidentified and 3 were made by the Public Force. Thus, the paramilitary groups appear to be responsible for the greatest number of cases.

Types of Threat

Among the most recurrent forms of intimidating or harassing people who are dedicated to social leadership or the defense of human rights, are e-mails with 2%, text messages with 9.9%, phone calls with 12.9%, harassment with 21.5% and pamphlets with 53%, the latter being the most used form of terrorizing social leadership in the country.

The use of the pamphlets was reported in 347 cases, distributed as follows: paramilitary groups with 245, FARC dissidents with 48, unknown with 30, the ELN with 12 and the security forces with 12. Of the 245 pamphlets authored by the paramilitary groups, the "Black Eagles" were responsible for 117, the Auto-defensas Gaitanistas de Colombia for 99, and 29 correspond to denominations such as "Paramilitaries, Paramilitary-Caparrapos and the Sinaloa Cartel". In addition to intimidating human rights defenders, the threats are also directed at the collectivities they are part of, communities, neighborhoods and even refer to acts of social intolerance against people such as sex workers, hallucinogen products consumers and people from the LGBTI population.



On the other hand, there is an increase in harassment events such as stalking or persecution in the routines of defenders. This occurs through actions such as the movement of suspicious people, intrusion into both the places of residence and work of the person being intimidated and into community spaces, verbal and physical threats or aggression, and intimidation with a white weapon or firearms. In this other form of threat and intimidation, an increase of 53 cases was recorded with respect to 2018, rising from 82 cases to 135, which represents an increase of 64.63%, same proportion as in 2017, indicating that the growth rate of this type of aggression is almost 50% per year.

Similarly, there was an increase in threats through phone calls. From 67 of such cases in 2018, 81 were recorded in 2019, 14 more than in the previous period. In the majority of the cases, the presumed perpetrators were paramilitary groups, with 58% of these. Likewise, there is an increase in the use of text messages, which went from 36 in 2018 to 74 in 2019, which means a growth of 105% in this form of threat.

Alleged Responsible

It is important to identify the alleged perpetrators of the 628 documented threats, in order to understand part of the phenomenon of political violence against human rights defenders. This is because most of the events herein recorded and analyzed are the result of the political and social disputes already mentioned above, which make it possible to per-

petuate the violations against social leaders, communities and the organizational processes they represent and defend.

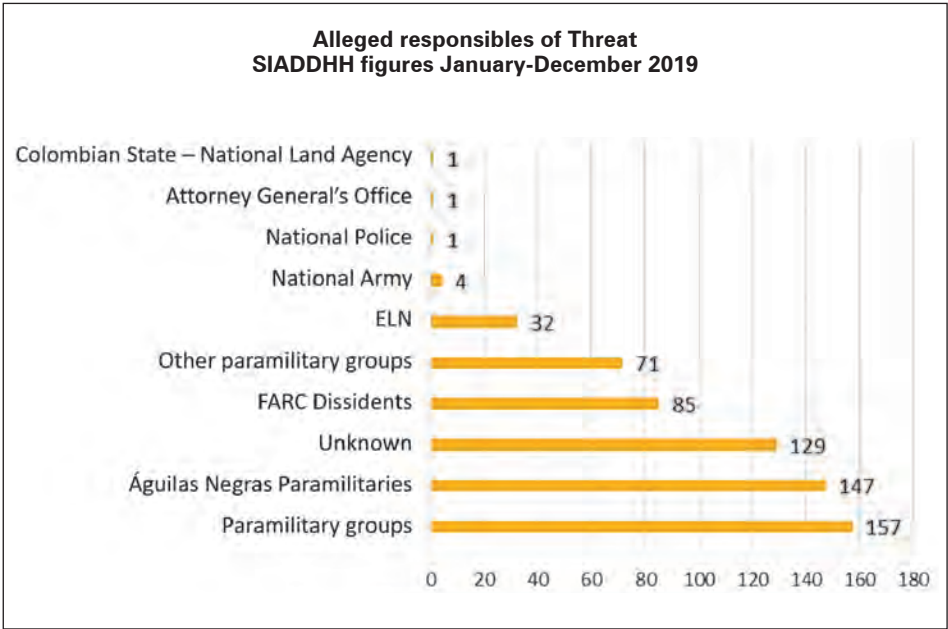
As pointed out by the Electoral Observation Mission⁹³, the Attorney General's Office, together with the Special Investigation Unit, in January 2020 provided figures highlighting the large percentage of actions committed by *individuals and organized armed groups*, including paramilitary groups, FARC dissidents, the ELN, and the EPL. However, there is no clear information on how threats or murders are carried out, beyond the statistic in which the life and dignity of the people who have been violated becomes. Here we have gathered, in contrast, the documented information for the SIADDHH, which gives an account of the alleged culprits.

Between January and December 2019, the paramilitary groups of the "Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia" issued 157 threats, while 147 were sent by the "Aguilas Negras", 129 by unknown persons, 85 by FARC dissidents, 71 by other paramilitary groups such as Los Caparrapos, Los Costeños, Los Panchecas, Los Pelusos, El Cartel de Sinaloa or Paramilitary groups; 32 by the ELN, 4 by the National Army, 1 by the Police and the Prosecutor's Office each and finally, 1

⁹³ Political-Electoral Observatory of Democracy (2020). THIRD REPORT ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE. Election Observation Mission. Available at: <https://moe.org.co/no-disminuyen-agresiones-contra-lideres-sociales-y-comunales-al-contrario-aumentan-la-violencia-contra-lideres-politicos-moe/>

case was found in which the Colombian State, through the National Land

Agency, neglected to protect a leader against the threat of a civilian.



It should be noted that in the midst of the intimidation and difficulties faced by human rights defenders, a number of different types of aggression occur, which often go unnoticed. On this occasion, it corresponds to other forms of aggression to which they have been submitted and which have been

registered by the SIADDHH. Among them, 2 cases where the victims were injured, 8 cases where the threat was accompanied by attacks, 3 with torture, 1 with detention, 1 where there was also theft of information and 2 with displacement.

Wounds	Attacks	Torture	Arbitrary Detention	Information Theft	Displacement
8	3	1	1	2	2

Finally, it is relevant to highlight the number of threats directed against groups of human rights defenders, as another phenomenon that is sometimes overlooked, what we have been

able to notice is that around 245 of these groups were also threatened by different actors; many are the families, inhabitants, organizational processes, peace communities, black

communities, indigenous reservations, municipal victims' boards, workers' associations for the constitution of peasant reserve zones, indigenous guards, among others. Hence, from the beginning of this analysis, it has

been sustained that what is happening is the extermination of the seed and the root of elementary leadership that is close to the defense of the most precious asset: Life.

Figures balance

Violence has become more intense against the same sectors that ten years ago reported the atrocities that were taking place in the middle of the armed conflict, at the beginning of Juan Manuel Santos' administration, but which were not necessarily the result of the warlike actions of the two poles in the State vs. insurgency battlefield, which continues to this day. As it has been said throughout the analysis, it is the legal and illegal economic interests that are destroying social leadership and the defense of human rights in the country.

In these 10 years of work, we find that what violence has achieved is to limit the exercise of fundamental rights of communities, that is, the very exercise of the "oldest democracy in the continent", which is nested in powers and does not allow the truth about many crimes against human rights defenders and even against political leaders or demobilized guerrillas to be clarified.

Likewise, in these 10 years of monitoring the situation of political violence against social leaders and human rights defenders, the SIADDHH has been hearing claims that a high percentage of the crimes have already been cleared up by the justice system, claims that only correspond to

institutional discourse, but with no real result to show the dismantling of the political, economic and criminal operational structures that exist behind this criminality.

In this decade, we highlight the increase in the figures that we have recorded in the various quarterly, half-yearly and annual reports, which not only show a difficult reality, but also relate to the progress that has been made by various territorial organizations in documenting information, so as not to leave it in oblivion and in the search for clarification of truth and justice. This data has been the support for the work carried out by the SIADDHH.

We would also like to draw attention to the successive and gradual increase in aggressions, as a constant over the last ten years. First, the number of threats has risen from 109 cases in 2010 to 628 in 2019, an increase of 476%. Between 2010 and 2019, 3,585 social leaders were threatened. From 2016, the year marked by the peace process with the FARC and the signing of the Agreement, until 2019, 1,898 leaders were threatened.

The years of greatest increase in this type of aggression have been, in the middle of negotiations in Havana

2014 with 488 and 2015 with 539. In the first year of implementation of the Peace Agreement 2017, 370 threats were made, in 2018 we registered 583 and in 2019 a total of 628 cases. 2019 closes this second decade of the century as the year with the most threats against social leaders.

In the second place come the aggressions that persist with a notable increase, the assassinations, which went from 32 in 2010 to 155 in 2018; in 2019 there were a total of 124 confirmed cases. The number of human rights defenders who have lost their lives in the last decade has reached **811**, with indigenous, community,

and peasant leaderships being the ones who have suffered the greatest number of losses in the defense of life, peace, and the rights of communities.

Same as the aggressions mentioned above, the number of attacks has gradually increased from 21 in 2010 to 52 in 2019. Finally, we point out that the last 5 years have generated great concern, as 3,372 individual aggressions have been registered, which indicates that on average we have had 36% more cases per year, and that aggressions may grow on average at a rate of 24%.

Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Threats	109	140	202	209	488	539	317	370	583	628	3585
Murders	32	49	69	78	55	63	80	106	155	124	811
Attacks	21	20	50	39	41	35	49	50	34	52	391
Arbitrary Detentions	11	23	26	22	23	26	17	23	4	29	204
Disappearances	0	6	5	1	1	3	2	0	4	3	25
Prosecutions	1	1	1	10	8	8	9	9	19	1	67
Sexual Violence	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Information Theft	0	0	3	7	10	8	6	2	6	7	49
Total	174	239	357	366	626	682	481	560	805	844	5134

Human Rights defenders murdered during 2019 -SIADDHH-

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
1/01/2019	Cauca	Suárez	Gilberto Valencia Agrono	President of the Community Action Board of the Pueblo Nuevo neighborhood	Communal leader	Unknown
1/01/2019	Valle del Cauca	Caicedonia	Jesús Adier Perafán Correa	President of the Community Action Board of the Valle del Cauca neighborhood. Candidate for Caicedonia Council	Communal leader	Unknown
4/01/2019	Cauca	Cajibío	Wilmer Antonio Miranda Cabrera	Member of the Association of Peasant Workers of Cajibío -ATCP-. Member of the PNIS	Peasant leader	Unknown
4/01/2019	Antioquia	Zaragoza	José Rafael Solano González	President of the Community Action Board of the Puerto Jobo village	Communal leader	Paramilitary groups
5/01/2019	Magdalena	Santa Marta	Maritza Isabel Quiroz Leiva	Substitute at the Santa Marta Victims' Table. Leader of female victims of displacement in the rural area of Santa Marta	Victims leader	Unknown
6/01/2019	Norte de Santander	Hacarí	Wilson Pérez Ascanio	Popular Movement for the Constituent -MPC-. Member of the PNIS	Community leader	Unknown
7/01/2019	Caquetá	Cartagena del Charrá	Miguel Antonio Gutiérrez Martínez	President of the La Victoria Neighborhood Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
15/01/2019	Bolívar	Montecristo	Victor Manuel Trujillo	Project manager in favor of children	Community leader	ELN
24/01/2019	Antioquia	El Peñol	Samuel Andrés Gallo Mayo	Social and community leader of the El Peñol municipality	Community leader	Unknown
26/01/2019	Valle del Cauca	Cartago	José Jairo Orozco Calvo	Community Housing Board of the Vista Hermosa Urbanization in Cartago	Community leader	Unknown
26/01/2019	Norte de Santander	El Tarra	Lede María Ortega Ortiz	Secretary of the Community Action Board of the Mundo Nuevo village	Communal leader	Unknown
29/01/2019	Cauca	Suárez	Dilio Corpus Guetio	Member of the Ascordillera Peasant Workers Association. Member of the peasant guard	Peasant leader	Unknown
3/02/2019	Cauca	Caloto	Eric Esnorlido Viera Paz	Member of the Community Action Board of the El Palo village and of the Workers Association in favor of the Constitution of the Caloto Peasant Reserve Zones -ASTRAZONACAL-	Communal leader	Unknown

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
8/02/2019	Norte de Santander	Tibú	José Alquiñmedes Moreno Ferrer	Delegate of the Community Action Board, T-25 Los Patios village. Community leader of the Social Integration Committee of the Río de Oro sector	Communal leader	Paramilitary groups
14/02/2019	Nariño	Samaniego	Maria Nelly Bernal Andrade	Member of the Indigenous Guard in the chapter of the Pastos People and defender of the territory of the La Montaña de Samaniego chapter	Indigenous leader	Unknown
16/02/2019	Antioquia	Caucasia	Querubín de Jesús Zapata Áviles	Representative of the Cauca Municipal Youth Platform. Member of the Semillas de Paz (Seeds of Peace) Foundation	Community leader	Paramilitary groups
20/02/2019	Arauca	Arauca	Zaira Bellasmin Pérez	Community representative of the Los Güirres settlement	Community leader	Unknown
25/02/2019	Arauca	Tame	Demetrio Barrera Díaz	Indigenous Guard Coordinator, Culioto 2 indigenous community of the Makaguan People	Indigenous leader	ELN
25/02/2019	Antioquia	Caucasia	Liliana Holguin	Caucasia LGBTI Board	LGTBI leader	Unknown
25/02/2019	Santander	Bucaramanga	José Fernel Manrique Valencia	Leader of the Sectional Board of Directors, United Trade Union of Workers in the Construction Materials Industry	Union leader	Unknown
27/02/2019	Putumayo	Puerto Asís	Sonia Rosero González	Pre-candidate for mayor	Community leader	Unknown
5/03/2019	Vichada	Cumaribo	Marco Antonio Romero Lozano	Vice President of the Campo Alegre Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
11/03/2019	Norte de Santander	Cicuta	Francisco Javier Cervantes Florez	Seis Reyes Settlement	Community leader	Unknown
14/03/2019	Casanare	Sácama	Alfonso Correa Sandoval	President of the La Cabuya village Community Action Board. Pre-sident of the Manantiales Peasant and Environmental Association -ASOCAM-	Communal leader	Unknown
17/03/2019	Cauca	Corinto	Jhon Jairo Noscué	Member of the Peasant Guard at the checkpoint in the El Tablón sector	Peasant leader	Unknown
17/03/2019	Nariño	Tumaco	Argemiro López Pertuz	Leader of illicit crop substitution in La Guayacana. Former President of the Guayacana Community Action Board (JAC).	Peasant leader	Paramilitary groups

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
18/03/2019	Antioquia	Sonsón	Joaquín Emilio Jaramillo López	Prosecutor of the Piedras Blancas Community Action Board	Communal leader	Paramilitary groups
22/03/2019	Meta	Villavicencio	Fredy Yesid Chisco García	El Rubí neighborhood Community leader. Former President of Community Action Board.	Community leader	Unknown
25/03/2019	Valle del Cauca	Sevilla	Edwin Andrés Grisales Galvis	Member of the Hip-Hop Network of the Sevilla municipality.	Community leader	Unknown
27/03/2019	Caquetá	Puerto Rico	Ebel Yonitá Ramos	Nasa Peoples Leader	Indigenous leader	Unknown
28/03/2019	Arauca	Saravena	Erick Yammid Torres Buitrage	Journalist at the Arauquita Stereo community radio station. Leader of the youth movement	Community leader	Unknown
7/04/2019	Caquetá	Currillo	Lucero Jaramillo Álvarez	Secretary of the Puerto Valdivia village Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
10/04/2019	Cauca	Argelia	Policarpo Guzmán	Founder of the Algeria Workers' Peasant Association -ASCAMTA-	Peasant leader	Unknown
11/04/2019	Meta	La Macarena	Anderson Ramiro Gómez Herrera	Advisor to ASQUINTAS on La Macarena	Community leader	Unknown
12/04/2019	Chocó	Riosucio	Aquileo Mecheche Baragon	President of the Indigenous Major Chapter of the Bajo Atrato CAMIZBA. Principal of the Jagual Indigenous Educational Institution	Indigenous leader	Unknown
27/04/2019	Antioquia	Maceo	Diofanor Montoya	Leader of the Elderly	Community leader	Unknown
1/05/2019	Nariño	Cumbal	Miguel Ángel Alpala	Reserve of the Los Pastos village Gran Cumbal. Member of the Indigenous Authorities of Colombia (AICO), the Justice Commission of the Pastos people and the Own-Rights School	Indigenous leader	Unknown
2/05/2019	Antioquia	Ituango	John Salas Barrera	Community Action Board Member	Communal leader	Unknown
4/05/2019	Cesar	Godazzi	Eduardo Torres Mora	Vice-president of the La Divina Pastora community council. Senior Leader.	Community leader	Unknown
7/05/2019	Arauca	Saravena	Didier Ferney González	Delegate of the association ASOJER of the municipality of Fortul. Member of the Interethnic Guard, Peasant and Popular of the Center East	Peasant leader	Unknown
8/05/2019	Nariño	Santa Bárbara	Milton Hernández	Minor Council of the Iseuande River Basin	Afro-descendant leader	Unknown

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
8/05/2019	Nariño	Santa Bárbara	Daniel Obando Arroyo	President of the Minor Council of the Iscuandé River Basin	Afro-descendant leader	Unknown
9/05/2019	Bolívar	Morales	Belsario Arciniegas García	Community leader of the Mico Ahumado village	Community leader	Unknown
9/05/2019	Arauca	Araucita	Mauricio Lezama Rengifo	Filmmaker and director	Community leader	FARC Dissidents
10/05/2019	Bolívar	Morales	Wilmar José Carvajalino	Agro-Mining Federation of Southern Bolívar -FEDEAGROMISBOL-	Community leader	ELN
11/05/2019	Huila	San Agustín	Luis Manuel Salamanca Galindez	Founder of St. Augustine's House of Culture	Community leader	Unknown
14/05/2019	Cauca	Caloto	Daniel Eduardo Rojas Zambrano	Member of the Community Action Board of the López Adentro Reservation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
15/05/2019	Caquetá	Puerto Rico	Benedicto Valencia	President of the Miraflores Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
16/05/2019	Norte de Santander	Ocaña	Maria del Carmen Flórez	Leader in the Altos del Norte neighborhood	Community leader	Unknown
16/05/2019	Valle del Cauca	Vijes	Aydali Ortega Marulanda	President of the Hispanos Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
17/05/2019	Cauca	Balboa	Guillermo León Rengifo Ramírez	President of the Capitanes village Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
23/05/2019	Boyacá	La Victoria	José Hugo Delgado Téllez	Community leader	Community leader	Unknown
24/05/2019	Casanare	Nunchia	Concepción Corredor	Former President of the La Pradera Community Action Board	Community leader	ELN
30/05/2019	Magdalena	Santa Marta	Luis Joaquín Trujillo	President of the Quebrada del Sol village Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
1/06/2019	Norte de Santander	Playa de Belén	Dagoberto Álvarez	Member of the Miraflores village Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
6/06/2019	Sucre	Coveñas	Julián Alexander Quiñones Oñate	President of the Guayabal Neighborhood - Stage I Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
10/06/2019	Cauca	Corinto	Freiman Baicué	Member of the Peasant Guard and the Association of Peasant Workers in the Peasant Reserve Zone of the Municipality of Corinto -ASTRAZONAC-	Peasant leader	Unknown

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
10/06/2019	Cauca	Corinto	Uver Ney Villano	Member of the Peasant Guard and the Association of Peasant Workers in the Peasant Reserve Zone of the Municipality of Corinto -ASTRAZONAC-	Peasant leader	Unknown
21/06/2019	Córdoba	Tierralta	María del Pilar Hurtado	Leader of the Los Robles sector settlement, Nueve de Agosto neighborhood	Community leader	Paramilitary groups
26/06/2019	Valle del Cauca	Tuluá	José Arled Muñoz Giraldo	Prosecutor of the Afro-United Foundation of the Pacific. Member of the Municipal Board of Victims	Afro-descendant leader	Unknown
20/07/2019	Huila	Gigante	Humberto Díaz Tierradentro	President of the Guadalupe village Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
27/07/2019	Vichada	Cumaribo	José del Carmen Jara Ardila	Member of the La Gran Reforma village Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
28/07/2019	Chocó	Bagadó	Pablo Emilio Campo Tequia	Member of the Alto Andágueda Reservation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
1/08/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Gersain Yatacue	Coordinator of the Indigenous Guard of the San Julián village	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
3/08/2019	Cauca	Caloto	José Eduardo Tumbo	Member of the Community Action Board and of the Association of Peasant Reserve -ASTRAZONACAL-	Peasant leader	Unknown
4/08/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Enrique Guejía Meza	Traditional physician	Indigenous leader	Unknown
9/08/2019	Antioquia	Frontino	Luis Alberto Jumi Bailarin	Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	Unknown
10/08/2019	Cauca	Caloto	Kevin Mestizo Coicue	Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	Unknown
10/08/2019	Cauca	Caloto	Eugenio Tenorio	Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	Unknown
12/08/2019	Cauca	Caloto	Orlando Gómez	Principal of the Huasanó Agro-Business Educational Institution	Academic leader	Unknown
15/08/2019	Nariño	Magüi Payán	Wilson Charley Tenorio	Secretary of the municipal Ombudsman's Office of Magüi Payán and former councillor	Community leader	Unknown
15/08/2019	Bolívar	San Jacinto del Cauca	Luis Eduardo Caldera Villamizar	Former President of the San Jacinto del Cauca Community Action Board and candidate for the Council of the Municipality	Communal leader	Unknown
18/08/2019	Antioquia	Medellín	Anderson Pino Castaño	Musician of the youth group "Kódigo ocho" (Code 8)	Community leader	Paramilitary groups

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
25/08/2019	Huila	Gigante	Danilo Olaya Perdomo	President of the Alto Cachiaya Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
1/09/2019	Cauca	Suarez	Aydée Tróchez	Representative of the La Cascada village Victims' Committee	Community leader	Unknown
1/09/2019	Cauca	Suarez	Héctor González	President of the Las Brisas Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
1/09/2019	Cauca	Suarez	Ladevis Ramos	Rural leader of the village of Altamira	Community leader	Unknown
2/09/2019	Arauca	Tame	Magdalena Cocubana	Macarieros del Pueblo Makaguán Community	Indigenous leader	Unknown
6/09/2019	Nariño	Tumaco	José Cortés Sevillano	President of the El Carmen Community Action Board. Leader of the PNIS	Communal leader	Unknown
8/09/2019	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chirrá	Yunier Moreno Jave	Member of the association of Peñas Coloradas village displaced persons	Community leader	FARC Dissidents
8/09/2019	Cauca	Páez	Mario Alberto Achicué	Member of the Indigenous Guard of the Lame-norte de Páez Reservation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
8/09/2019	Cesar	Chimichagua	Miguel Angel Suárez Santiago	Coordination of the Catatumbo Peasant Association -ASCAMCAT-	Peasant leader	Unknown
13/09/2019	La Guajira	Maicao	José Manuel Pana Epie-yu	Member of the Autonomous Board of Major Spokespersons for Human Rights. Traditional authority of the Karaquita reservation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
20/09/2019	Caquetá	Solano	Victor Manuel Chani Aguilar	Indigenous leader of the Aguas Negras Reservation	Indigenous leader	Public Force
26/09/2019	Cauca	El Bordo	Jairo Javier Ruiz Hernández	Founder of ASCATBAL. Member of the veredal committee of the National Coordinator of Coca, Poppy and Marijuana Growers -CCG-CAM-. Member of the PNIS	Peasant leader	Unknown
26/09/2019	Cauca	Páez	Marlon Ferney Pachó	Secretary of the indigenous council of Talaga. Nasa Chhaexha Association	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
29/09/2019	Antioquia	Tarazá	Alex Fernando Salcedo	Member of the Association of Cocoa Producers -ACATA-. Member of the PNIS	Peasant leader	Paramilitary groups
29/09/2019	Antioquia	Tarazá	Cristian Sánchez	Member of the Association of Cocoa Producers -ACATA-. Member of the PNIS	Peasant leader	Paramilitary groups

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
29/09/2019	Antioquia	Tarazá	Albert Armando Sánchez Gómez	Member of the Association of Cocoa Producers -ACATA-. Member of the PNIS. Rural Promoter	Peasant leader	Paramilitary groups
30/09/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Ortiz Arancel Avelino UI Mestizo	Founder and member of the Indigenous Association "Avelino UI". Member of the Process of Popular Unity of Southwestern Colombia -PUPSOC- and of the Social and Political Coordination of the Cauca Patriotic March	Indigenous leader	Unknown
4/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Dumar Mestizo	Member of the Youth Movement Álvaro Ucie Chocué	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
13/10/2019	Nariño	Barbacoas	Lilia Patricia García	Secretary of the Council of the Watsalpi Awa Indigenous Reservation	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
13/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Toribio Canás Velasco	Nasa indigenous guard of the Tacueyó reservation	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
17/10/2019	Quindío	Calarcá	Constantino Ramirez	Founder of the Regional Indigenous Organization of Quindío-ORI-QUIN-. Member of the Directors Board of the Quindío Autonomous Corporation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
19/10/2019	Risaralda	Santa Rosa de Cabal	Nelson Andrés Trujillo	Founder of the IAS Youth Group	Community leader	Unknown
22/10/2019	Caquetá	La Montañita	Miguel Ceballos Rodríguez	Treasurer of the San Isidro Community Action Board	Communal leader	Unknown
28/10/2019	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá	Gustavo Montoya	Vice President of the La Espensa village Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
28/10/2019	Caquetá	Cartagena del Chairá	Ronald Rodríguez	Member of the Coexistence and Conciliation Committee of the La Espensa village Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
29/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Cristina Bautista Taquinás	Governor (Neehwesx authority) of the Tacueyó reservation	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
29/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Astríbal Cayapu	Nasa Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
29/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	Elodoro Finscué	Nasa Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
29/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	José Gerardo Soto	Nasa Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
29/10/2019	Cauca	Toribio	James Wilfredo Soto	Nasa Indigenous Guard	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
3/10/2019	Antioquia	Chigorodó	Gilberto Domicó Domicó	Indigenous guard of the Emberá Eyábita people, from the Polines Reservation	Indigenous leader	Paramilitary groups
3/11/2019	Cauca	Toribío	Jesús Eduardo Mestizo Yosando	Member of the Avelino UI Indigenous Association	Indigenous leader	Unknown
3/11/2019	Risaralda	Pereira	Luis Eugenio Muñoz Duque	President of the Local Administrative Boards of Pereira and National leader of the IALs. Mayor of the Arabia Township	Communal leader	Paramilitary groups
8/11/2019	Tolima	Santa Isabel	Carlos Aldairo Arenas Salinas	Promoter of the Route of the Condor, in the Los Nevados National Natural Park	Environmental leader	Unknown
18/11/2019	Antioquia	Tarazá	Walter Enrique Rodríguez Palacio	President of the San Miguel village Community Action Board. Member of the Association of the Lower Cauca Peasants -ASOBAC-	Communal leader	Paramilitary groups
19/11/2019	Cauca	Morales	Emiliano Chocué	Nasa Indigenous Guard of the Chimborazo Reservation	Indigenous leader	Unknown
23/11/2019	La Guajira	Riohacha	Hernán Antonio Bermúdez Arévalo	Member of the El Eneal Community Council	Afro-descendant leader	Paramilitary groups
26/11/2019	Antioquia	Ituango	Bernardo de Jesús Chanci	President of the Community Action Board of the San Agustín de Leonés village. Member of PNIS	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
3/12/2019	Caquetá	San Vicente del Caguan	Elicerio Mendoza Palomino	President of the Community Action Board of the Casas Grandes village. Treasurer of the Troncal-Guacamayo road committee	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
3/12/2019	Cundinamarca	Sitatausa	José Humberto Rodríguez Quiroga	"Elected Mayor of Sitatausa"	Communal leader	Unknown
6/12/2019	Antioquia	Tarazá	Humberto de Jesús Londoño	Coordinator of the El Socorro village Conciliation Committee. Member of the Bajo Cauca Peasant Association -ASOBAC-	Peasant leader	Paramilitary groups
10/12/2019	Arauca	Saravena	Jhon Jairo Ballesteros Balaguera	Prosecutor of the Alto Satoca Community Action Board	Communal leader	FARC Dissidents
12/12/2019	Cesar	Curumani	Luis Carlos Hernández Santiago	Representative of the Departmental Bureau of Victim Participation	Victims leader	EPL

DATE	DEPARTMENT	MUNICIPALITY	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED RESPONSIBLE
13/12/2019	Cauca	Bolívar	Yerson Oswaldo Zuñiga Anacona	Founder of the Los Pinos village. Former member of the La Caldera Community Action Board	Peasant leader	Unknown
15/12/2019	Cauca	Toribío	Cristian Andrés Vitonas Yatacué	"Avelino U" Indigenous Association and Juventud Rebelde (Rebel Youth) Cauca	Indigenous leader	Unknown
20/12/2019	Magdalena	Santa Marta	Natalia Jiménez	Director of the Magdalena Cauca Vive project, of the Natura Foundation	Environmental leader	Unknown
21/12/2019	Huila	Iquira	Jairo Ortiz	Nasa indigenous guard of the Huila reservation, Río Negro district	Indigenous leader	FARC Dissidents
22/12/2019	Arauca	Saravena	Martha Cecilia Pérez Giraldo	Member of the Amanecer de Mujeres por Arauca Association (Women's Daybreak For Arauca) -AMAR- and of the Departmental Network of Entrepreneurial Women	Women's leader	Unknown
22/12/2019	Putumayo	Mocoa	Nilson Richard Caicedo	Member of the Community Council for the Development of Black Communities in La Cordillera. Teacher and social leader of the Bajo Patía region, in the municipality of Cumbitara	Afro-descendant leader	Unknown
23/12/2019	Nariño	Tumaco	Lucy Villarreal	Member of the Indo-American Cultural Foundation	Cultural leader	Unknown
25/12/2019	Huila	Pitalito	Reinaldo Carrillo Vera	Member of the peace committee of the National Association of Peasant Users of Colombia -ANUC-	Peasant leader	Unknown

CONCLUSIONS

- Unfortunately, these past few years in every report we have informed about the harshness of violence against human rights defenders, highlighting in each period the increase in the number of attacks. 2019 is not the exception; with 846 violent acts against the leadership in Colombia we must affirm that this is the year with the highest number of cases registered by our Information System since 2009. This means that it has been the period with the greatest risk for those who defend the rights of communities and social groups.
- Despite the difficult human rights situation in Colombia, the National Government refuses to acknowledge the reality that the civilian population in the regions, particularly human rights defenders, is experiencing. Wearing a blindfold, State institutions that have the obligation to generate conditions to guarantee life and rights, divert attention from the crisis the country is experiencing with denialist discourses and the implementation of policies and strategies that do not respond to the real needs prevailing in the territories.
- 2019 was characterized by unprecedented mobilizations in Colombia, organized around the National Strike and motivated by multiple disconformities that united, as never before, different sectors of society. Historic demands around inequality, economic policies and the Peace Agreement were great motivations. In addition, complaints about attacks against human rights defenders were present in the demonstrations. The voices united from different regions further highlighted a reality impossible to deny, characterized by the increase in violence and the lack of effective strategies to stop it. Despite the magnitude of the protests, the Government's position stood out for its evasiveness, insufficient and superficial measures, and disregard for the mobilizations.
- Human rights and civil society organizations make constant demands for the creation of guarantees for the protection of the lives of human rights defenders. However, little attention has been paid to these voices, calling among other things, for respect for the Peace Agreements and, in particular, for commitments aimed to the elimination of violence against social leaders. The lack of willingness to listen to civil society and make progress in the protection of life has been manifested in facts such as the public policy that was made and published without consensus with social organizations and human rights defenders, the insistence on the Timely Action Plan and the lack of knowledge of the National Commission on Security Guarantees.
- The Government's position on the analyses and recommendations of

international entities such as the United Nations is extremely disquieting, in particular the reports of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michael Forst, and the Office in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Despite the judicious readings of both on the human rights situation in Colombia, which seek to generate an alert on the critical security conditions in the country, the official response has been limited to attacks against the UN and the denial of the situation of risk in the regions. This radical position in a context as complex as the current one gives little hope to communities and human rights defenders who are asking for their lives to be protected.

- Although the level of aggressions and murders against human rights

defenders is very high, some government officials, in their eagerness to demonstrate results in reducing violence, have constructed a discourse in which they claim that there is a decrease in murders in 2019 in relation to the cases in 2018, declaring in a triumphalist tone that it is the result of the implementation of strategies such as the Timely Action Plan -PAO-. These arguments ignore the dynamics of violence in the territories, which have marked the intensity of the aggressions and, at the same time, they come out as irresponsible, because they ignore that the attacks against the leaderships are not only limited to the murders, since there are other ways with which they are intimidated and which increased during 2019. While these attitudes remain, human rights defenders continue to expose their lives to relentless violence in the territories.



**PROGRAMA
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PROGRAMA NO GUBERNAMENTAL DE PROTECCIÓN A
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