



40th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 25 February - 22 March 2019

Item 2: General Debate

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

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“The current situation in Colombia”

Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) has been present in Colombia for 10 years with its Nonviolent Peace Corps Operazione Colomba, involved in monitoring activities and international accompaniment to the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó and to other realities of Colombian civil society.

Despite some positive results achieved with the signing of the Peace Agreement in November 2016, the current situation of the country remains very difficult.

Therefore, we would like to express our concern especially for three alarming aspects.

First, the expansion in almost the whole country, in particular in rural areas, of illegal armed groups, especially such as neo-paramilitary groups, but also dissenting groups of the FARC and guerrilla groups of the ELN, which force the civilian population to submit to their violent rules or to displace.

Second, the relentless rise of killings of human rights defenders, social leaders, peasants and indigenous peoples, of people reclaiming land and of those who work to demand and carry out the implementation of the Peace Agreements.

Third, the breakdown of the dialogue between the Government and the ELN guerrillas.

For these reasons, APG23 recommends to the UN High Commissioner to insist in order that the European institutions monitor the rapid and effective implementation of the Peace Agreement in Colombia, from a legal, political and economic point of view, involving communities and organizations devoted to the protection of human rights. And that in particular is vigilant on the implementation of point 3.4 of the Agreement, which provides for the dismantling of neo paramilitary structures.

Moreover, the recommendations expressed in the last UPR 2018 to the Colombian Government and all the recommendations made by Mr Forst, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, regarding the protection of human rights defenders should be strongly and constantly renewed.

Finally, we call for the Colombian government to adopt immediate and effective protective measures for human rights defenders in order to stop the killings and we urge it to resume the negotiations with the ELN as soon as possible.

Thank you!