

IV International Forum "COLOMBIA VIVE!"

When the State does not warrant justice

Treviso, October 12, 13 and 14, 2007

FINAL DOCUMENT

Held from October 12 – 14, 2007, in Treviso (Italy), the IV International Forum Colombia Live! analyzed Colombia's current situation, particularly with regard to continuing violations of human rights, impunity, the "demobilization" of paramilitary squads and the growing relationship between Italian and Colombian mafias. Additionally, it attempted to deepen analysis of Humanitarian Zones and self-determination processes to protect civilians in the midst of armed conflict, as implemented by indigenous, peasant and Afro-Colombian communities nonviolently resisting the war and forced displacement. The forum was organized by the Italian Rete di Solidarietà Colombia Live!

After listening closely to the testimonies of the representatives of Colombian communities, human rights organizations, municipalities, institutions and social organizations from England, Spain, Belgium, Austria, France, Italy and the United States, the Forum's participants reaffirmed our decision to strengthen our bonds of friendship and solidarity with communities and social organizations moving that promote civil resistance and defense of human rights in Colombia.

Considering

- Despite the ongoing political, social and armed conflict that has bled Colombia, for over 40 years, the last decade has witnessed the consolidation of the **geography of hope**, comprised of rural communities that have defined life plans that creatively and non-violently contrast with the most dramatic manifestations of neoliberalism;
- Such communities have created **spaces for the protection of civilians** in the midst of the war, a practice of participation and real democracy, implementation of international humanitarian law, transmission of ancestral knowledge, reaffirmation of self-governance and the defense of life with dignity, of territory and culture;
- The Colombian government's refusal to recognize the communities Humanitarian Zones of non-violent resistance amounts to disregard for the right of civilians not to be drawn into the war and therefore, the **fundamental principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants**;
- There is a policy of persecution against communities in non-violent resistance, through direct violence – by the military, police or paramilitary forces, judicial persecution, libel by high-ranking officials, economic

blockades, persecution of the communities' accompaniers, and the constant threats and attempts at cooption through so-called socio-economic programs that are used to gain politically by dividing communities and militarizing civil society;

- There is a web of links between drug trafficking, paramilitaries, political power and territorial control as shown by the *parapolitica* investigations undertaken by the Colombian Supreme Court;
- The case against the paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso has shown the tight link between Colombian narco paramilitaries and the Ndrangheta Calabrian mafia, and the fact that persons linked with such paramilitary leader have been appointed to work at the Colombian embassy in Italy;
- The Colombian government's refusal to negotiate a humanitarian accord to allow the exchange of members of the armed forces, public officials and civilians held hostage by the guerrillas; the consolidation of impunity as a mechanism to deny victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation;
- The existence of several forms of international solidarity, through physical accompaniment, political, moral and economic support;
- The universally recognized value of non-violent struggle adopted by the Colombian communities in non-violent resistance, who have developed practices of a solidarity-based economy and life with dignity, which in a very concrete fashion contribute to build a different world.

We request

Of the European Union and its member states

- Suspend weapon sales and military aid to Colombia, given that the country is experiencing a major armed conflict, in which human right violations are committed with impunity;
- Undertake effective monitoring of aid cooperation with Colombia to ensure that such monies are not used for the consolidation of the military apparatus, the illegal and illegitimate exploitation of natural resources and, in general, the worsening of the war.
- Support negotiation of a Humanitarian Accord allowing the release of hostages;
- Increased commitment to civil society initiatives, particularly those promoted by non-violent resistance communities for the defense of human rights;
- Condition cooperation and trade agreements with Colombia upon respect for human rights and concrete results in the investigation of crimes against members of non-violent resistance communities and other organizations that are victims of political violence in Colombia. In February, 2006 the European Parliament already approved a provision on this matter; the provision needs

to be adopted as directive for the EU executive bodies responsible for foreign policy;

- Specifically, the Italian government and the Italian embassy in Bogotá need to support the relationships of solidarity that Italian civil society have with non-violent resistance communities and human right organizations in Colombia. We also call on the Italian embassy to join the diplomatic mission that supports the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó.

To the Colombian Government

- Immediately cease any form of violence and persecution against peasant, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities that, with their non violent resistance, contribute to breaking the vicious cycle of violence in Colombia;
- Stop all types of persecution against civil society organizations engaged in the defense of human rights and in the defense of the victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation;
- Guarantee the constitutional right of collective property of indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities to their territories;
- Through clear policies, defend Colombian public patrimony and prevent looting of natural resources by multinational corporations;
- Not interfere with Colombian judicial investigations into links between a significant number of members of Congress and public officials and paramilitary groups responsible, over many years, for thousands of human rights violations and crimes against humanity.

To the Colombian Government and the Rebel Armed Groups

- Without delay seek a negotiated solution to the political, social and armed conflict;
- Negotiate a humanitarian accord for the release of kidnapped persons;
- Recognize and respect the Humanitarian Zones of communities in non-violent resistance (or spaces of Permanent Assembly in the case of the Indigenous Communities of Northern Cauca), as spaces for the protection of unarmed civilians in the midst of the armed conflict;
- Respect communities' stance of autonomy vis-à-vis armed actors, as a non-violent refusal to be dragged into the war and be displaced from their lands;

To the governments of Italy and Colombia

Activate mechanisms that effectively tackle the relationship between the criminal Calabrian Ndrangheta mafia organizations and the Colombian paramilitary groups.

Further, examine alleged support being offered to those dangerous criminal organizations by public officials from both countries.

We commit ourselves to

- Continue supporting efforts **that by memory, truth, justice and reparation** are carried out by communities in non-violent resistance, the National Movement of Victims of Crimes of the State, the Jose Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective and other Colombian organizations;
- Continue fervently denouncing human rights violations against civilians committed by **any armed group**, legal or illegal;
- Work towards the **protection** of efforts of non-violent resistance to the war and to those who courageously carry them out or accompany them;
- Through awareness raising practices calling for concrete expressions of solidarity, continue disseminating **good practices** of non-violent resistance to the war, defense of life with dignity, of territory and culture carried out by communities in non-violent resistance;
- Strengthen the **European Network** in support of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, integrated by the municipalities of Westerlo (Belgium), Alburquerque (Spain), Burgos (Spain) and Narni (Italy), all sister cities of the Peace Community;
- Encourage and facilitate **sister city relationships** between Italian municipalities and the CAVIDA and ACIN communities in non-violent resistance;
- **Promote recognition and respect** of Humanitarian Zones and the Cauca Indigenous Guard as legitimate expressions of civil resistance protected under International Humanitarian Law.

Treviso, 14 October 2007