

COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES  
DOCUMENT THEIR SUFFERING  
AND THEIR HOPE



REPORT

5

A PROPHETIC CALL

JUSTAPAZ AND THE PEACE COMMISSION OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNCIL OF COLOMBIA, CEDECOL  
RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM

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**A PROPHETIC CALL, EDITION 5**  
**COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES DOCUMENT  
THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE**

Bogotá, August 1, 2010

Case Registry: January 1 to December 31, 2009

**Peace Commission**

Caribbean Coast Region • Western Region • Antioquia-Chocó Region  
Tolima-Huila-Caquetá Region • Central Region

**A PROPHETIC CALL, EDITION 5:  
COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES DOCUMENT THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE**

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# INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth edition in the A Prophetic Call series, produced by the Research and Advocacy Program of the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JUSTAPAZ) in conjunction with the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL)<sup>1</sup>.

## Documentation methodology

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Since 2004, the project known as the *Documentation and Advocacy Program* has documented experiences through the fieldwork of regional teams that are trained in collecting cases of human rights and International Humanitarian Law violations against Protestant and evangelical churches.

These regional teams, limited by human and financial resources, interview victims and their families, pastors, and church leaders as primary sources of information. The results of this regional documentation are reported to the National Research and Advocacy Team, where the information is verified and, when possible, corroborated by secondary sources.

The cases are added to the SIVEL database (Online Political Violence Information System), organized according to type of violation, and consolidated into annual reports and statistics.

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1 The Colombian Evangelical Council, or CEDECOL, was founded in 1950 by a range of denominations and represents approximately 70% of Colombia's evangelical and Protestant Christian population, including historic, evangelical, Pentecostal and independent churches; a testimony to its unity and respect.

In 2010, the *Documentation* program was reorganized into the *Research and Advocacy* program. The program currently has four objectives:

- Research and produce A Prophetic Call
- Strengthen local capacity
- Accompany victims
- Advocacy

This program bases its conceptual framework on the Research and Popular Education Center's (CINEP) *Human Rights and Political Violence Database*. This is founded on international human rights and International Humanitarian Law categories that apply to armed conflicts, broadening and diversifying the sources, and consolidating a theoretical framework based on the category of Social and Political Violence. This categorization is used to organize the information and through this, analyses and reports are produced that attempt to explain the human rights situation in Colombia.

The cases that are published in this report have the consent and the accepted responsibility of the victims and their families. Cases in which the name appears with an asterisk (\*) indicate a fictitious name was used to protect the identity of the victim and her/his relatives.

## **Structure**

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Chapter one lays out an analysis of the international and domestic context through the documented cases, human rights reports and relevant research on human rights violations and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) infractions. In chapter two, cases documented during 2009 are reported with the goal of preserving historic memory, marking the impact of the armed conflict on Protestant and evangelical churches in Colombia.

Chapter three includes a quantitative analysis of the 2009 cases, including the demography of the victims, their geographic location, the identities of the alleged perpetrators and the most frequently committed violations.

Chapter four presents a theological reflection on the land situation in the Colombian context; a problem specifically related to the armed conflict and human rights.

Chapter five describes experiences, projects and programs undertaken by Protestant and evangelical churches as peace-building proposals and seeds of hope. These best practices lead to the transformation of churches, communities and society.

Finally, chapter six outlines the program's recommendations to the Colombian government, the armed actors and the international community based on the cases documented and the subsequent analysis.

# Executive Summary

**A** Prophetic Call 5 compiles and analyzes cases from 2009, which become a testimony of the armed conflict's impact on Protestant and evangelical churches. This report is produced through a joint project between the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Political Action (Justapaz) and the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL).

During the research period between January 1 and December 31, 2009, the team documented 69 cases of human rights violations and International Humanitarian Law violations against pastors, church leaders and members of Protestant and evangelical churches. In these cases, 206 violations were documented against 137 individual victims and approximately 553 victims of collective violations. Among the victims are members of 21 denominations (the majority of victims were members of the Inter-American Church of Colombia, the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC) and the Foursquare Church) and victims accompanied by the Mennonite Church of Colombia. In cases with individual victims, there were 17 homicides, including the cases of three pastors and two church leaders.

As in previous editions of A Prophetic Call, in 2009 the majority of homicide cases against Protestant and evangelical church members were attributed to paramilitary groups. This could be explained by the fact that the majority of documented cases occurred in provinces with high levels of paramilitary presence and activity, such as Córdoba, Antioquia, Meta, Bolívar, and Atlántico, among others.

## Analysis

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In the six chapters of this report, identified cases are documented and compiled, the domestic and international context in which the cases occurred is analyzed, and a theological reflection is provided. At the same time, experiences and programs developed

by Protestant and evangelical churches as peacebuilding proposals and seeds of hope are outlined as well as recommendations to the Colombian government, to the armed actors and the international community.

During the period analyzed, the most frequently documented violations were: threats (94), displacements (71), homicides (17), injuries (7), torture (5), hostage-taking and kidnappings (5), forced disappearances (2), arbitrary detentions (2), forced recruitment of minors (1), attempted murder (1) and human shield (1). As for the alleged perpetrators, paramilitaries were identified as the responsible party in 113 violations, guerrillas in 49 and Colombian Armed Forces in 15. For 29 violations it was not possible to identify the responsible party.

Violations were documented in 14 of the 32 provinces with Córdoba (54 violations), Bogotá (49), Antioquia (40) and Meta (14) reporting the highest number of violations. The highest rates of displacement and threats were documented in January, April, August and October.

## **The International Context**

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Beyond Colombia's borders, there were several significant achievements in the recognition of international human rights mechanisms. Indications of these achievements were the four visits of United Nations Special Rapporteurs to Colombia: 1) on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; 2) on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples; 3) on the situation of human rights defenders; and 4) on the independence of judges and lawyers.

In terms of bi-lateral relations with the United States, even with the election of Barack Obama to the presidency, the relationship was tense due to the continued negotiations over the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the U.S. and Colombia and the support for Plan Colombia. Additionally, in 2009 a confidential agreement between the two countries was signed authorizing the establishment of seven military bases within Colombia's borders. There is concern about the impact these bases could have on the civilian population and on the borders.

The human rights crisis and International Humanitarian Law infractions also produced changes in international aid. For example, the European Parliament decided to review its position with respect to signing a Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia due to concerns over cases of extrajudicial execution and union murders. Even though the agreement was adopted and signed by the European Commission and the Ministers' Council in 2010, the language of the agreement must now be agreed upon before the European Parliament can decide on ratifying the agreement.

## **Seeds of Hope**

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This report has documented Seeds of Hope: initiatives, projects and development programs under the leadership of churches that seek to break the cycle of violence and promote social transformation. The experiences documented, from Bogotá and in the Cauca province, have created change and produced hope, even in the most difficult circumstances. These "seeds" are

experiences that go beyond denominations, seeking to create change on political, social, economic, cultural and religious levels.

## **Recommendations**

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A Prophetic Call 5, based on the information gathered regarding violations to the right to life, physical integrity, freedom, dignified life, religious freedom and freedom of movement against Protestant and evangelical church members, proposes a series of recommendations to the Colombian government, the international community and the armed actors.

This report calls for a cease fire and peace talks between the warring factions, and respect for the civilian population caught in the war. At the same time, it highlights the important role of churches in peacebuilding and the urgent need for the development of policies focused on ending the armed conflict.

In terms of the victims, the recommendations point to the debt of truth, justice and reparation owed them, the necessary special attention to displaced persons and other vulnerable populations, and the obligation to protect human rights defenders.

Lastly it emphasizes the need to dismantle paramilitary structures, institutional strengthening of the Colombian government, and the change in military and counter-narcotics policies, including the reduction in military spending.



*Candles: Photograph by Shalom Wiebe*



# C h a p t e r 1



## Chapter 1

# Reading the Signs of the Times: 2009 international and domestic context analysis

### A. Introduction

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In 2009, a series of events reverberated through the national, regional and local human rights, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and victims' contexts.

Churches continue to be impacted by the armed conflict in Colombia, as a consistent and systematic pattern of political violence against Protestant and evangelical churches in Antioquia, Atlántico, Bolívar, Caquetá, Cauca, Chocó, Córdoba, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Norte de Santander, Tolima, Valle del Cauca and Bogotá emerged.

During the year 69 cases were documented encompassing 206 violations against 137 individual victims and approximately 553 victims of collective violations.

### B. International and human rights context

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Internationally, there were significant achievements made in recognizing international human rights mechanisms.

In 2009, four United Nations Special Rapporteurs visited Colombia to examine the following themes: extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (June 8-18); the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples (July 22-27); the situation of human rights defenders (September 7-18); and the independence of judges and lawyers (December 7-16).<sup>1</sup>

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1

Taken from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Annual Report on the human rights situation in Colombia. A/HRC/13/72. March 2010.

Despite hope that Barack Obama's inauguration as President of the United States would bring a meaningful change to policy toward the Andean Region and specifically to Colombia, there has been a continuation of previous policies with the negotiation of a free trade agreement (FTA) and support for Plan Colombia (in its two phases: Andean Regional Initiative and the Patriot Plan). This agreement affirms the security policy and strategy of the United States in the Andean Region and across Latin America, constituting an attempt to control natural resources, financing military spending and a counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism strategy that has had devastating impacts on the population, including forced displacement and environmental damage.

A confidential military agreement between Colombia and the United States was signed to establish seven military bases in Colombia.<sup>2</sup> They would be located in Malambo; Atlántico; Palanquero; Magdalena Medio; Apiay, Meta; the Pacific and Cartagena naval bases; the Tolemaida training center and the Larandia, Caquetá army base. This agreement was not reviewed, passed by the Colombian Congress, nor the Advisory Committee. There are serious concerns about the impact these bases could have on the civilian population and on the borders with neighboring countries.

Problems on the borders, particularly between Colombia and neighboring Ecuador and Venezuela, have destabilized the region and generated an international crisis. This had made the officials from each country take ever more polarized positions, cut off communication, not use diplomatic channels, and adopt measures that have affected mobility between the countries and the economy in the border areas.

The human rights and International Humanitarian Law violations crisis has produced changes in international cooperation. The problems of extrajudicial executions and the murder of unionists caused the European Parliament to review its position regarding the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia.<sup>3</sup> However, in 2010, this agreement was adopted and signed by the European Commission and Council of Ministers. Once the format and the text of the agreement are agreed upon, it will be sent to the European Parliament who will decide whether or not to adopt the agreement.<sup>4</sup>

### **C. Human rights and International Humanitarian Law**

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights stated in its report from its visit to Colombia:

"The full realization of human rights in Colombia continues to be affected by a complex internal armed conflict, which is exacerbated by organized violence, particularly related to drug trafficking. This situation

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2 Cambio Magazine, "El ABC de la bases militares colombianas en las que habrá presencia de los Estados Unidos". Available at: [http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/836/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA\\_INTERIOR\\_CAMBIO-5599691.html](http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/836/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR_CAMBIO-5599691.html)

3 More information about the refusal to sign the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia: [http://www.foeeurope.org/trade/events/2009/informe\\_audiencia\\_UE-Colombia\\_TLC\\_PE\\_300409.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/trade/events/2009/informe_audiencia_UE-Colombia_TLC_PE_300409.pdf)

4 More information about the agreement's current status: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc\\_118238.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc_118238.pdf)

has negatively affected the functioning of democratic institutions and the socio-economic development of the country.”<sup>5</sup>

These problems have maintained the humanitarian crisis in the country and a level of uncertainty in terms of whether human rights and International Humanitarian Law will be respected and guaranteed. In this situation, Protestant and evangelical churches continue to be subject to threats and persecution due to their faith and their non-cooperation with armed groups.

#### **D. Economic control, territorial control, and control of natural resources**

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The history of land tenure in Colombia has been characterized by violence and the dispossession of peasant farmers, as well as the territory of indigenous and afrocolombian communities. Using counter-insurgency actions and the drug war as a pretext, there has been a policy of dispossession of territory and the concentration of land ownership, supporting the interests of multinational corporations and their megaprojects.

An example of this policy is a lawsuit filed in Florida, United States, against Chiquita Brands Inc. for having financed the paramilitary block under the command of alias “Jorge 40.” This lawsuit was filed by a Colombian woman, whose husband was killed by the paramilitary group. Filing the lawsuit has triggered threats by alleged paramilitaries against the woman’s brother (Case 52).

Furthermore, we document how alleged paramilitaries killed a farmer, who as a community leader had supported displaced persons in returning to and recovering their lands, to the chagrin of powerful neighbors in Montería, Córdoba (Case 4). We also document how presumed paramilitaries, while giving testimony at a public hearing for Law 975 (known as the Justice and Peace Law) threatened displaced persons that were seeking to recover their lands in Mampuján, Bolívar (Case 64).

During 2009, the Colombian government implemented a policy with the stated objective of providing subsidies to Colombian farmers. This policy, *Agro Ingreso Seguro* (AIS), has been riddled with scandal because the subsidies were given to friends of the administration and to large business owners with the argument that they generate employment and support small-scale farmers.<sup>6</sup> AIS is an example of the continuation of policies that seek to dispossess the peasant farmers of their lands, and to protect agro-industrial economies and the elite landowners throughout the country.

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5 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia. A/HRC/13/72. March 2010. Available at: [http://www.hchr.org.co/documentoseinformes/informes/altocomisionado/Informe2009\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hchr.org.co/documentoseinformes/informes/altocomisionado/Informe2009_eng.pdf)

6 Revista Cambio, “Programa Agro Ingreso Seguro ha beneficiado a hijos de políticos y reinas de belleza”. Available at: [http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/847/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA\\_INTERIOR\\_CAMBIO-6185730.html](http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/847/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR_CAMBIO-6185730.html)

## E. Drug trafficking fueling the armed conflict

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Drug trafficking continues to be tied to the armed conflict as different armed actors, including guerrillas and paramilitaries, fight to control the production of narcotics. Alliances are made among armed groups with the goal of monopolizing the drug trade.

In 2009, we identified disputes between paramilitary groups for the control of drug-trafficking (Case 32), and documented how fumigations have affected peoples' ability to access minimal standards of living in municipalities in Caquetá (Case 69).

## F. "Parapolitics", political power and social control

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The number of congresspersons being investigated for alleged ties to paramilitary organizations has continued to climb. At the end of 2009, there were 93 open cases against members of congress, 13 convictions, and 294 cases initiated against 12 governors, 166 mayors, 13 provincial council members and 58 municipal council members.<sup>7</sup>

Tensions between the executive branch and the judicial branch have undermined judicial independence and transparency, and have raised concerns about some judges' personal security.

In 2009, it was revealed that the Administrative Security Department (DAS), the intelligence agency that answers directly to the President, carried out illegal activities and espionage against human rights defenders, members of opposition parties, and journalists and government officials. The DAS's illegal activities included wire-tapping, monitoring of emails, surveillance, harassment and threats, information theft and illegal entry into offices and residences.

This situation led both the Office of the Inspector General and the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate DAS officials.<sup>8</sup> In September 2009, President Álvaro Uribe proposed the closing of the Department and the creation of a new intelligence agency. The High Courts<sup>9</sup> have asked President Uribe to disclose who within his administration ordered the spying and illegal wiretaps<sup>10</sup> against members of the opposition, journalists and judges.

In terms of the alleged demobilization of paramilitary groups, it has been found that these structures have not been dismantled, and continue exercising social, economic and political control of many areas of the country, as they continue to

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7 Available at: <http://www.verdadabierta.com/parapolitica/costa-caribe/595-congresistas-elegidos-en-el-ano-2006-vinculados-en-la-parapolitica>

8 Arrests have been made of members of the police and officials from the Technical Investigation Unit (CTI) of the Prosecutor's office who illegally spied on Iván Velásquez, an assistant judge to the Supreme Court of Justice and investigator of para-politics connections. Available at: <http://www.semana.com/noticias-nacion/capturas-seguimientos-magistrado-velasquez/131896.aspx>

9 Available at: [http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/decir-que-autoridad-ordeno-chuzadas-a-magistrados-piden-cortes-al-presidente-uribe\\_5226727-1](http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/decir-que-autoridad-ordeno-chuzadas-a-magistrados-piden-cortes-al-presidente-uribe_5226727-1)

10 These illegal wiretaps are commonly referred to as "chuzadas" or "bugging".

violate human rights and International Humanitarian Law. The restructuring of these groups is confirmed primarily by three phenomena: 1. Paramilitary structures that never participated in demobilization processes still exist; 2. There are demobilized paramilitaries that have regrouped; they have been misnamed as “criminal gangs” and exercise control over specific communities and illicit economies; 3. There are armed organizations that have specific political motivations; their existence is the most convincing evidence of the continuation and persistence of paramilitarism.<sup>11</sup>

Among experts and the government there is no consensus on what these groups are or how to name them. In some cases they are treated as emerging criminal gangs at the service of drug trafficking (BACRIM in Spanish). Others consider them to be a new type of group altogether that is different from paramilitaries, while others see them as a new generation of paramilitaries.

In the 2010 report, *Paramilitaries’ Heirs: the New Face of Violence in Colombia*, Human Rights Watch affirms:

Regardless of how the successor groups are categorized, the fact is that today they are frequently targeting civilians, committing horrific crimes including massacres, killings, rapes, and forced displacement. And the state has an obligation to protect the civilian population, to prevent abuses, and to hold perpetrators accountable.<sup>12</sup>

The Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris (CNAI) think-tank considers in its recent report that these so-called neo-paramilitary groups have grown at an extremely fast pace, using force to maintain control of territories, populations, and the flow of goods, from which they extract economic, political and military profits in 293 municipalities, particularly in urban areas.<sup>13</sup>

In 2009, we have documented how the armed groups have maintained their social and territorial control and continued the dirty war against the civilian population. Armed combat was seen between paramilitary groups (Los Paisas, Rastrojos and Black Eagles) for control over drug trafficking and territory. This combat and fighting was present particularly in Córdoba and Antioquia where we document how the civilian population was caught in the crossfire (Cases 40 and 67). In this struggle between the Black Eagles, Rastrojos and Los Paisas, there were massacres committed against the civilian population. This fighting also included the murder of the pastor of the Inter-American Church in Cauca, Antioquia (Case 10) and of a farmer caught in the crossfire between the Black Eagles and Los Paisas (Case 12).

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11 Organization of American States’ Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA). (2009) Décimo segundo informe trimestral del Secretario General al Consejo Permanente sobre la Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz en Colombia. Available at: [http://www.cnr.org.co/new/interior\\_otros/12do%20informe%20MAPP.pdf](http://www.cnr.org.co/new/interior_otros/12do%20informe%20MAPP.pdf)

12 Human Rights Watch (2010) *Paramilitaries’ Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia*, p. 9. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/02/03/paramilitaries-heirs>

13 Romero, M., Arias, A. (2009) Sobre paramilitares, neoparamilitares y afines. Observatorio del Conflicto Armado de la Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris (CNAI): Bogotá. Available at: [http://www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co/sac/files/oca/analisis/documento\\_emergentes\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nuevoarcoiris.org.co/sac/files/oca/analisis/documento_emergentes_2009.pdf)

On the other side, there were also territorial disputes registered between the Army and guerrilla groups, which impeded the pastoral work of some churches and resulted in unexploded ordnances (UXOs) being left behind that have caused deaths and amputations in the civilian population (Case 45). Another case of civilians caught in the crossfire was registered in Toribío, Cauca, where six people were injured (Case 20).

There were also cases registered that demonstrate how different groups form pacts and alliances with each other. For instance, demobilized guerrillas joining paramilitary groups, such as the Anti-terrorist Revolutionary Army of Colombia (ERPAC) (Case 24); or the evidence of the Colombian military's continued tolerance of paramilitary groups' actions in Córdoba province (Case 7).

There is also evidence of armed confrontation between unidentified armed groups in Puerto Libertador, Córdoba (Case 68), and of combat between the Army and illegal armed groups, where, for example, in Dibulla, La Guajira (Case 43), the Colombian Army uses the civilian population as human shields by maintaining a base and participating in combat from within the town.

## **G. Re-election and the re-election referendum**

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The legislative process that enabled the re-election of President Álvaro Uribe in 2006 was found to be illegal. The Supreme Court handed down convictions with an eight-year prison sentence without benefits for former Representatives Teodolindo Avendaño and Iván Díaz Mateus for committing the crime of bribery to encourage the re-election referendum.<sup>14</sup>

In 2009, a bill was proposed to allow for a re-election referendum, that is, the second re-election of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (elected to his first term in 2002, and re-elected in 2006). After being passed by the House and Senate, the Prosecutor General, the Inspector General and the Supreme Court had to carry out the necessary reviews within their mandates to clarify if the referendum process was performed legally. Despite the Inspector General's approval, at the beginning of 2010, the Constitutional Court declared the re-election referendum unconstitutional.

## **H. Extrajudicial executions**

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Although the administration adopted measures in the Ministry of Defense and a decline in the number of cases in 2009 was registered, the occurrence of extrajudicial executions continues to be concerning due to the levels of impunity and the lack of reparation to victims. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report:

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14 Semana Magazine, "Teodolindo y Mateus condenados por Yidispolitica". Available at: <http://www.semana.com/noticias-justicia/teodolindo-mateus-condenados-yidispolitica/124685.aspx>

By September 2009, the National Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Unit of the [Prosecutor General]'s Office had been assigned the investigation of 1,273 cases, with a total of 2,077 victims (122 of them were women and 59 minors) in 29 [provinces].<sup>15</sup>

The presumed participation of the Colombian Military in the reported extrajudicial executions has been affirmed by the fact that by mid-2009 many soldiers had been detained and accused of the crime.<sup>16</sup> However, “there have already been more than 40 soldiers freed from their ‘false positive’ charges,”<sup>17</sup> due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

According to the Extrajudicial Executions Working Group within the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group for Human Rights (CCEEU):

The new system has big flaws and has a limited capacity to produce truth and justice in cases of extrajudicial executions. For instance, the system lacks absolute deadlines to avoid the extension of preliminary stages of prosecutions. Furthermore, victims cannot adequately exercise their right to a defense because they are denied access to court records, reports on the proceedings, and the files that contain the evidence.<sup>18</sup>

In 2009, we registered a case in which the strategy of falsely accusing an indigenous leader is used to arrest him as a “guerrilla member.” The alleged perpetrator in this case is the Regional Military Intelligence Office of the National Army number 4 (RIME) (Case 24).

## **I. Legislating against the victims (Law 975 of 2005)**

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The rights of victims continue to be violated. The collapse of the drafted bill of the Victims Statute left the conditions for finding truth, justice and reparation ever more scattered. Documented cases show that victims are being threatened and re-victimized, and that reparations must be more than a monetary sum.

For example, a case was registered in which Uber Enrique Banquez, alias “Juancho Dique”, in a public hearing about the forced displacement of civilian populations in Bolívar, said to one of the victims present: “You need to request protection because not all of us have demobilized and there are still large land owners. Since the government hasn’t fulfilled its commitments to the demobilized paramilitaries, they could come for retaliation,” (Case 64).

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15 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia, § 37.

16 Semana Magazine. “426 militares han sido detenidos por ejecuciones extrajudiciales”. May 7, 2009. Available at: <http://www.semana.com/noticias-justicia/426-militares-han-sido-detenido-ejecuciones-extrajudiciales/123701.aspx>

17 Semana Magazine. “Por vencimiento de términos, en libertad otro militar involucrado en ‘falsos positivos’”. February 2, 2010. Available at: <http://www.semana.com/noticias-justicia/vencimiento-terminos-libertad-otro-militar-involucrado-falsos-positivos/134476.aspx>

18 Colombian Human Rights Platform (2009) Continuidad o desmembrado: la seguridad democrática insiste y la esperanza resiste, Anthropos: Bogotá, p. 78.

In terms of the Justice and Peace Law's demobilization process, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report highlighted:

By December 2009, there had been no convictions under this Law; the possibilities for victims to know the truth about what happened to them and their loved ones have been mostly restricted to the voluntary depositions, and no reparations have been provided under these proceedings.<sup>19</sup>

Several of the extradited paramilitaries, such as Salvatore Mancuso<sup>20</sup>, Diego Fernando Murillo<sup>21</sup> and Miguel Ángel Mejía Múnera<sup>22</sup>, refused to make statements within Law 975's framework due to the lack of guarantees and effectiveness.

## **J. Homicide of the civilian population**

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In 2009, congruent with previous years and publications of *A Prophetic Call*, we registered an increase in the cases of homicide committed against Protestant and evangelical church members by alleged paramilitary groups with 10 violations (Cases 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12). One case of registered homicide was attributed to guerrilla groups and one to the Colombian Public Forces. Armed combat between the groups caused three registered violations, and two others were documented but the perpetrators are unknown.

## **K. Forced disappearance**

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Forced disappearance continues to be a serious human rights problem in Colombia. The victims of forced disappearance are mainly low-income or unemployed young men that live in marginal urban areas or isolated rural areas. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report confirms:

By December 2009, the National Registry of Disappeared Persons reported 37,300 cases, of which almost 10,000 were cases of enforced disappearance. Most of these cases remain unsolved, and their perpetrators and motives unidentified.<sup>23</sup>

One of the cases registered was committed by alleged paramilitary groups against a fisherman for having lost a shipment of goods in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca (Case 16). Another case of forced disappearance was registered in Medellín, where

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19 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia, § 81.

20 Available at: <http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2009/10/107117.php>

21 Available at: <http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2009/09/107066.php>

22 Available at: <http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2009/10/107136.php>

23 Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia, § 53.

the alleged perpetrators were members of the the Criminal Investigation Section of the Colombian Police (SIJIN); neither the SIJIN nor the Prosecutors General's Office in Medellín, Antioquia, has responded to this allegation (Case 18).

## **L. Forced displacement**

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Forced displacement is one of the worst manifestations of the humanitarian crisis. In 2009, forced displacement continued increasing due to the degradation of the internal conflict directly affecting the civilian population.

While public policy seeks to make significant progress in terms of guaranteeing the rights of people who have been displaced, it is not aimed at building socio-economic stability for the families, nor does it seek to help families overcome the financial set-backs resulting from their displacement. In 2009, the Constitutional Court issued Court Order 008 that states that the displacement situation is "unconstitutional" and continues to persist while emphasizing the absence of effective public polices to prevent displacement.

Protestant and evangelical churches continue to suffer forced displacement by alleged paramilitary and guerrilla groups (Cases 10, 31, 36, 37, 38, 39 and others).

Continued mass and collective displacements were registered in different regions of the country, particularly in areas that have constant hostilities among armed groups. In 2009, evangelical Christian churches identified the following cases of mass displacement as violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law:

- Disputes between paramilitary groups (Los Paisas and Rastrojos against the Black Eagles) caused the displacement of 62 families in Tierralta, Córdoba (Case 40).
- After the murder of a leader of displaced communities, alleged paramilitaries forcibly displaced two families in Montería, Córdoba (Case 41).

## **M. Individual and collective death threats**

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In 2009, CINEP documented a progressive rise in individual and collective threats made through the distribution of threatening pamphlets.

In its report *From 'False Positives' to social intolerance and collective threats*, CINEP argues that this situation has occurred in 24 provinces nationwide. It also explains:

The suspected perpetrators in 98 percent of the cases are paramilitary groups, and in the remaining 2 percent the National Police participated and/or assisted paramilitaries. These threats are mainly directed

at homeless people, sex workers, people who consume and sell drugs, youth, criminals, homosexuals, workers, and residents of the municipalities and neighborhoods under threat.<sup>24</sup>

Last year, we documented several cases of threats against Protestant and evangelical churches made by alleged guerrilla groups (Cases 15, 21, 48, 49, 62 and others); but, in the majority of the cases, the alleged perpetrators were paramilitary groups (Cases 1, 19, 22, 25, 29, 32, 46, 53, 56, 57, 64, 65 and others).

## **N. Religious discrimination and intolerance**

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During the period studied in this report, violations of freedom and equality of religion were committed in different ways (Cases 9, 10, 17, 44, 50, 56, 57 and others).

While the religious intolerance that provokes these human rights violations remains invisible to public opinion and the broader society, a Christian Solidarity Worldwide report from 2009 affirms that:

While it is undeniable that many Christians in Colombia exercise their right to meet and worship freely, the daily reality for a significant percentage of Colombian Christians is very different... Across the country, churches have been closed and religious activity forbidden by order of the armed groups, entire Christian communities have been displaced, and pastors and church leaders have been marked for assassination. In many cases these threats have been carried out.<sup>25</sup>

Among the motives for discriminating against Protestant and evangelical churches is the position of pastors and church leaders to not participate in or cooperate with the armed groups. For this reason, these groups see the churches as a threat to their authority and territorial control. They also see specific church practices, such as evangelizing, as causing their members to convert to the Christian faith and desert the armed group (Cases 42, 42, 44, 45 and others).

## **O. Recruitment and use of child soldiers**

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Forced recruitment and involvement of children and adolescents in the armed conflict has become a far too common situation in different parts of the country in the past few years. This is especially true given the expansion of recruitment from rural to urban areas, and in particular, the most vulnerable social sectors.

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24 CINEP (2009) De los 'Falsos Positivos' a la intolerancia social y las amenazas colectivas, p. 3.

25 Christian Solidarity Worldwide (2009) Briefing Colombia: Religious liberty and freedom of conscience, New Malden, p. 3.M. Available at: <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=report&id=111>

The United Nations Secretary-General's report on Colombia from 2009<sup>26</sup>, reports that recruitment of children by the FARC-EP is on-going in Antioquia, Arauca, Caquetá, Cauca, Chocó and Guaviare provinces. The ELN guerrilla group has focused their recruitment of children in Nariño, Putumayo, Santander, Sucre, Valle del Cauca and Vaupés.

The paramilitary groups and those groups made up of demobilized paramilitaries continue to threaten and forcibly recruit children in different regions throughout the country.

In 2009, a case was identified in which presumed paramilitary groups at the service of alias "Don Mario" tried to recruit the son of a pastor in San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia (Case 26). While the Colombian Armed Forces do not formally recruit children or minors, there have been constant reports of the Armed Forces using them for military tasks, including as informants, in intelligence and propaganda activities and civil-military campaigns.

In 2008, the Constitutional Court established (with Court Order 251) the general parameters that the State institutions should follow in carrying out programs aimed at assisting children and adolescents who have been forcibly displaced. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers in Colombia observed that the government's pilot program to prevent recruitment in Putumayo did not do enough to respond to the problem and did not actively involve local civil society organizations. While a space was created on the national level for civil society to give recommendations on the components and reach of Court Order 251, these recommendations were not used in the program's implementation.

In late 2009, the Constitutional Court ruled in favor of conscientious objection to compulsory military service, basing the decision on citizen action and the lawsuit presented by several organizations that appealed Law 48 of 1993.

## **P. Extortion**

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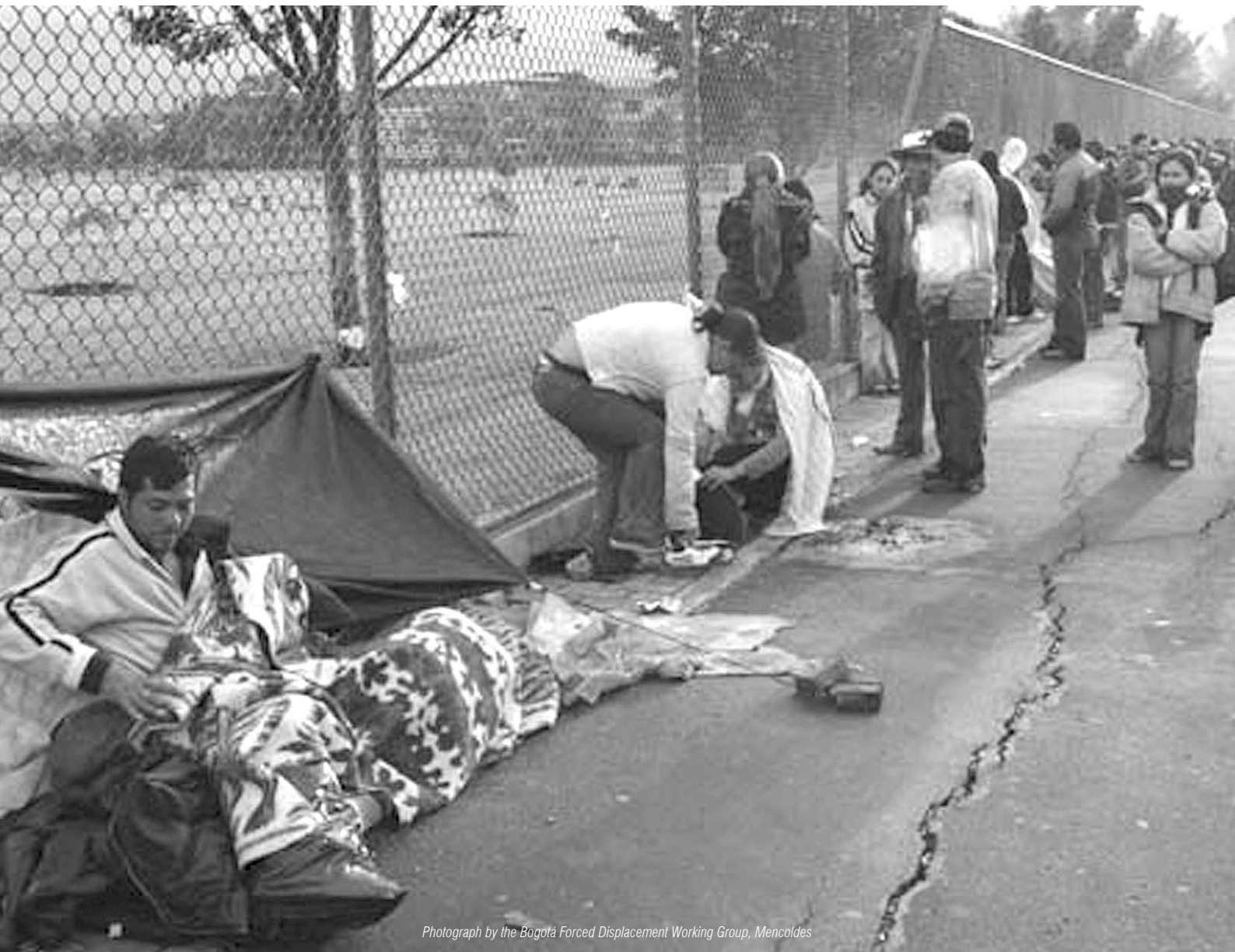
In 2009, there continued to be cases of extortion as a form of social control and to finance the armed groups. One case was identified in which presumed guerrilla groups extorted a church leader in Puerto Rico, Caquetá (Case 54).

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Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Colombia, S/2009/434. 28 August 2009. Available at: <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/securitycouncilwgroupdoc.html>





*Photograph by the Bogotá Forced Displacement Working Group, Mencoldes*

# C h a p t e r 3



## Chapter 2

# Cases of Political Violence

This chapter has three sections with cases that were compiled during 2009, serving as a testimony to the armed conflict's impact on Protestant and evangelical churches.

The first section shares 69 cases that contribute to the historic memory of the victims and highlight the prevalence of impunity in 2009. The second section compiles cases that occurred prior to 2009, in the period between 1997 and 2008.

Finally, the third section compiles cases that are referenced in this publication that appear in previous versions of A Prophetic Call.

### 2009 Cases

#### A. Homicide

##### Case 1: Homicide, Injury, Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Perry Rentería, Lesti Rentería, Fileston Rentería, Perry's wife, of the Mennonite Brethren Church

**Date:** April 29, 2009

**Location:** Istmina, Chocó

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of events:** Perry Rentería, 28 years old, was married with one child. He worked as a motorcycle taxi driver. The paramilitaries told him that he had to

work for them. He drove for them for a while, but one day decided to stop. On April 29, 2009, at 10 p.m., the paramilitaries came to Perry's house and killed him in front of his wife and son. They also seriously wounded his wife, sending her into a coma, which she later awoke from.

Perry Rentería is the son of María Benita de Gutiérrez, of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Istmina. She has ten other children. After Perry's murder, the paramilitaries threatened to kill his brothers Lesti and Fileston Rentería if they refused to work for them. The threats continued, forcing the brothers to displace and hide in another town in Chocó.

### Case 2: Homicide

**Victim:** Rafael Ramírez Castro of the Christian Alliance Church

**Date:** May 14, 2009

**Location:** San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Rafael Ramírez Castro, 40 years old, was married to Ismelda Escaspeta Roso, who attends the Christian Alliance Church, and with whom Rafael had four daughters, one of which is an adult, and two sons, both minors. The victim worked as a motorcycle taxi driver, a job that supported his family. On May 14, 2009, a young man contracted Rafael to give him a ride; that day, Rafael appeared dead on the edge of the municipality around 6 p.m. His widow states that he had never received death threats and it is incredible that he would have been killed simply for being a motorcycle taxi driver. What is most difficult for his wife is that Rafael's murder remains in impunity. She will also have to start looking for a way to support the family, given that Rafael was the sole provider.

In recent days in San Vicente del Caguán municipality there have been numerous murders and death threats committed by unidentified groups. The municipality was the epicenter of the former demilitarized zone under the Andrés Pastrana administration (1998-2002), where peace talks with the FARC-EP guerrillas took place. The area has had guerrilla presence for many years with two FARC-EP fronts operating there. Paramilitary and the Colombian Armed Forces are also present in the municipality. At the time of this report (December 2009), the FARC-EP had declared an armed strike.

### Case 3: Homicide

**Victim:** Besaído Acosta Benítez (church leader) of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** May 20, 2009

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Besaído Acosta Benítez was married with six children between seven and twenty-two years old. Besaído was playing chess with some friends at his workplace when unknown armed men traveling in a car stopped and shot him four times. Besaído died instantly.

Besaído was a businessman who had maintained a store in the central market of Montelíbano for 15 years. He had also organized an association of small business owners, to which he was elected president several times. Several years prior to his murder, he unsuccessfully ran for a seat on the Municipal Council. He was an active member of the church and according to his pastor's testimony, Besaído had played an important role eight years ago in founding a new church outside the city limits. He and his family had worked tirelessly to spread the church's work in the neighborhood where it was located.

### Case 4: Homicide

**Victim:** Jhon Jairo Martínez Vides (human rights defender)

**Date:** June 28, 2009

**Location:** Montería, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Jhon Jairo Martínez Vides was 37 years old and married to Olga Isabel Hernández, 28. The couple has three children: Felipe\*, 9; Constan-

za\*, 7; and Mireya\*, 2 years old. Jhon Jairo worked as a displaced-community leader and a farmer. On June 28, at 7 p.m., four armed men, presumed members of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, went to Jhon Jairo's house and murdered him. The men knocked on Jhon Jairo's door and asked to borrow his motorcycle. Without leaving his house, he responded that it didn't have any gasoline. The men then asked his wife to sell them some minutes from her cell phone and asked Jhon Jairo for some water. Jhon Jairo knew the men, having spoken with them a few days prior. He opened the door for them and when he went to the kitchen to get them water, they shot him. He fell into his wife's arms as she was going to get her cell phone. They then shot him a second time and fled the scene.

It is believed that the men murdered Jhon Jairo on behalf of a cattle rancher who had threatened him many times. Jhon Jairo had reported to the Montería Prosecutor General's Office and to a journalist from El Meridiano from Córdoba that he was being threatened by a cattle rancher that had cattle near El Quindío farms, giving them the name of the man who was threatening him.

Jhon Jairo Martínez, along with Amada Hernández, was a leader of the displaced community that had settled on El Quindío farm. This population of approximately 45 families came from the community of Murmullo Medio near the town of Batata, in Tierralta municipality. In 1996, they were victims of mass forced displacement due to armed combat between guerrilla and paramilitary groups. In 1998, they were able to re-settle on the El Quindío farm. The occupation of this farm was carried out in a peaceful manner and remained nonviolent until about five years after their

settlement there, when in 2003 the community began to be affected by violence. As a provocation, some 61 hectares of land that the community had collectively planted with timber-yielding trees were maliciously burned. The burned land was occupied by families that had been given land on the El Quindío farm by the Colombian Land Reform Institute (INCORA). This land was burned at least two more times, and the barbed wire used to demarcate the inhabitants' plots has frequently been cut.

This situation was made worse in 2006, when around February, several hectares of timber trees were cut down by men who were sponsored by Luis Serpa, who provided them with supplies and tools. Many of the men were demobilized combatants. As a result of this situation, a conflict developed between Luis Serpa and Jhon Jairo, who began to file claims for the property damage and disturbance that was caused by the cutting of the collectively planted oaks. Due to these claims, Jhon Jairo was threatened by Luis Serpa, who was interested in acquiring the lands. Because the lands bordered with the Betansí Swamp, changes in the geography were creating a phenomenon known in the Colombian Civil Code as accession, which would guarantee Serpa the right over the squatter's territory.

The disturbances were resolved by appealing to the national government since local institutions did not seriously attempt to resolve the situation, nor to protect Jhon Jairo, who was eventually murdered.

Jhon Jairo is the brother of Jorge Martínez Vides, who was also threatened last year and had to flee, thus being displaced for a second time (*Case 43, PC 4*). Jhon's wife Olga Hernández is the niece of Azaél Hernández who was

\* The names marked with asterisks have been changed to protect the person's identity.

forcibly disappeared last year (*Case 19, PC 4*) and whose family had to resettle in another area (*Case 37, PC 4*).

After Jhon Jairo's murder, all the cattle ranchers in the area began to refuse to buy hay from the community, which put the families at risk given that growing and selling hay was the community's main source of income.

### **Case 5: Homicide, Death Threat and Religious Intolerance**

**Victims:** Manuel Camacho and Pastor Gloria Isabel Hernández, of the Global Missionary Movement Church

**Date:** September 21, 2009

**Location:** San José del Guaviare, Guaviare

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Manuel Camacho, 38 years old, was married to Gloria Isabel Hernández, both pastors; they have a son and a daughter. The FARC-EP guerrillas had recently replaced their commander in the region and Manuel and Gloria happened to cross paths with him after a day of preaching in a rural community. "Yes, I've heard of you, I've heard too much about you," said the guerrilla commander after the pastor asked him if he had heard the name Manuel Camacho. "I know that you have disobeyed the order to not continue preaching, therefore you and your church have one week to pay us two million pesos [about US \$1,000]." Shocked by this news, the couple told the guerrilla commander that they could not make that decision without consulting their church members. They also made it clear that they would continue preaching the gospel despite the threats. The commander had not expected this courage and gave them a short timeframe in which to respond. He also warned them that the prohibition against preaching continued in effect and authorized only house meetings.

The days that followed were very difficult days for the congregation's parishioners who were unable to come to a consensus. Some members thought it better to pay the money, arguing that it was the best option to not create any motives to kill Pastor Manuel. "If we don't give the money, they might kill the pastor and we don't want to lose him." However, Manuel and his wife refused to pay, "We cannot give God's money to them for warfare," they said. Manuel added, "I'm willing to be handed over in the moment that God chooses. If He wants it, it doesn't matter if you hide me or try to stop it, my death will occur."

After an extensive dialogue, the decision was made to give in to the guerrilla's request. The Sunday before giving the money to the commander who was visiting Choapal, Gloria explained to him that the economic situation for them as peasant farmers was very difficult, and even uniting the church's members together the sum was too large. "One brother has lent us a million pesos and all of us have promised to return the sum, but we can't give any more," Gloria told him. She also proposed paying the amount with work or in another way that isn't money. The guerrilla's response to the barter proposal was negative, although he did accept reducing the amount by half. A bit more daring, Manuel resolutely insisted on being given permission to carry out an evangelization campaign in nearby communities. Upon being pressured by the minister and the men that accompanied him, the subversive confessed he had to consult with his superiors. Under these circumstances church leaders and the pastors spread out in teams to the different communities. One guerrilla, hearing of the church's work, said to one of the participants in the evangelization campaign: "Those evangelicals have become a plague. We tell them to be still and keep quiet, and now they're scattered everywhere talking nonsense and preaching..."

Days later, Pastor Manuel received a note saying that a commander would be visiting his house the next day. The next day, two men arrived. One sat down next to Gloria and asked her if there was gasoline inside a large tank that he pointed to. When she responded, she heard the six gunshots that the other guerrilla fired into Manuel's face. Their two children were present, although they couldn't directly see the murder. Just like their mother, they heard the gunfire.

Manuel, his wife, his daughter and son had been living in Choopal for eight years, and they had been pastors for approximately four years. Three years prior to Manuel's murder, a group of guerrilla members had visited asking them to quit their work as pastors. It is believed that the threats began because residents in the area and some members of the guerrilla group had converted to Christianity.

#### Case 6: Homicide

**Victim:** Marco Fidel Suárez Moreno (church leader) of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)  
**Date:** July 24, 2009  
**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Marco Fidel Suárez Moreno, 42 years old and married to Elcy Ramos, had four children between the ages of 11 and 22. He was a member and leader of the Galacia Church (AIEC), in Nuevo Paraíso, a community in Santa Fe de Ralito.

On July 24, around 11:20 a.m. in the town of Santa Marta, on the border between Canutillal and Pueblo Cedro, four armed men, presumed members of the Black Eagles paramilitaries, who were traveling by motorcycle, shot and

killed Marco Fidel when he left a farm where he had gone to weigh cattle.

Marco was a councilperson in the Tierralta Municipality from 1998 to 2000 and he was the president of the Community Council for Las Aguaditas in Santa Fe de Ralito. When he was killed, he was serving as councilperson in Montería and was active in community conflict resolution having been trained by the Organization of American States' Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OAS) after the demobilization process. He also worked in cattle ranching and agriculture.

#### Case 7: Homicide

**Victims:** Marcial Ávilez (teacher) and Augusto Ávilez\*, of the Foursquare Church  
**Date:** August 10, 2009  
**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Marcial Ávilez, a professor, and his son Augusto\* left their house at 5 a.m. to go to the land they were farming. On the road to their land, there were two men, presumably members of a re-armed paramilitary group. These men shot Marcial five times and shot his son six times. The community found out later that it was a case of mistaken identity: the presumed paramilitaries were waiting for a man that was traveling on a red motorcycle, so when they saw Marcial and his son on a red motorcycle, they killed them.

"Something that really worries us and that we'd like to see change is the relationship between the paramilitaries and the Military. If the Military were really combating these groups it would be different. It is not easy to live in this area and its worse when this is happening every day.

We cannot talk about it because it's dangerous to speak out...," explained a local resident.

#### Case 8: Homicide and Injury

**Victims:** Doris Astrea\*, María Eugenia, Gustavo Andrés Parra\*, Manuel\* and Octavio\*, of the Missionary Union Church

**Date:** August 30, 2009

**Location:** Toribío, Cauca

**Alleged perpetrators:** Combatants

**Description of the events:** Members of a combatant group caused the death of Doris Astrea\*, 4 years old, María Eugenia, 19, and Gustavo Andrés Parra\*, 2, when they found a grenade and handled it. Two other children were injured: Manuel\*, 11 years old, lost his eyesight, and Octavio\*, 22 months old, lost his fingers. This event happened after armed combat occurred in the area between the guerrilla and the Military.

#### Case 9: Homicide

**Victim:** Pastor Rafael Velásquez, of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** September 6, 2009

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Rafael Velásquez was married to Ángela Durando; they had no children. He was the pastor at the Foursquare Church. Besides being a pastor, he sold small appliances in the communities around Marañonal.

On Sunday, September 6, at 10 p.m., three armed and masked men arrived to the pastor's house, and without saying a word, shot him, killing him instantly. His wife and six youth from the church that worked with him were

in the house when he was murdered. Pastor Rafael had not received any death threats.

The community is located relatively close to Los Córdoba, from which Pastor Rafael Carpio (*Case 30*) was forced to displace due to death threats. In the area where Pastor Rafael Velásquez was murdered, there was a territorial dispute between the two paramilitary groups Black Eagles and Los Paisas. If anyone entered or left a community where one of the groups was located, the other group accused that person of being a collaborator or informant. Rafael's father's family lives in a neighborhood called Cancún, where there is great poverty and overcrowding.

#### Case 10: Homicide, Torture, Death Threat, Injury and Displacement

**Victims:** Pastor Aurelio Contreras\*, Daniela Bermúdez\*, Mireya Contreras\*, Esmeralda Contreras\*, Hernando Contreras\*, Daniel Benavides\*, Micaela Fernández\*, Linda Benavides\*, Sofía Benavides\*, Helena Benavides\*, Walter Benavides\* and Mónica Benavides\*, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** October 16, 2009

**Location:** Caucasia, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Aurelio Contreras\*, 50 years old, pastor, was married to Daniela Bermúdez\*, 48, and had three children: Mireya\*, 30, married with five children; Esmeralda\*, 28, married; and Hernando\*, 19 years old. The family had returned home after a church service. Evangelical Pastor Daniel Benavides\*, 39 years old, who is married to Micaela Fernández\*, and has five children (Linda\*, 8; Sofía\*, 6; Helena\*, 4; Walter\*, 2; and Mónica\* 8 months old), was visiting Pastor Aurelio Contreras at his house at the time of the crime.

At approximately 9:30 p.m., some ten minutes after the church service had ended, three armed men, one of whom was masked, arrived at Pastor Aurelio Contreras\* house, asking for him. Pastor Daniel Benavides\*, who opened the door, said that he wasn't there, but when Pastor Aurelio Contreras\* showed himself, the armed men tied them up and took them to another room, mistreating them verbally and physically hitting them. The men stabbed Pastor Aurelio Contreras\* in the face and neck. They then robbed some cell phones and some 300,000 pesos (approximately US \$150), and then proceeded to murder Pastor Aurelio Contreras\* by firing three gunshots into his back. They then told Pastor Daniel Benavides\* that for the time being they were not going to kill him, but they intimidated him saying that they knew who he was and he knew who they were, and so he should stay quiet and leave the zone. They threatened the pastor's daughter, saying that if she reported the crime, they would come back and kill everyone. Then, two of the three armed men went and murdered another member of the church in his house.

The day after the murder, a flyer appeared in the church saying that the pastor had been killed "for being a rat" (an informant). Both Pastor Aurelio\* and Pastor Daniel's\* families left, being displaced.

Local witnesses believe that the pastor was killed because a month prior to his murder, on the evening of September 15, a group of Black Eagles re-armed paramilitaries came to Villa del Socorro and committed a massacre. Many members of the community sought refuge in the church, which was in the middle of a service. Several injured people, including youth, were assisted by the pastor and members of the church. The pastor also called the police, who arrived hours later to help the injured and remove the bodies of those killed. It is believed that this angered the Black Eagles, resulting in the murder of the pastor.

The Bajo Cauca Antioqueño region experienced an increase in violence in the first few months of 2009, in large part due to a dispute between several re-armed paramilitary groups, including the Black Eagles, Los Paisas, and Los Rastrojos. On the date of publishing, several pastors in the zone were receiving death threats.

#### Case 11: Homicide and Displacement

**Victims:** Jaime León\*, Martha\* and Fernanda León\*, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** October 16, 2009

**Location:** Caucasia, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Jaime León\*, 40 years old, was a farmer in Villa del Socorro and married to Martha\*. They have a daughter named Fernanda León\*, who is 12 years old. Jaime was shot to death by two armed men that entered his house. Witnesses identified the men as members of the re-armed paramilitary group Black Eagles. Minutes before killing Jaime, the men had killed Pastor Aurelio Contreras\* (Case 10). Jaime León's\* wife and daughter were forcibly displaced from their home as a result of the murder.

#### Case 12: Homicide

**Victim:** Evangelista Pastrana of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** November 7, 2009

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Evangelista Pastrana, a farmer who was dedicated to the church, was married to Emis Torreglosa, and had three sons and a daughter between 17

and 23 years old. Men of the re-armed paramilitary group Los Paisas went to Evangelista Pastrana's house around 7 p.m. and killed him in front of his wife and children. This farming family got caught in the fight for territorial control between the Black Eagles and Los Paisas. It seems that the murder was carried out by Los Paisas because they accused Evangelista Pastrana of being a collaborator with the Black Eagles, an accusation that his family and community dismiss as false. The entire community is terrified every time there is a rumor regarding lists of people that are going to be murdered.

#### Case 13: Homicide

**Victim:** José Abel Palacios Rodríguez of the United Pentecostal Church of Colombia

**Date:** November 20, 2009

**Location:** San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Colombian Military

**Description of the events:** José Abel Palacios Rodríguez, 50 years old, was a farmer and community leader. He had a 19-year-old son, Leonardo Palacios. The violence occurred on the border between San Vicente del Caguán and the province of Meta. José Abel Palacios was passing through a Colombian Military roadblock when some soldiers stopped and shot him. The soldiers wanted to pass him off as a guerrilla they had killed in combat. However, because their crime was discovered by José Abel's son, the soldiers spoke with the family and asked them not to say anything because they had made a mistake. According to José Abel's son, his father had not received any threats. There has been a continuous presence of the guerrilla in this region for many years and military operations are common.

#### Case 14: Homicide and Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Sergio González and family

**Date:** November 29, 2009

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Sergio González, 35 years old, was a widower with a son who is a minor. Sergio was dedicated to farm work and the church. He left home early one morning to harvest some rice before going to church. However, while he was in the rice fields, presumed paramilitaries arrived and killed him.

Due to this situation, his brothers and other family members had to leave home, forcibly displaced to Montelíbano's municipal seat. Early the same year in that area, Pastor Rafael Carpio was threatened and had to leave (Case 30). Around the middle of the year, there was a mass displacement of about 200 families, who after a few days returned to their homes because the threat from the Black Eagles had supposedly passed.

#### B. Forced Disappearance and kidnapping

#### Case 15: Forced Disappearance and Kidnapping, Torture, Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Ernesto Sandoval\* (student), Juan Pablo Sandoval\*, Hortensia Gómez\*, Estela Sandoval\* and Miryam Sandoval\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** February 24, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Ernesto Sandoval\*, 11 years old, was a student and lived with his parents and two sisters. Ernesto's\* father, Juan Pablo Sandoval\*, explained: "At 4:30 p.m. my son Ernesto\* left the house and walked towards the house of a friend from school to work on homework. The friend lived about four or five blocks away. I had told him that he should return home by 5 p.m. by 5 p.m., he hadn't arrived. At 6 p.m., he still hadn't arrived, so I sent his sister Estela\* to look for him at the friend's house. Estela\* quickly returned with the news that Ernesto\* had never made it to his friend's house. We began to look for Ernesto\* in the street. A woman in an internet café told us that she saw two men in a taxi pick up a child. We later discovered that in fact that child was Ernesto\* and that the two men had grabbed him and forced him into the car, and since he is so small he couldn't get away. At 7 p.m., my sister (Ernesto's\* aunt) received a call where a man told her that he had the child. Ernesto\* had all the families' cell phone numbers in his notebook with him, so the men had access to those numbers.

"On February 25, 2009, at 7 a.m., we arrived to the church in very bad shape. We began to pray with some sisters from the church. At 10 a.m. the pastor arrived, and while I was talking to him, I received a phone call. A man talked to me and treated me very badly, with bad words and curse words. I put my phone on speakerphone so the pastor could hear. The man identified himself as 'Commander Carranza of the 55<sup>th</sup> Front of the FARC-EP.' He told me, 'We have your son here. If you come to us we will return your son to you. If you don't, we will return him in a body bag.' He said a lot of ugly words to me, saying, 'You rat [informant], you'll be held responsible for our dead colleagues.' And then the call was cut off."

Ernesto's\* parents later received another call from these men, and they told them to pick up Ernesto\* in a municipi-

ality in Cundinamarca, and only there would they hand him over. Juan Pablo\* decided that his wife, Hortensia\*, would travel to the place and their pastor arranged for a church member to accompany her.

They arrived to the municipal plaza where they found Ernesto\* eating an ice cream cone. Three men accompanied Hortensia\* and her son on the trip back to the city where they lived, and the men got out in a municipality before arriving to the city. Juan Pablo\* finished the story: "Ernesto\* had indications on his body that they had tied him up with twine around his wrists and one foot. He said that he wasn't hit. He said that the men forced him into the taxi and that they drove in the car for a long time, going through several towns. Because of this incident, we had to move, we changed neighborhoods, we changed our cell phones, and I quit my job because they couldn't ensure my safety. My children now live with their aunt and don't go to school. They are very afraid to leave the house."

Juan Pablo Sandoval\* and his family had been threatened in 2007 and were forcibly displaced in 2008 (*Case 51, PC4*).

#### **Case 16: Forced Disappearance, Kidnapping and Threat**

**Victims:** Miguel Ospina, Julia Olarte, and their daughter and son, of the Colombian Alliance Church

**Date:** July 14, 2009

**Location:** Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Miguel Ospina, 26 years old, was married to Julia Olarte, 32, and had a daughter and son, both minors. Miguel worked as a fisherman and at night he went out to fish near the Buenaventura port. His

wife believes that the paramilitaries asked Miguel to run an errand for them, which involved taking a package of merchandise from one port to another. The cargo fell into the hands of the Police, but everyone that was in the boat managed to escape. Back at home, Miguel was sought by one of his colleagues and was told that he had to go to the store to talk. He left and did not return. Later, Julia received a phone call from the paramilitaries that warned her that they had disappeared her husband and that she shouldn't look for him or report the crime, because it would put her and her children in danger. Regardless, she reported the case to the Prosecutor General's Office in the city of Cali.

#### **Case 17: Forced Disappearance, Kidnapping and Death Threat**

**Victims:** Pastor Walter Arrollo, Ángela Echeverry, Wanda Arrollo\* and Eduardo Arrollo\*, of the Fellowship Church

**Date:** September 24, 2009

**Location:** Barranquilla, Atlántico

**Alleged perpetrators:** ELN

**Description of the events:** Walter Arrollo, married to Ángela Echeverry, had two children, a 2-year-old girl named Wanda\* and six-year-old Eduardo\*. Walter was a pastor in Barranquilla leading a prison ministry.

On September 24, 2009, Walter left home with his family to go to the city of Cúcuta. His wife was pregnant. The family disappeared and they never arrived to Cúcuta. The only thing that was found of the family was their suitcase with their Bible and things that belonged to Ángela and the children. Walter's family reported the crime to the Prosecutor General's Office. They also requested that the Barranquilla Prison Fellowship pray that Pastor Walter and his family be found.

Pastor Walter Arrollo was formerly a commander of the ELN. He was captured, put on trial, and sentenced to 60 years in prison. While in prison, the Prison Fellowship evangelized to him and in 1993 he converted to Christianity. From then on, he began a process of restoration and forgiveness. Later, he was ministered to by the Barranquilla Prison Fellowship because he was moved there to finish his sentence in the district's penitentiary where he continued his process of restoration. He joined the Sycamore Tree Restorative Justice program, and he also became a Christian leader and evangelist in the prison. He brought many guerrillas to Christ, who then ended their participation in the conflict.

While in the prison, he was threatened for preaching the gospel to guerrilla members. He was later assigned to the position of main pastor in the Barranquilla Penitentiary. Due to his work, good testimony, studies, and other activities, his sentence was reduced. He served 15 years in prison and gained conditional freedom on March 1, 2008.

Upon leaving, he continued to work in the prison as the Barranquilla Prison Chaplain. His mother says that he once received a death threat from the ELN, because he had become a Christian and left the group. He also had evangelized and brought many guerrilla members to Christ, who are now serving God while fulfilling their prison sentences. Despite the intimidations against his preaching, Walter never felt that his life was in danger.

#### **Case 18: Forced Disappearance and Kidnapping**

**Victim:** Freider Arturo Manera Osorio, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** October 25, 2009

**Location:** Medellín, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Police Intelligence (SIJIN)

**Description of the events:** Freider Arturo Manera Osorio, married to Martha Martínez, had one son and four daughters: Johnny, 23; Katherine, 21; María, 21; and two daughters under 18 years old.

The day of the crime, at approximately 1 p.m., a group of six men arrived in a green truck with tinted windows and license plate ITA 233, which when reported to the Prosecutor General's Office did not appear as a registered plate. The men identified themselves as members of the SIJIN [Police Intelligence] and told Freider that he had to go with them. They loaded him in the truck and took him away. The men were dressed in civilian clothing but had submachine guns.

Fifteen minutes after being taken away, Freider's wife and mother went to the SIJIN to verify if there had been a warrant out for Freider's arrest. The response was that there was no arrest warrant, nor record of his detention.

They then went to the Prosecutor General's Office to report the forced disappearance. There they were told that they had to wait 24 hours before they could file the report. The report was filed. However, as of the date of publication, there has been no news of Freider's whereabouts.

### C. Injury

#### Case 19: Injury, Torture and Death Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Manuel Francisco Tordecilla Calderón of the Shiloh Christian Center Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** January 28, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Pastor Manuel Francisco Tordecilla Calderón, 37 years old, is married to Marian Enith Romero Vega, 31, and has four sons and one daughter, all of whom are minors. The church, which belongs to the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC), keeps its doors open to the community by offering high school degree programs and courses, because the town only has elementary schools. The church has also helped many displaced families that have arrived to the town; the pastor has become a leader within the displaced communities.

On January 28, 2009, at 7 p.m., Pastor Manuel left his house to buy something to drink in a nearby store. Outside his house, an unknown man called to him, "Come with me and don't call to anybody nor make any noise; you are going to die tonight." The man took the pastor towards a dark alley where two men were waiting. They tried to tie him up but the pastor protested, saying, "If you are going to kill me and I have no escape, why tie me up?" The men took the pastor outside of town where they pointed a gun at him, hit and insulted him. The pastor asked them why they wanted to kill him and who had given them the order. They responded that it was one of the "big bosses" that belonged to the mafia, presumably the paramilitaries, and that they were going to kill him for being an informant. After two hours of discussion, surprisingly, the men agreed that they didn't have a sufficient reason to kill the pastor. They told him that he should literally "get lost," and he fled.

When Pastor Tordecilla returned home, he told his family what had happened. They hadn't realized that anything weird was going on. They thought the pastor was visiting a member of the church. The pastor shared the information with the church and although some members counseled the family to immediately leave town, the pastor respond-

ed, “We trust in God, and I am sure that there isn’t a valid reason to kill me.”

A week later, the men returned and told the pastor that as far as they knew, everything was fine and there were no problems. However, they warned him that he should be careful because the person that had sent them wanted to harm him. Since then, the pastor has not had further communication with the men.

An investigation was carried out and none of the illegal armed groups that are present in the area took responsibility for the threats against the pastor. This was the third time that the pastor had been threatened, so they have taken the case very seriously. This has caused a lot of anguish for the family, particularly for the pastor’s children, who are always asking if those men are going to kill him. Pastor Tordecilla has said that he will continue to lead the church, trusting in God’s protection. He believes that if God allows it, no one will be able to do him harm, and he says he will be in the town until God leads him in another direction (*Case 103, PC4*).

#### Case 20: Injury

**Victim:** Unidentified, of the Love and Faith Center

**Date:** October 31, 2009

**Location:** Toribío, Cauca

**Alleged perpetrators:** Guerrilla – Colombian Army (combat)

**Description of the events:** Six people were injured when a grenade was thrown at a house. One of the persons injured, a teacher, completely lost his sight. The victim is a member of the Love and Faith Center. This event occurred in the wake of guerrilla and Army combat.

## D. Torture

### Case 21: Torture and Threats

**Victims:** Zabaraim Fandiño Quitian, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** January 20, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Zabaraim Fandiño Quitian, a 40-year-old farmer, works in agriculture and construction. He is married to Neila Cruz Aguilar and they have five children, all of whom were minors when the event occurred.

Zabaraim was working in construction at the General Santander Police Academy, when on January 20, 2009, his boss Ernesto sent him to buy four sacks of cement at around 11 a.m. Zabaraim was moving the last two sacks in a wheelbarrow when he stopped to rest. When he stopped, he realized that there were two young men coming towards him and looking at him. While passing by, they said to each other, “Yes, that’s him.” Zabaraim delivered the cement and continued work until lunchtime.

Later, he was walking along the General Santander Avenue, around 1 p.m., when a dark car began to drive slowly alongside him. The car stopped, and he thought it was going to drop someone off or pick someone up. All of a sudden, a man began speaking to him from behind saying that he was with the F2 (now SIJIN – Police Intelligence) and told him, “Get on the floor [of the car] and don’t look up.” He got in, thinking that the man was a government agent.

There were three people in the car, the driver and two men in the backseat with him. He was on the floor of the car

so he didn't see where the car was going. Thinking that the men were from the State, Zabaraim told them that he didn't have any problems with anyone. They told him that soon someone was going to identify him. The man who spoke to him was tall and had curly hair, and the other had indigenous features.

Zabaraim felt that they drove on paved and unpaved highways. At times, the car stopped. One time it stopped and the door was opened and Zabaraim saw the face of the guerrilla member Pedro, from the FARC-EP Front 32 in Putumayo. Upon recognizing him, he said, "Get him out of here." From there on, Zabaraim knew that he was in the hands of the guerrilla.

He was in the car all of Tuesday night. On Wednesday, January 21, 2009, he remembers that they took him out of the car after dawn. The car left, leaving him with the two men. All day he stayed still, lying on the ground. The same car returned that evening and took them to another place. They stayed on the shores of a creek. The men gave him a piece of black rubber and some blankets with which to sleep. On Thursday, January 22, 2009, at dawn they tied one of his hands to a tree. He remained tied up all day until they untied him and they all began to walk. Zabaraim thought that they were going to kill him. They walked through a farm in silence.

They arrived to a clearing where they stayed the night. There they again tied him to a tree. The men ate but didn't give Zabaraim anything to eat, just sugar water. They told him that they were mistreating him because he hadn't helped them (FARC-EP) in Putumayo by bringing them supplies (Case 95). Because of his refusal they went hungry, and now they were going to treat him the same by not giving him anything to eat.

On Friday, January 23, 2009, Zabaraim was tied to a tree all day long. At night, the men began to talk to him. They asked him about his wife and children, but he responded that they had separated and he didn't know where they were. They asked if he was capable of setting off a bomb at his worksite, in the Police School or other site. He told them, "You already know that I have never wanted to harm anyone, nor do I want my children to see me harming anyone." Then they told him, "It's up to you. This is your problem." They also asked if he knew how to drive a car and he said no. After the questions, the men tied his arms behind his back and tied his feet to a tree. "I thought they were going to kill me, but then I didn't hear anybody and so I decided to flee. I was able to lower my hands and lift my legs up to free my hands. With my hands in front of me, I was able to free myself from the tree. Then I untied my feet and hands. The process left my wrists and ankles raw and bloody. I walked by night and didn't find anybody. I arrived to a road and continued walking while also hiding," he explained.

On Saturday, January 24, 2009, "I continued covertly along the road. I got so thirsty that I finally decided to knock on the door of a house and ask for water. A woman opened the door and was frightened by my appearance, but she offered me water and let me sit in a shelter because it was going to rain. There I waited as it rained for an hour or two. A man arrived in a white car; the people in the house had called him because they were suspicious of me. The man came up to me and began talking to me and asking me questions. I was afraid to tell him what had happened, thinking that he might be one of them, so I told him that I had gotten lost. He told me that the people in the house were nervous with me there and he offered to take me in his car to the main street in town. I told him no, that I was going to return the way I came. The owner of the house gave me a rain pon-

cho and I left walking. After a while, I decided to return to the house and ask the man to call the police. Upon arriving and asking them to do so, they told me that they had already called the police and that they were on their way. When the police arrived, one carried a handgun. It scared me because I had never seen a police officer with that type of gun and I thought that maybe it was a guerrilla dressed as a policeman. However, they assured me that they were the police and I went with them. We walked to a car driven by the police, which took me to the police post (CAI) in Tocancipá. That is when I found out that I was in Cundinamarca province. From that point on, the Prosecutor General's office hasn't wanted to accept my report of the events."

Since his youth, Zabaraín has regularly been harassed by the FARC-EP guerrillas, who pressured him to join them or do favors for them, but he has always refused their offers and requests. In 2002, his brother, then 22 years old, was killed by the FARC-EP for not collaborating with them. Shortly afterwards, his brother-in-law was also murdered by the same guerrilla.

## E. Attempted Murder

### Case 22: Attempted Murder and Death Threat

**Victims:** Antonio Muñoz\* (human rights defender), Verónica Pontevedra\*, Penélope Muñoz Pontevedra\*, Federico Muñoz Pontevedra\*, Yesenia Muñoz Pontevedra\* and Ana Muñoz Pontevedra\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** October 1, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries – Prison Guards (INPEC).

**Description of the events:** Antonio Muñoz\*, 45 years old, is married and has three daughters and a son, all under 18 years old. Muñoz has participated in defending human rights from a very young age with neighborhood, youth, and union organizations, and recently with displaced persons organizations.

According to the victim, "The night of the events, while I was on my way home, I was accosted by two men on a motorcycle. Without saying a word, they tried to kill me. Thanks to the fact that their pistol didn't work, I was unharmed. After saying some curse words, they left me and fled to the north."

Antonio\* said that the man tried to shoot the weapon several times, but it never fired.

"On November 24, around 8 a.m., upon arriving home, the owner of the house told me that there had been a man with a motorcycle vest on the corner. He had been there a long time and didn't do anything except watch the house. Additionally, she told me that she had called the Police, but they hadn't shown up yet... I dialed 123 [Emergency number] and, after identifying myself, asked that a police patrol come. Some 15 minutes later it arrived..."

The Police searched the suspect, who had a motorcycle; he was armed and said he was a member of INPEC (Prison Guards). "At 9:42 a.m., I received a call where a man told me: '[You are] very afraid, my son. We are for real. You have to come to terms with the pain and understand that you are already dead. Tell your wife that she is a widow'."

It seems that the death threats came from the paramilitary group Black Eagles, and are related to Antonio's\* activism and leadership with displaced and vulnerable populations, and his work in human rights. Antonio\* explained

that everything began in 2007 when he raised the profile of a case of corruption related to money for displaced population in Risaralda (*Case 99*).

## F. Forced Recruitment of Children

### Case 23: Death Threat and Forced Recruitment of Children

**Victim:** Rebeca Espinosa\*, of the Colombian Alliance Church

**Date:** January 1, 2009

**Location:** Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Rebeca Espinosa\* is a 13-year-old girl that attended the Compassion International project of the Colombian Alliance Church in Buenaventura. Rebeca\* had been recruited by paramilitary groups in 2008 (*Case 92*). Rebeca\* was in the paramilitary group from January to May. In June 2009, she was invited to a spiritual retreat by the Compassion International project where she confided that she belonged to the paramilitary group and that she didn't want to continue in the armed group because she was afraid that they would kill her. She had already been threatened by a paramilitary soldier.

Rebeca\* explained that she had tried to leave the paramilitary group, but she was afraid that they would hurt her mom, because they had already attacked Rebeca\*, almost killing her in the Buenaventura cemetery in April of that year. To stop them from killing her, she had to promise to return and work with the paramilitary group.

Rebeca\* stated that the money she receives helps to support her mother and some nephews and nieces. She would like to go to a different city, but she is afraid that

they will do something to her family. There is another man in the paramilitary group that doesn't like her and at any moment he could harm her. Rebeca\* is afraid that he will come at night and kill her, so she sleeps in a different place each night.

## G. Arbitrary Detention

### Case 24: Arbitrary Detention and Displacement

**Victims:** Javier Murcia\* (nurse), Adriana Cantillo\*, Adrián Murcia\*, Paula Murcia\* and Gisselle Murcia\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** February 1, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Gaitán, Meta

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP - Military - paramilitaries  
– Prosecutor General's Office

**Description of the events:** Javier Murcia\* is an indigenous leader with Cubeo ethnic background in Vaupés. He is also a nurse, businessperson, and was a candidate for Congress in 2006. He is married to Adriana Cantillo\* with a son Adrián\* and two daughters Paula\* and Gisselle\*, all under 18 years old. Javier\* had a farm with cattle, a pharmacy, a clothing store, and a restaurant. Upon receiving continuous death threats from the FARC-EP, Javier\* was forced to displace from his home with his family (*Case 100*).

In Villavicencio, Javier\* fell ill with hemorrhagic dengue. Two men from the Prosecutor General's Office entered his hospital room and told him that they had an arrest warrant accusing him of rebellion. Later, a prosecutor arrived to the hospital to carry out the arrest. Javier\* did not accept the charges and the Prosecutor General's Office wanted to force him to do so. The hospital decided to remove Javier\* from the facilities, and they turned him over to the police.

Javier\* was held without right to visits and without access to a phone call or any other form of communication. He was taken to the Villavicencio prison. There, he explains, “They took me to an overcrowded yard where I had to sleep under a cement slab on the ground with another person. Another man slept above us. I didn’t receive any medical care, not even a pill for my headache. I asked God for strength to continue and my God helped me. The food was awful. I prayed alone at night. I didn’t have the right to anything. The police officers hate you. It’s a different world: there are thieves, addicts, hit men... everything. You have to keep quiet and do what you have to do to survive.”

Adriana Castillo\*, Javier’s wife, got a lawyer who investigated the persons making the accusations as well as the prosecutors, and verified the following: the RIME 4 (Regional Military Intelligence of the National Army) had taken a group of four farmers from Puerto Trujillo at night. They forced the farmers to declare themselves guerrillas and they were told to accuse other people of being guerrillas. The Army offered the farmers five million pesos [about US \$2,500] to do so (which was never paid). The Army’s RIME 4 wrote down the declarations, but not all of the pages were signed by the farmers, so the Army later added more names to the list of “guerrilla members” that the “demobilized” farmers had named. The name Javier Murcia\* was one of the names that was added. This is known because the lawyer met with the four “demobilized” farmers that supposedly made accusations against Javier\*, and they explained that they had never named him. The “accusing” farmers testified about the incident in a public hearing as well.

After seven months of being deprived of his freedom by a false accusation, Javier Murcia\* left prison in October. He was again forcibly displaced and went to Bogotá. Javier\* is being pursued by the Army, who falsely accused him; by the

FARC-EP, who would continue to extort him or murder him if he returns home; and by the ERPAC, a paramilitary group that operates in the Puerto Trujillo region. This group presumably is made up of people who had formerly belonged to the FARC-EP. The Puerto Trujillo zone has a large presence of armed actors: military, guerrilla and paramilitaries. There is continuous armed combat between them. It is very common for members of the guerrilla who demobilize to later join the paramilitaries because they couldn’t find a job or other way to support themselves.

## H. Displacement

### Case 25: Displacement and Threat

**Victims:** Diana Campoalegre\*, Marcela Rodríguez\* and Sandra Rodríguez\*, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** January 1, 2009

**Location:** Medellín, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Diana Campoalegre\*, widow with two daughters: Marcela Rodríguez\*, 14 years old, and Sandra Rodríguez\*, 9 years old. In 2001, her husband Antonio\*, a street vender, received threats requesting extortion payments from a paramilitary group. That year, when Antonio\* went out to work one day, he was murdered by the paramilitaries who considered him an infiltrator.

Since then, Diana Campoalegre\* has received death threats from the people who executed her husband. The group continues operating in the neighborhood where Diana\* lives. They are constantly asking her where she is and have threatened her so that she doesn’t report what happened to her husband. In 2009, Diana Campoalegre\* had to displace and move homes twice from one neigh-

borhood to another in Medellín for fear that something could happen to her or her daughters.

#### Case 26: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victim:** Nehemías Agualimpia, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** January 1, 2009

**Location:** San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Nehemías Agualimpia, 20 years old, was studying his third semester of Bank Administration at the university. He is the son of Pastor Cristina Mendoza, who has four other children. There weren't any good job opportunities where he was living, so he was tempted to work for the paramilitaries. They offered him a million pesos per month [about US \$500]. Nehemías was confused about what to do because he didn't want to stop studying, but he also didn't want to risk his life because he knew that if he joined the paramilitary group, there was little chance that he would get out alive.

The church helped Nehemías, who had to displace to another city to work and continue studying. Nehemías had received death threats from the paramilitary group commanded by alias "Don Mario" in 2009.

Pastor Cristina Mendoza is a widow, her husband died of a heart attack after the family was forcibly displaced from Bananeras by death threats from the paramilitaries. She has done everything possible to help her five children get ahead in life.

#### Case 27: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Juan Carlos (human rights defender), two unidentified people

**Date:** January 18, 2009

**Location:** Cartagena, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Juan Carlos is married and has a son. He is a community leader that supports displaced families. Juan Carlos declared that on January 18, 2009, unknown men arrived to his house in Cartagena, looking for him to settle his debts. Upon not finding him, they intimidated and threatened his wife and son using profanity. They left the message that if he continued leading and supporting the displaced families that they would kill him. Because of the death threats, Juan Carlos and his family have had to continually change houses.

#### Case 28: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Manuel Miranda Díaz, Pastor Nicolasa Mesa Ochoa, Antonia\* and Francisco\*, of the Foursquare Church.

**Date:** January 27, 2009

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Manuel Miranda Díaz and Nicolasa Mesa Ochoa have five children, of whom two live with them: Antonia\*, 14 years old, and Francisco\*, 6 months old.

Manuel and Nicolasa were pastors at the Foursquare Church in Montelíbano. They were accused of being spokespeople for an armed group, which led to the family being threatened. This pushed the family to be forcibly displaced to

another city, where they face a lot of hardship. The previous year, the family had suffered many death threats and a violent attack (*Case 97*).

### Case 29: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Santiago Arbeláez\*, Elizabeth Contreras\*, Concepción Arbeláez Contreras\*, Isaac Arbeláez Contreras\*, Diomedes Arbeláez Contreras\* and Mabel Arbeláez Contreras\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** January 28, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Santiago Arbeláez\*, 40 years old, is married to Elizabeth Contreras\*, and has three daughters: Manuela\*, Concepción\* and Mabel\*; and two sons: Isaac\* and Diomedes\*. Santiago is a businessperson, owns a bakery, and fumigates sugar cane crops.

Presumed paramilitaries arrived to the lobby of the apartment where Santiago Arbeláez\* and his family were living, asking for “a family that came from Cali.” The doorman told them that there weren’t any families from that city. The men returned twice to ask for the family.

Another time, a man from the neighborhood supermarket told Santiago\* that two men had come by looking for a family from Cali. Realizing that the men were looking for them, Santiago Arbeláez and his family moved to a new neighborhood. His children slept in a local bakery because the owners felt sorry for the family. Santiago\* and his wife went to the Prosecutor General’s Office and reported that men were looking for them and stayed at the office that night. The following three nights they slept on the street. From there, the entire family began to sleep in the bus terminal. Then they moved to another neighborhood.

This family has suffered threats and displacement at the hands of the paramilitaries since 2007 (*Cases 84 and 93*).

### Case 30: Displacement, Collective Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Rafael Carpio Hernández and family; Vírgenes Morales

**Date:** March 5, 2009

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Rafael Carpio and his wife Vírgenes Morales have eight children between 4 and 28 years old. Five of them (between 4 and 24 years old) live with the couple. Their other three children live with their spouses.

Pastor Rafael was forcibly displaced by death threats from an armed group. A total of 20 people, all family members of the pastor, were also displaced. Approximately 200 families fled from Los Córdoba in the first half of 2009.

On the night of February 26, 2009, armed men, presumably paramilitaries, arrived at Rafael’s house. They told one of his sons that he had until 6 a.m. the next morning to leave town, or they would kill him. The next day, men arrived with a pistol but they didn’t find him. Later they sent a message saying that all of Rafael and Vírgenes’ children and their son-in-law must leave town.

On March 5, the family left the town because they were terrified. They all went to Montelíbano where they settled in a small house in an outlying neighborhood in the south of the city. Some of Rafael’s children left for another city. “We are here and are very anxious. We’re not able to return to Los Córdoba, even though we left

everything there because we couldn't bring anything with us. We left everything there. We are only hoping for God's will and the generosity of the people that can assist us," explained Rafael. Also, he added, "for security reasons, we would like to move to a different place to feel calmer, since this situation has put our health at risk. One of my daughters had to stop her university studies, where she was studying in her third semester. Our desire is to get dignified work to support the family and serve the Lord."

In April, Rafael had to fill out the paperwork so that the Municipal Ombudsman's Office would receive his statement of being displaced. Three months later, Social Action reported that it still had not received the report from the Municipal Ombudsman. On December 2, 2008, one of Rafael's son-in-laws was murdered in Montelíbano and the persecution has been continuous since then. There was a rumor that Rafael's children were on the hit list of an illegal armed group. However, his children were not concerned because they said they weren't guilty of anything.

#### Case 31: Displacement and Threat

**Victims:** Gladys Ofir and Jenny Viviana Cárdenas, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** March 15, 2009

**Location:** Apartadó, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Gladys Ofir, a single mother, works as the church secretary and has two daughters, one is 22 years old and the other, Jenny Viviana Cárdenas, is 19 years old.

In Apartadó, Gladys worked as the pastor's secretary in the church until 2009; during this time, she maintained

a low profile. In March of 2009, Gladys received calls on her cell phone where the caller threatened her and her younger daughter. The calls continued throughout the month.

During an evangelizing campaign, on May 2, 2009, a man who said he was part of the FARC-EP told her that she and her daughter had to go with them because she had a debt to settle with the guerrilla (*Case 74*) and she was given a timeframe in which to go. On May 10, because Gladys did not go, they told her that she should leave her neighborhood and the region. If she didn't, they would come for her and her daughter. So Gladys and her daughter had to leave Apartadó.

#### Case 32: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Manuel Pineda González, Pastor Pablo González, Pastor Lorenzo Castillo and Pastor Juan Moscote of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC). Pastor Bernardo Sánchez and Pastor Rodrigo Díaz, of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** April 23, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Pastor Manuel Pineda González was threatened by presumed members of the Black Eagles paramilitary group and had to leave the municipality for a month. "They realized that the threat against me had been a mistake and they said that I could return," Pastor Manuel explained.

The same group later threatened Pastors Bernardo Sánchez, Rodrigo Díaz, Pablo González, Lorenzo Castillo and Juan Moscote. The Black Eagles called them and told them that they had to give them forty million pesos (about

US \$20,000). The same thing happened to pastors in Montelíbano.

The pastors denounced these acts to the Prosecutor General's Office. "A problem that the pastors in this area have is that we can't have our children here with us. They would be recruited by an armed group," asserted one of the pastors.

In this area there has been a complex structure of paramilitary groups: Los Paisas supported the Los Rastrojos, and the Black Eagles supported the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces. The Black Eagles and Los Paisas have been fighting for the past two years. In other cases, the Black Eagles and the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces were the same group under the same commander. There had also been rumors that the guerrilla supported the Black Eagles in their combats against Los Paisas, due to their interests in controlling drug trafficking. The local economy was severely affected by these conflicts.

### Case 33: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Danilo Alean López, Liney Hernández and three children, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** May 28, 2009

**Location:** Cotorra, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Danilo Alean López and his wife Liney Hernández have three children between 7 and 17 years old. Danilo is a pastor at Christ the Savior Church, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC). The church is committed to its work with around 350 young boys and girls. Two hundred of these young people are supported by Compassion Inter-

national and the other 150 children get assistance by their own means. Also, last year the church helped families that were victims of the Sinú River flooding by giving them food and clothing.

Pastor Danilo received a phone call on May 28 that was made by a man who identified himself as a spokesperson for the Black Eagles, a paramilitary group with a lot of influence in the region. The man told the pastor that there were some people that wanted his assistance. He told the pastor that a car would come to pick him up and take him to the men. When the pastor said that he would not cooperate with the plan, the man said that he had another option for him: buy a cell phone calling card for the paramilitary group. He added that if he didn't cooperate, the pastor would be considered a military target and would have to immediately leave the municipality. The pastor and his family, fearing for their lives, fled the town that same afternoon.

The family is particularly fearful of this type of death threat because three of Pastor Danilo's brothers were killed by the AUC, the paramilitary group, in 1993 and 1994. One of the brothers, Moisés, was also a pastor.

### Case 34: Displacement and Human Shield

**Victims:** Pastor Rodolfo Verona of the Ephesians Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** July 10, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Combatants

**Description of the events:** Pastor Rodolfo Verona was caught in the crossfire of two combating armed groups. Due to this, the pastor had to flee.

### Case 35: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Luis Carlos Cohenz Garcés (church leader), Gloria Reinel Torreglosa, Nohelia\* Cohenz, Gerardo\* Cohenz, Betty\* Cohenz of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)  
**Date:** August 1, 2009  
**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Luis Carlos Cohenz Garcés, 33 years old, is married to Gloria Reinel Torreglosa; they have three children: Nohelia\*, Gerardo\* and Betty\*, 9, 8 and 4 years old respectively. Luis Carlos is the leader of Athens Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC). At the time of the events, he was leading the development and food security projects at the ASVIDAS's farm to support several poor families in the region.

After the murder of Marco Fidel Suárez (*Case 6*), who was killed by paramilitaries in the former Demobilization zone, a death threat was made against Luis Carlos Cohenz Garcés, who witnessed Marco's murder. He was later required by the police to be a witness in the murder, but he refused due to the fear of being threatened (given that those who report crimes or are official witnesses of crimes are also then often killed).

A neighbor told Luis Carlos that the armed group that killed Marco Fidel knew that he had gone to the police to give his testimony, and for that reason he was a military target.

On Sunday, August 2, at dawn, Luis Carlos left his house with his family to find a safe refuge, with the anxiety of not knowing if he should leave the province.

### Case 36: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Isaac Vargas, of the Tiberias Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)  
**Date:** August 5, 2009  
**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Isaac Vargas Martínez, 32 years old, is single and a member of Tiberias Church, which is part of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC). On August 5, 2009 at noon, five armed men that belong to the Black Eagles paramilitary group, arrived at the house of Isaac's father Aladino Vargas (Aladino is a leader in the Tiberias Church). The men asked Isaac to help them by going to town and buy them some t-shirts and bags. According to the family, it was just a pretext to get Isaac out of the house so the men could kill him on the road.

According to the illegal group, Isaac Vargas was an informant for Los Paisas, a different paramilitary group. They made this accusation because Isaac sells clothing and other goods in the communities where there had been combat between the groups.

Isaac was able to escape and ran towards the church where he sought refuge. Several members of the church went there and accompanied him that night and the next day. On August 8, the family decided that Isaac should leave the community. From there, they organized a strategy so that he could leave, as it is difficult to get past the continuous presence of the armed group on the road out of town. Isaac made it to another city as a newly displaced person.

### Case 37: Displacement, Death Threat and Collective Death Threat

**Victims:** Leandro Julio Marmolejo Fernández of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** August 8, 2009

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Leandro Julio Marmolejo Fernández, 28 years old, is married to Lisley Herrera; they have a daughter and a son, both under 18 years old. After the murder of a person in the neighboring community of Murmullo on July 28, rumors had spread that there were threats against other people in the community, including Julio Marmolejo.

The cause for the death threat is unknown, but the pastor and the church elders are very concerned, and are trying to find out the causes behind the threat. Julio had to leave the community, leaving behind his family, during the weekend of August 8.

### Case 38: Displacement, Collective Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Jorge Peña sons and daughters of Pastor Peña of the Pergamon Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** September 9, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Guerrilla

**Description of the events:** Jorge Peña is a pastor who had taken up an important leadership role, responding to the landslides in Puerto Libertador, Córdoba. This in-

cluded the management and administration of financial resources. Some members of the community were jealous and spread rumors about the pastor's work, including lies that they told the guerrilla.

A nurse went to the church and told the pastor that she had heard that the guerrilla were coming to kill him and other "rats" [informants] in San Juan. The pastor left and was displaced for a few months; he returned in August. His children have been permanently displaced.

### Case 39: Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Pablo Antonio Tapia Vega and Arcila Álvarez López of the Smyrna Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** November 6, 2009

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Pablo Antonio Tapia Vega is married to Arcila Álvarez López. Pablo is the pastor at the Smyrna Church and is also a community leader. Because the government has not provided any teachers in this community, the Smyrna Church has started a school. The church also serves as a place for the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and the World Food Program to organize food programs for children. The community also does not have a health clinic. This organizing process was supported by Christ the King Church and CORSOC-ASVIDAS (Community Social Development Corporation in Tierralta).

Pastor Pablo was threatened by the FARC-EP guerrilla on Friday, November 6. They told him to leave the area because they didn't want to see him there ever again and they considered him a government informant. That after-

noon, Pablo saw several men coming towards his house. He grabbed his wife, who was five months pregnant, and they left and hid in the forest. They stayed there until around midnight and then returned home, collected some belongings and early on Saturday, November 7, they left home and went to the Crucito town seat. From there they sought assistance in order to leave the area.

On November 9, the couple continued their displacement to the community of Villa Madeira (a community of families that were displaced and re-settled there since 1996). There, Pablo's father-in-law provided them with shelter, but the house was very small and was overcrowded. The situation put the health of Pablo's wife and their unborn baby at risk. Pastor Pablo was suffering psychologically; he couldn't stop crying, felt very alone, and that he had lost everything. Alto Colón is the community that is furthest from the town of Tierralta. The road to the community leads to the Paramillo natural reserve. The population in the area has withstood a lot of violence and has resisted being displaced, although many individual families have been displaced.

## I. Collective displacement

### Case 40: Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Families from Alto Viento, Solo Dios, Agua Viva and Ratón Medio

**Date:** June 28, 2009

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Because of armed combat on June 28 between the paramilitary groups Los Paisas-Rastrojos and the Black Eagles to gain territorial control, 62 families have been displaced from Alto Viento, Solo Dios,

Agua Viva and Ratón Medio in Cadillo, in the municipality of Tierralta. Many of these families belong to the Tiberias Church (AIEC) and other AIEC churches.

### Case 41: Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Families from Parcelas de El Quindío

**Date:** August 9, 2009

**Location:** Montería, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Due to Jhon Jairo Martínez Vides' death (*Case 4*) at the hands of paramilitaries, the families of the El Quindío community were very frightened. On Sunday, August 9, 2009, two families from the community displaced towards the center of the country.

## J. Human Shield

### Case 42: Human Shield, Illegal Means and Methods of Warfare, and Religious Intolerance

**Victims:** Members of the New Life Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** August 27, 2009

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Pastor Jaime Gómez was in the church with a group of church members who were fixing the roof that had been damaged in a storm. A small group of Black Eagles paramilitary combatants approached the town. Members of Los Paisas, the other paramilitary group that normally has control of the area, were located nearby. Approximately 150 men from Los Paisas began to fire upon the men from the Black Eagles, killing seven

of them. The survivors from the Black Eagles went to the church to seek refuge and continue fighting from there. The members of the church escaped unharmed. Pastor Jaime Gómez was new to the community, and the previous pastor had fled the zone due to death threats.

#### Case 43: Human Shield

**Victims:** Residents of Campanas de la Vega  
**Date:** September 14, 2009  
**Location:** Dibulla, La Guajira  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Combatants

**Description of the events:** There is a military base located inside the town of Campanas de la Vega in Dibulla municipality. Because of the base's location, fighting between the Army and the armed groups in the region put the lives of the people who live in town in danger.

According to one inhabitant of the town: "I don't understand how we can have a base inside the town and also—right under their noses—have kidnappings, massacres, recently there were attempted rapes of young girls, robberies, and they don't do anything, they don't even realize it's happening." Besides this, the person added, in Dibulla there are more than 10,000 men in paramilitary groups.

Different armed groups operate in the town, including the guerrilla, the Black Eagles of Los Nevados, and the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. This presence is due to the fact that the town is along a drug-running corridor. At the time of documenting the case, Puerto Brisas port was being constructed in Mingueo, which opens on to the Caña River, the site of heavy armed combat.

## K. Religious Intolerance

#### Case 44: Threat, Collective Threats and Religious Intolerance

**Victims:** Two unidentified church leaders in Melchor, Cauca.  
**Date:** February 15, 2009.  
**Location:** Bolívar, Cauca.  
**Alleged perpetrators:** ELN.

**Description of the events:** A pastor from the church in Meléndez sent two church leaders to Melchor, Cauca to lead the work there. After six months, the ELN guerrilla kicked them out, threatening them and prohibiting their work there. They continue to impede their work, by not allowing them to enter the area or provide services there.

#### Case 45: Collective Threat and Religious Intolerance

**Victims:** Churches in Toribío, Cauca  
**Date:** August 1, 2009  
**Location:** Toribío, Cauca  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Guerrilla – Colombian Army

**Description of the events:** During August, September and October there were frequent armed combats between the guerrilla groups and the Army. Since the majority of the church members live in the countryside or out in small communities, and many of them could no longer attend the services, they were not able to carry out their pastoral work. Also, frequent harassment had created much fear and concern. On numerous occasions they had to seek refuge during church services because fighting erupted outside. The armed groups, when passing by areas near the church, have left explosive ordnances such as grenades, mortars, *tatucos* [grenades made from

rifles], and other artifacts, which have caused death and amputations.

## I. Death Threat

### Case 46: Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Nelson Larrota Venegas of the Vision for the Nations Charismatic Church

**Date:** January 15, 2009

**Location:** Ibagué, Tolima

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Nelson Larrota Venegas is a 49-year-old pastor. Nelson has received constant phone calls asking him for money. Later, a request was made in person. The people who threatened him and asked him for money said that they belonged to demobilized paramilitary groups. There have been many armed and criminal groups present in the area.

### Case 47: Threat

**Victim:** Jorge Jiménez, of the House of God Church

**Date:** January 25, 2009

**Location:** Montería, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Jorge Jiménez is married and has three children. He is a motorcycle taxi driver and messenger.

Unknown people put a threatening note under the door of Jorge's house. In the note, the people used profanity to complain that Jorge had not done a messenger job well

for them which cost them a lot of money. The note finished by telling him that he should watch out because he was going to pay for it. Jorge went to his church's pastor. After praying for awhile and calming down a bit, they decided to go to the authorities to report the incident.

Jorge remembers that in December he was called to pick up a package that he had to deliver to a person in a store in the city's central market, where public transportation vehicles arrive from Buenos Aires, Antioquia, and towns in Córdoba such as San Juan and others. The package was badly wrapped and very heavy for its size, but Jorge didn't suspect anything. His job was to pick up and deliver the package to the southern market, to a place called *Vuelve y Ven*, where a person was waiting for him and paid him for the delivery.

### Case 48: Threat and Collective Threat

**Victims:** Pastor José Cristancho\*, of the Evangelical Missionary Union Church of Colombia (IUMEC).

**Date:** February 6, 2009

**Location:** Miranda, Cauca

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** José Cristancho\*, a 42-year-old indigenous man, is single and the pastor of a IUMEC church. He and the inhabitants of Monterredondo, in Miranda municipality, Cauca, received a communiqué from one of the mobile fronts of the FARC-EP on February 6, 2009. The communiqué ordered that no one leave their house after 6 p.m. each evening. If anyone were to leave after 6 p.m., the guerrilla would not be held responsible for anything that happened to that person. As a consequence, the church could not hold services or visit their members.

#### Case 49: Threat

**Victims:** Zarael Forero of the United Pentecostal Church of Colombia

**Date:** February 15, 2009

**Location:** Ibagué, Tolima

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Zarael Forero, a 44-year-old farmer, was threatened by the FARC-EP guerrilla for not obeying their order to travel from his community San Juan de la China to the municipal seat to buy them groceries. The FARC-EP guerrilla has a permanent presence and control of this area.

#### Case 50: Threat and Collective Threat

**Victims:** Saúl Parra and family, of the Christ the Center Church

**Date:** February 20, 2009

**Location:** Colombia, Huila

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Saúl is a member of the Christ the Center Church. Towards the end of February, presumed guerrillas from the FARC-EP stopped Saúl in the town and prohibited him from returning to his farm until he told them where one of his brothers was located. Up to this point, he was the only person in his family that could go into town, given that the rest of the family had already been threatened after the murder of Saúl's brother Joel who was a pastor (*Case 16, PC3*). Both his church and his family have been threatened by the same group (*Case 65, PC4*).

#### Case 51: Death Threat

**Victim:** Antonio José Espitia\* (dentist), accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** February 22, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Antonio José Espitia\*, a dentist, is married and has three daughters and a son. On two different occasions, unknown people shot at his door in the complex where he lived. They also wrote graffiti saying, "Now it's going to happen" over his door.

Antonio José Espitia\* had been receiving death threats for years. On February 22, two armed people on a motorcycle, and another three people in a taxi, approached Antonio José Espitia\*. One of them came up behind him and put a pistol to his back, while another man asked him where his son was. They told him that if he didn't help them, they would take him with them to make his son come to them. Antonio José\* told them that they had the wrong person, and at that moment the men fled possibly because they saw some police officers approaching. One of his daughters witnessed this incident.

On November 30, 2009, unknown men fired two gunshots into the door where Antonio\* and his family lived. It is presumed that the paramilitaries who are pursuing him, are looking for his son and daughter-in-law (*Case 73*).

#### Case 52: Death Threat

**Victims:** Yolanda Saldarriaga\* (teacher), accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** February 23, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Yolanda Saldarriaga\*, 51 years old, has three daughters and a son. Yolanda\* was with a friend at a fast food restaurant waiting for her lawyer, when an armed man insistently intimidated and watched them. Her lawyer was a witness to his actions. This lawyer is representing Yolanda\* in a Florida Court (United States) in a lawsuit against Chiquita Brands Inc. Yolanda\* is suing the company because they financed the William Rivas Paramilitary Front, whose commander was alias “Carlos Tijeras” of the Jorge 40 Block. Yolanda explains, “According to Chiquita Brands Inc, everyone from the Alto Sierra, where we lived, were members of the guerrilla. It was alias ‘Carlos Tijeras’ who ordered the murder of my husband (on February 4, 2003).”

Yolanda\* continues explaining, “On March 24, 2009, my brother received a call on his cell phone from a friend who told him that in the company in Ciénaga where he was working, two individuals that belonged to the Black Eagles paramilitaries were asking for him (my brother). They asked him if it was true that he was living with me in Bogotá. On March 25, 2009 at 11:18 a.m. my brother was stopped by two individuals on a motorcycle as he was walking towards the San Andrés de Afidro 3 apartments in Suba from the parking lot. These men stopped him. Pulling out a pistol they told him ‘Come here. You’re Hector\*, Yolanda’s\* brother, from Ciénaga.’ My brother responded that he was not, but the men stopped him again. However, the man driving the motorcycle said ‘that isn’t him, let’s go.’ The man with the gun told my brother, ‘You escaped.’ The men had an accent from the coast. They had helmets on, and they rode a red multi-cylinder motorcycle. My brother told the doormen in the apartment complex what happened, and they rec-

ommended calling 123 [Bogotá’s emergency number]. The incident was reported to the police (CAI) in Fontanar Suba and the sergeant on duty received the case. My brother later filed a formal report with the Prosecutor General’s Office and other agencies concerning our family’s security.”

“I don’t know what to do, we are all afraid. And now we’re even more afraid because my neighbor and my sister Dora\* in Ciénaga called me and told me that Mr. José Luis Álvarez, alias ‘El Mulo’, who maintains strong ties with the Black Eagles, the new paramilitary group in Colombia, has declared me a military target,” explains Yolanda\*. “Also, the mother-in-law of paramilitary commander alias ‘Canal’ from Ciénaga, who is active with the Black Eagles, lives in my neighborhood here in Bogotá. I am afraid that family might recognize me, so I’m thinking about moving to a different part of the city if it’s at all possible. My children, my brother, my niece and I live with great anxiety and fear. We don’t go out much, and we’re so stressed we can’t focus on anything. We’re very afraid because we don’t know what might happen to me. Only God knows how difficult life has been for me and my children. The pain shows itself in my heart mostly at night, and my refuge is my Lord, he gives me strength. My children and I are a sad family, but we are strong because of the Lord’s love.”

#### **Case 53: Death Threat, Collective Threat and Illegal Means and Methods of Warfare**

**Victims:** Carmen Zulima Naranjo (human rights defender) and her family, of the Faith and Prayer Christian Integration Church (ICFO)

**Date:** March 3, 2009

**Location:** Villa del Rosario, Norte de Santander

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Carmen Zulima Naranjo, 48 years old and divorced, has three daughters that are 17, 19 and 22 years old, and a son that is 16 years old. She is a single mother and a community leader. She has been trained by different national and international organizations in human rights. Carmen is the director of the Human Rights and Displacement radio program, which has been broadcast from Villa del Rosario since 2007. She is also the founder of the Association of Displaced Peoples of Villa del Rosario (ASODEVILL). Due to her work, she has received protective measures from the Ministry of Interior and Justice.

Due to her role as a social leader, Carmen has been subject to constant death threats and surveillance. According to her own testimony to government officials, she has even had her office looted and destroyed by Black Eagles paramilitaries, (*Case 80*). In February 2009, a community leader and the son of another community leader were murdered. Due to this violence, another leader had to be evacuated from the area with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Villa del Rosario, in Norte del Santander, is considered a red zone because of the presence of the Black Eagles paramilitaries.

#### Case 54: Death Threat

**Victims:** Fabiola Giraldo (teacher), Claudia Patricia Giraldo, Carlos Víctor Giraldo and Edilson Giraldo, of the Christian Crusade Church

**Date:** April 10, 2009

**Location:** Puerto Rico, Caquetá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Fabiola Giraldo, 45 years old, divorced with three adult children (Claudia Patricia, 25; Carlos Víctor, 22; and Edilson, 21), participates actively as an instructor in a Bible institute in her community.

The FARC-EP released a communiqué demanding a sum of \$10,000 pesos per cow (about US \$5) that is located on the farm where Fabiola and her family live. The communiqué declared that if this demand was not met, the family would be declared a military target. Fabiola was on her farm, located in Rionegro, in Puerto Rico municipality, Caquetá, when her foreman delivered the communiqué to her. The family has not made any formal reports because they are sure that the FARC-EP is following them so that they don't turn to the authorities; their lives are at risk.

According to the testimonies of other people in nearby communities, there has been a guerrilla presence in this area for many years. Currently there are many intense military operations that are impeding the FARC-EP from obtaining supplies and other resources needed for their activities. This has driven the guerrilla group to use these types of methods to create fear and generate income. Other farm owners have been threatened in the same way.

#### Case 55: Death Threat

**Victims:** Antonia Figueroa\*, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** May 15, 2009

**Location:** San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Antonia Figueroa\*, 16 years old, was recruited by the paramilitary group belonging to alias "Don Mario" (*Case 89*). Due to a serious illness, Antonia\* had not returned to the paramilitary group that had recruited her. In May 2009, seeing that she did not want to come back, they told her that she had to return or they would kill her. Antonia\* was able to leave the region to seek protection.

### Case 56: Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Adonys, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** May 27, 2009

**Location:** Montería, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** On May 27, 2009, Pastor Adonys, of the Central Church of Montería, received a phone call from a man who identified himself as a spokesperson for the Black Eagles paramilitary group. He told Adonys that there were some “people with difficulties” that wanted the pastor and the church to take care of them. He also told the pastor that there was a car waiting for him a block from the church to take him to the men who needed help. The pastor told him that he and the church were not able to help and it would be better for them to contact the Red Cross or a similar organization. The man told Pastor Adonys that if he refused to help he would be considered a military target. After exchanging a few more words, the man hung up. The family is frightened and has asked for prayer.

### Case 57: Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Alejandro Zabala, of the Presbyterian Church

**Date:** June 15, 2009

**Location:** Honda, Tolima

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Alejandro Zabala is a 45-year-old pastor. On June 15, 2009, two young men traveling by motorcycle stopped Pastor Zabala and threatened him. They continued these threats, using phone calls and pamphlets, and told him to leave the region.

Pastor Zabala had previously been located in Puerto Boyacá, a paramilitary zone. He had helped several displaced families leave the area, and perhaps this was the reason why he is being threatened. The area where the pastor is located and was threatened has an extensive Black Eagles paramilitary influence.

### Case 58: Death Threat

**Victim:** Norma del Carmen Benítez Mejía, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** June 15, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** Army - Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Norma del Carmen Benítez, 36 years old is a widow and now single mother of her son John Munevar\* and daughter Esperanza Munevar\*, both minors. The entire family was forcibly displaced after Norma del Carmen’s husband was murdered by the paramilitaries, with the presumed consent of the Army (*Case 71 and Case 94*).

Norma attended a hearing where two paramilitary commanders spoke about the case of her husband; they took ownership of it, but didn’t mention the participation of an Army Colonel and Captain. In the hearing, Norma said that “the Army had something to do with it as well.” Then she went to the Prosecutor General’s Office and told them the truth about the Colonel and the Captain’s participation, beginning with the calls made in 2000 to recruit Alberto to the paramilitaries. Norma received death threats in the form of letters and phone calls.

In September 2009, two men dressed in civilian clothing arrived at Norma’s house and said they were police officers. They had a file with all her personal information.

They said that they were in charge of protecting her. They asked her questions about her routine, like when she and her children leave home, etc. Later, Norma asked the Police and the Prosecutor General's Office about this visit, and they told her that they hadn't sent anyone because her case had not yet been studied. The men never returned and Norma reported the incident.

#### Case 59: Death Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Salvador José Alcántara Rivera, of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** June 27, 2009

**Location:** Simití, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Salvador José Alcántara Rivera, 50 years old, is married to Nidia Alian, who is the same age. The couple has four adult children. Salvador is an evangelical pastor, a leader of the community of Garzal, and the president of the Garzal Community Council.

Salvador has received death threats from paramilitaries (*Case 76, Case 77, Case 78, and Case 83*) and recently a death threat against Salvador was made public in the town of Vijagual, where a hit man had been paid to go and kill him.

On August 8, 2009, a group of men armed with rifles, dressed in black and with long-range weapons, stationed themselves across from Salvador's house all night. A member of the Alcántara family arrived home at 11 p.m. that night, and was searched by the group. They registered his presence, and asked him where he came from, and where Salvador was located. The group identified themselves as "guerrilla", however, their uniforms and their weapons made the family think that they were a paramilitary group.

Just that day, Salvador Alcántara happened to not be in Garzal. He and other community leaders were leading the legal actions and political advocacy work aimed at the custody, protection and vindication of the right to land and territory and the right to the sustainable use of natural resources of the 300 farming families that live in Garzal. These rights, however, have been fundamentally violated by a company that grows palm oil, and by different state agencies on the local and regional level.

#### Case 60: Death Threat

**Victim:** Ercilia Marín Herrera, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** July 15, 2009

**Location:** Ibagué, Tolima

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Ercilia Marín Herrera is a 46-year-old farmer and widow. Two years ago, the FARC-EP guerrilla killed her husband, which forced her to leave and be displaced, although later she returned to manage the farm. The FARC-EP tried to make her leave again by constantly threatening her. However, her economic well-being depended heavily on the farm, so she insisted on staying. The FARC-EP is the armed group that exercises the greatest level of control in the area.

#### Case 61: Death Threat

**Victims:** Enrique\* and Laura Acuña, of the Presbyterian Church

**Date:** August 3, 2009

**Location:** Turbo, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Combatants

**Description of the events:** Enrique\* is nine years old and was continuously harassed by an armed group in his neighborhood, an area that has many displaced persons in Turbo. The armed group wanted to recruit Enrique\* and train him to use weapons. The group's boss constantly visited Enrique's mother, Laura Acuña, to tell her that she should let the child go with them and that if he goes, the group will support the family.

One day, they came to take him with them permanently, but because Laura was able to hide him for a short time, they weren't able to take him. However, the child continues to be at risk of recruitment. Laura is a widow: her husband and one of her children were murdered by paramilitaries in 1997 (*Case 70*).

#### Case 62: Death Threat

**Victims:** Astrid Sandoval\*, Fernando Sandoval\*, Tatiana Sandoval\* and Osmar Sandoval\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** August 18, 2009

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Astrid Sandoval\* takes care of her nieces and nephews. On August 18, 2009, at 1:30 a.m., a masked man tried to open the window to enter the children's room. They woke up and started yelling. Astrid\* got up and went to their room, where they all saw the man. After he fled, the security guards in the complex looked for the man, but they were not able to find him.

Astrid\* does not believe that the man came to rob them, but rather to harm the family. Beginning the day prior to the incident, at approximately 8:35 p.m., Astrid\* began receiving phone calls. The people on the other end of the

line didn't speak, they just listened to see who answered. The calls came every hour: at 9:35 p.m., at 10:35 p.m., and at 11:30 p.m. This happened three different times.

The boys and girls say that they feel that someone is following them when they go to school. They have seen a man who always follows them from school to their home.

On another occasion, the children saw some men on a motorcycle murder a young man on the street. Now they are afraid to go outside, preferring to stay inside the apartment.

Astrid's security risks are related to the threats directed against her sister and brother, which come from the FARC-EP. Because she is living in the apartment and taking care of her brother's children, Astrid\* suffers the same persecution and threats.

#### Case 63: Death Threat

**Victim:** Jessica Ester, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** September 12, 2009

**Location:** San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Jessica Ester is 18 years old. Her sister was recruited by the paramilitaries, but they let her leave for a set time while she recovered from an illness.

Jessica explains that she had never had contact with the paramilitaries in San Pedro until her sister left them. At that point, she began to receive phone calls from the paramilitaries. They demanded to know where her sister was located. Jessica didn't know where her sister was, and told them so. She asked them to not ask her again because she's never been involved in her sister's activities.

The next week, she again received a phone call. They told her that her sister better return to them. She told them again that she didn't know where her sister was, and reiterated that they need not call her because she didn't know anything about what her sister was doing. They then threatened her, saying that if she didn't tell her sister to return, they would look for her and kill her. Since then, Jessica has wanted to leave the region.

#### **Case 64: Death Threat**

**Victim:** Gabriel Pulido Contreras (human rights defender)

**Date:** September 21, 2009

**Location:** María La Baja, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Gabriel Pulido Contreras is 33 years old; he is married and has two sons. Gabriel helped identify farm lands in a collective and individual reparations process led by the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR) for approximately 245 displaced families from Mampuján. He also participated in hearings carried out within the Justice and Peace Law framework, specifically the arraignment hearing for Uber Banquez, alias "Juancho Dique," and Edgar Cobo Téllez, alias "Diego Vecino." Gabriel was able to interrogate both the suspects in the hearings about their motives and reasons for displacing the Mampuján town residents, given that the men themselves recognized that the population was innocent. Mr. Uber Banquez responded, "You need to request protection, because not all of us have demobilized, and there are still large land owners, and since the government hasn't fulfilled its commitments to the demobilized paramilitaries, they could come for retaliation." Given his attitude, the judge had to intervene.

On Monday, September 21, 2009, at around 10 p.m., two men dressed in civilian clothes arrived to the community where Gabriel lives. They said that they were members of the Army and they were sent by a Colonel and a Lieutenant from the Malagana Battalion. The men asked questions about the living conditions in Mampuján and asked where the leaders were located. "This situation scared us because 'Juancho Dique' himself confessed in the hearings that the Malagana Battalion had worked with them in the massacres that they had carried out in the zone. It also scared us because a friend in Córdoba (Bolívar) and another friend in San Juan had told us that 'Juancho Dique' was trying to figure out who the leaders in Mampuján were so that he could get rid of them," explained Gabriel. That was why the friends had recommended that he not lead the process to recover lands.

At this time, in the María La Baja municipality there were a lot of problems with security, and since May there have been many acts of violence in the town and in the rural areas, without any arrests of the perpetrators.

At the time of the incident there had been nine people murdered: in Matuya three youth were killed, in the town of Santa Fe de Hicotea a woman was killed, in Retiro Nuevo a man was killed, in Las Bellas a person had their head cut off, and in the urban center three men who were ex-paramilitaries were killed.

#### **M. Collective Threat**

##### **Case 65: Collective Threat**

**Victims:** Pastors from Planeta Rica, Córdoba

**Date:** May 28, 2009

**Location:** Planeta Rica, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Several pastors from Planeta Rica municipality received calls from a man who identified himself as a spokesperson for the Black Eagles paramilitary group and asked for assistance for some of his men. In this case, all of the pastors agreed to not cooperate with the man and to stay in Planeta Rica to face the situation as a group.

#### Case 66: Collective Death Threat

**Victims:** Marginalized and vulnerable population in Caucasia  
**Date:** June 1, 2009  
**Location:** Caucasia, Antioquia  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Pastors from the churches in and around Caucasia denounced that in June, September and October pamphlets were circulated that threatened to kill women who are “pre-paid” [prostitutes] and prostitutes, children that are out after 9 p.m., youth crack-users, and people who are “rats” [informants].

#### Case 67: Collective Threat

**Victims:** Light and Life Church, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean  
**Date:** July 10, 2009  
**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Early in July there was armed combat on several occasions between the Los Paisas and Black Eagles paramilitary groups in the rural area where the church chapel is located. The church was literally in the middle of the combat crossfire. A pastor, who lives near the church, commented, “I was in the community

and there were approximately 400 armed and uniformed men from Los Paisas waiting for the Black Eagles (waiting to combat them).”

#### Case 68: Collective Threat

**Victims:** Christ My Only Hope Church  
**Date:** August 28, 2009  
**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Combatants

**Description of the events:** The Christ My Only Hope Church is located at the bottom of the mountain in San Juan. Armed groups were located at the top of the mountain, locked in combat for three days. The pastor explains, “While we were in Sunday services we could hear the gunshots of combat above us in the mountains.” On September 1, there was combat on the edges of the Río Verde community.

## N. Illegal Means and Methods of Warfare

#### Case 69: Illegal Means and Methods of Warfare

**Victim:** José Vallar Montaña Vichue  
**Date:** September 15, 2009  
**Location:** San José del Fragua, Caquetá  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Police, Foreign Agents

**Description of the events:** On September 15, 2009, José Vallar’s farm was fumigated with glyphosate by small anti-narcotics airplanes. The airplanes took off from Larandia Military Base and fumigated: grass (one hectare), cacao (3/4 hectare), sugar cane (3/4 hectare), yucca (3/4 hectare), borojó fruit, pineapple, avocado, coffee, corn and plantains.

The fumigation was carried out by the National Anti-Narcotics Police with the assistance of United States troops. José Vallar filed a complaint with the mayor's office in San José del Fragua municipality. Officials from the municipal government visited the farm, verified the fumigation and took close note of the damage. Vallar reports that he has checked on the status of the complaint process and they told him that the complaint had been sent to the National Anti-Narcotics Directorate (DNE). He called the Directorate (DNE) to see how the complaint process was going, and they informed him that they had not received any complaint for his farm and that they hadn't received any complaints of fumigations of licit crops from Caquetá for a full year. "What it suggests is that the people who receive the complaints never take the proper steps in the process needed with the National Anti-Narcotics Directorate," José Vallar explains.

## Cases prior to 2009

### Cases between 1997 and 2005

#### A. Homicide

##### Case 70: Homicide

**Victims:** Juan Rentería and José Iván, of the Presbyterian Church

**Date:** March 21, 1997

**Location:** Atrato (Yuto), Chocó

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** The paramilitaries arrived to Chigorodó in the Atrato river basin in Chocó and killed a group of people. Juan Rentería and his wife Laura lived in a community some three hours from the massacre site. It

was said that the paramilitaries were coming to their community and would kill everyone.

The night of March 20, 1997, a group of six families left their homes to head to the jungles in the mountains between Antioquia and Chocó, near the Atrato River. They fled because they feared that the paramilitaries would kill them. They walked all night and part of the next day, when someone informed them that the paramilitaries had gone to the community, and upon finding no one there, they left.

Juan Rentería, his wife and son José Iván, and four other men decided to return home to get some of their belongings. However, on the road home, the paramilitaries violently attacked them and brutally killed the men: they cut them into pieces and threw them in the Atrato River. They gave Laura nothing more than her son's cap and her husband's shirt. Later, she found out that the paramilitaries had played soccer with her son's head before throwing his body in the river.

##### Case 71: Homicide, Arbitrary Detention and Death Threat

**Victims:** Alberto Leonidas del Castillo Cortés and his brother and sister, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** December 17, 2000

**Location:** Tumaco, Nariño

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP - Paramilitaries - Army

**Description of the events:** Alberto Leonidas del Castillo Cortés, married to Norma del Carmen Benítez Mejía, 38 years old, had a 10-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son. Alberto was born in Tumaco, Nariño and was a professional soldier in the National Army. Alberto retired from the Army in May 2000 and hoped to dedicate his time to his family, his home, and to work independently.

In July 2000, after a visit to Tumaco, a Captain and a Colonel of the Army began to call Alberto to propose that he work for the paramilitaries in Tumaco. The two men sought out soldiers who had left the Army to recruit them to the paramilitary forces in Tumaco, specifically the Liberators of the South Block that was being formed.

Alberto returned to Tumaco to find a taxi that he had bought, with the intention of taking the car to Sincelejo. Towards the end of October, the guerrilla detained the car for two weeks and painted the letters FARC-EP on it. They let the driver go. With his brother's help, who went to speak to the guerrilla, Alberto was able to get the car back on November 15, a month later.

While he was in Tumaco, Alberto stayed at his mother's house. On December 29, a driver known as "Matute" from the Tumaco Battalion, who was friends with Alberto, went to his mother's house and made Alberto go with him to a place near a bridge where there are always Marine infantrymen. But that day, the infantrymen weren't there. The driver left Alberto alone with a woman named Edilma Macasue, who was also friends with Alberto. Then a taxi showed up with four people that Alberto knew: two soldiers and two apparent paramilitaries. Alberto greeted them, but they took him and forced him into the taxi. When Alberto realized what was happening, he began to shout. They bound his hands and they took him to a touristy part of town called El Morro. On their way there, they passed by the Battalion, where many infantrymen were located. Because Alberto was screaming, the men pushed him out of the taxi a block from the Battalion in front of a high school. They made him walk away and they shot him in the back, killing him. A woman was witness to the event, which is why the details are known.

According to Norma, Alberto's wife, "Everything was coordinated by the Colonel and the Captain." After Alberto's death, his brother was detained for three days at the Battalion and was threatened so that he wouldn't report his brother's murder. Alberto's sister went to the hospital for the autopsy and the Captain told her, "If you don't want to have problems, you better not report his death." Norma began the process within the Justice and Peace Law for her husband's murder, which led to her receiving death threats (*Case 94*).

#### **Case 72: Homicide, Arbitrary Detention, Death Threat and Displacement**

**Victims:** Francisca Esarna Cassiani and her three daughters and four sons of the Water of Life Church

**Date:** January 15, 2002

**Location:** María La Baja, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries - Army

**Description of the events:** Francisca Esarna Cassiani and her seven children lived on a farm in Matuya, in María La Baja municipality, where a few times members of the guerrilla had gone to ask for food. This provoked the paramilitaries, under the command of alias "Juancho Dique," to threaten her and she decided to flee. However, this paramilitary group took her four boys and executed them. Later, the Army detained Francisca, and she continues to be held in the Sincelejo prison for allegedly being a member of the guerrilla.

María La Baja is an area that has been afflicted by violence. First by the EPL and CRP guerrilla groups, and later by the military itself, who accused the population of being members of the guerrilla, and finally by the paramilitaries that displaced all the members of the communities of Mampuján, Playón, La Pista, Santa Fe and committed multiple homicides.

### Case 73: Homicide, Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Ana Lucía Caviedes\*, Jaime Romero Llanos\*, Ana's father, Ana's daughter, and Jaime\*  
**Date:** January 1, 2003  
**Location:** Ocaña, Norte de Santander  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Army

**Description of the events:** Ana Lucía Caviedes\*, the wife of Jaime Romero\*, and daughter-in-law of Antonio José Espitia\* (Case 51), was a witness to her father's murder in the mid-90s. Her father was a farmer who was killed and cut into pieces by the military in Ocaña. They accused Antonio José of being a member of the ELN, but he was never aligned with the group. On one occasion, members of the ELN stopped by his farm and forced him to give them cattle to eat. Ana Lucía identified the soldiers that killed her father and filed an official report. From there, the family began to be pursued and threatened. This forced Ana Lucía\* and her husband to seek refuge in another country.

### B. Injury

### Case 74: Injury and Displacement

**Victim:** Gladys Ofir, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia  
**Date:** January 15, 2002  
**Location:** Apartadó, Antioquia  
**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Gladys Ofir, a head of household, works as a church secretary. Gladys has two daughters, one is 22 years old and the other, Jenny Viviana Cárdenas is 19.

Gladys Ofir previously worked in the Army Command office. Her house was located next to the Cultural House in Apartadó, where guerrilla bosses were holding a workshop on journalism. Someone told the Army that the guerrillas were in the house so the Army went and arrested some of the guerrilla leaders, taking them to Army Command. One of these men was interrogated in the Major's office of the Apartadó Command, which is the office where Gladys worked as a secretary at the time. The guerrilla commander recognized her because she walked by the Cultural House to get to work at the Command Office. The guerrilla commander assumed that she had informed the Army about their presence in the Cultural House. Later, in 2002, guerrilla members followed Gladys on her way to catch public transportation to work. Two guerrillas got in the vehicle and shot her, disfiguring her face. After the attack, the guerrilla left her for dead. However, she was still alive and taken to the hospital, where they managed to save her life.

Between 2002 and 2006, Gladys moved constantly to hide from the guerrilla. In 2007, she and her two daughters returned to Apartadó because by that time the area was dominated by the paramilitaries.

### C. Displacement

### Case 75: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Pastor Rosendo Antonio Romero, Mónica Romero\*, María Suárez Mellado and three unidentified persons of the Baptist Church  
**Date:** April 18, 2005  
**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba  
**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Rosendo Romero, 46 years old, is a pastor and was the president of his Community

Council. Rosendo and his family were forcibly displaced from Flores Arriba, in Santa Marta, Tierralta municipality. They fled because the paramilitaries established a base with approximately 800 combatants in their community, imposed their authority over the community, and threatened Pastor Romero due to the community and humanitarian work that he was doing with some families in the community.

#### D. Death Threat

##### Case 76: Death Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Salvador José Alcántara Rivera of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** April 15, 2000

**Location:** Simití, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Pastor Salvador Alcántara confronted some men who were part of paramilitary groups when he saw them taking a young man down the street. He asked them why they were taking him, and their response was to verbally abuse him and threaten him. The young man was later executed. This happened when the paramilitaries were just beginning their activity in Simití, Bolívar (*Case 59, Case 77, Case 78*).

##### Case 77: Death Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Salvador José Alcántara Rivera of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** October 27, 2003

**Location:** Simití, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Pastor Salvador Alcántara sought out Manuel Barreto, a large landowner and leader of paramilitary groups, near the hospital in Simití to talk with him. Manuel Barreto was in a car with some paramilitaries when they passed by the pastor and his friend as his friend's house. The pastor asked him about the commentaries that were circulating that said that "the paramilitaries were present there [in Garzal] because the people have to be displaced." The pastor asked him, "is it true?" Barreto affirmed the statement, saying, "All of this territory is mine. I have 500 rifles to regain this land." He proposed to the pastor that he could give him some land so the pastor would stop being a bother. The pastor took offense and explained that he was not looking for personal favors, instead he sought to protect the community's welfare. Manuel Barreto asked, "Do you also want to fight?" He said that in January he would visit the community and he didn't want to see a single person or family in El Garzal. "The Magdalena River takes everything that is put in it. All the people in Garzal are guerrillas." (*Case 59, Case 76, Case 78*)

##### Case 78: Death Threat

**Victim:** Pastor Salvador José Alcántara Rivera of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** January 15, 2004

**Location:** Simití, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Manuel Barreto, the large landowner in the area, found out that Pastor Salvador Alcántara was working with international accompaniment and organizing the community to demand the residents' rights to the land in Garzal. Pastor Salvador received a call from a known paramilitary. He was warned that his situation was critical and that there was an order out to kill him.

## Cases 2007

### A. Homicide

**Case 79: Homicide, Forced Disappearance, Torture, Injury, Arbitrary Detention, Death Threat and Displacement**

**Victims:** Alexander López, Albeiro López, Óscar Sánchez and Jorge Lagos, of the Christian Crusade Church

**Date:** April 19, 2007

**Location:** Riohacha, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** GAULA (Joint Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Colombian Armed Forces) – Army

**Description of the events:** Alexander López, son of Pastor Piedad Ospino and father of four children, left home at 9 p.m. on April 19, 2007. He was going to Valledupar to bring a motorcycle that someone had bought and had asked him to transport to Riohacha. He was never seen again. The pastor filed a report with the CTI [Technical Investigation Unit] about Alexander's disappearance.

On September 5, 2007, Albeiro, the pastor's youngest son, was traveling by motorcycle taxi and was stopped by several men who were traveling in a four-door truck with tinted windows and without a license plate. They forced him into the truck and told him to not look around. They beat him and interrogated him, asking if his family had filed a report about Alexander's disappearance, to which he responded no. He wasn't aware that his family had in fact reported the disappearance. Albeiro told his mother that he was able to see that the men had dark clothes on and face masks, like those used by members of the GAULA. Albeiro was detained by the men from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

On September 25, 2007, at 10 a.m., the pastor received a phone call that told her to go to Valledupar to identify a cadaver that was believed to be her son. At 5 a.m. the next morning, the pastor was able to identify the body as her son. Alexander's cadaver was given to his family on September 26 and he was buried on September 27 in Riohacha.

The CTI reported to the pastor that Alexander had died in armed combat with the Army on April 20 at 3 a.m., that is, a day after having left his home. Alexander appeared as a casualty in Patillal municipality in Cesar, dressed in boots and camouflage.

In a phone conversation with the Human Rights Unit Prosecutor, the pastor says that she was able to hear on the other end of the line the Prosecutor asking another person how it was possible that the young man could show up as "killed in combat" if he wasn't wearing camouflage but rather civilian clothing. An official from the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (*Defensoría del Pueblo*) who knew about the case told the pastor, "This is becoming fashionable," (apparently making reference to the cases of extrajudicial executions, better known as false positives, being "in fashion").

The pastor said that she knew who was behind her son's murder and that they were located in her neighborhood: a member of the GAULA known as "Pichi." She knows it was him because on July 6, 2009, a friend's son had heard "Pichi" say that he knew that Alexander was dead.

These events caused the pastor's sons Óscar Sanchez and Jorge Lagos to leave La Guajira province on September 27, because their lives were at risk. "Pichi," who is allegedly involved in Alexander's death, was following Jorge.

## B. Displacement

### Case 80: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Carmen Zulima Naranjo (human rights defender) and her two daughters, of the Faith and Prayer Christian Integration Church (ICFO)

**Date:** June 15, 2007

**Location:** Manizales, Caldas

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Carmen Zulima Naranjo, 48 years old, divorced, with three daughters and a son, is a single mother and social leader. In 2003, for economic reasons Carmen and her family had to leave Manizales (Caldas), and they moved to Villa del Rosario municipality in Norte de Santander.

In 2005, paramilitaries in the area forced residents to make extortion payments and to attend meetings. Carmen and her family were forcibly displaced from their home because they refused to accept the demands. They all returned to Manizales and after two years. In 2007, the paramilitaries again asked them for money, using threatening phone calls. For this reason, they returned to Villa del Rosario, as they considered these phone calls proof that the paramilitaries that had threatened them were no longer located there.

The constant threats and displacements caused Carmen to separate from her husband. In 2007, Carmen resettled in Villa del Rosario, where she continued her work in the community to support the displaced families. She created a radio program called Human Rights and Displacement, on Citizens' Radio and has directed it since 2007. Carmen also formed the Association of Displaced People of Villa del Rosario (ASODEVILL).

Carmen again began to receive threats, lootings, and persecution. Two of her daughters had to leave the municipality for fear of being forcibly recruited; one returned two years later.

Carmen has had protective measures since 2007, which were provided by the Ministry of Interior and Justice. However, she has to apply a lot of pressure to have the measures renewed. Carmen continues to be harassed and threatened (*Case 53*).

### Case 81: Death Threat, Displacement, Collective Death Threat and Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Javier Suárez\*, Eber Suárez\* and 25 families from Campanas de la Vega

**Date:** December 6, 2007

**Location:** Dibulla, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Javier Suárez\*, a leader of displaced families, was threatened and forcibly displaced by men that belong to the Black Eagles paramilitaries. Nearly 2,000 men from the group, heavily armed and equipped with cell phones and communication radios, came to Javier's\* farm and the neighboring farms, telling them that they had to plant coca. They threatened all the farmers, saying that they would kill them if they didn't do it, and they prohibited them from leaving their farms.

On December 8, Javier\* and his family decided to leave as forcibly displaced persons from their farm. The other 25 farming families also decided to leave.

On December 11, 2007, Javier\* went to the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office in Riohacha. While he was there, he

received a phone call from his farm and was told that the paramilitaries and Army had fought in armed combat. The Ombudsman did not believe his report and accused him of lying. The Social Action office also denied the facts of the threat. The Riohacha Police Colonel was transferred after the combat. The Administration committed to returning the farm to them, but when they wanted to return, they found a group of Koguis [indigenous group] were there and they didn't want to leave. The local administration did nothing to remove them from the land.

Javier\* says that the Governor's office was in negotiations to sell the farm and it wasn't taking into account the crops that they had put so much effort into planting. The crops took physical effort to plant, and included economic efforts as well: the Agrarian Bank had given them loans to work the land, which the farmers were still paying off.

Javier\* complained asking how it was possible that President Uribe could say that there are no paramilitaries. Javier\* asserted that it's a lie and the demobilization efforts were a sham: the paramilitaries are in Dibulla. Javier\* explained, "Neither Social Action nor any other government institution has helped us. For Social Action, displacement is only if you're hungry, kneeling, asking for food, and if not, you're not counted as displaced. They don't understand that farmers have to learn other things besides working the earth because if not, we die of hunger."

The 25 families from Campanas de la Vega were displaced to places all over Colombia. Javier\* and Eber Suárez shared that Mingueo, in Dibulla municipality, was threatened by the Gaitanistas Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, who had distributed pamphlets and murals about the group in the community. Everyone in the municipality was in danger of being killed.

### Case 82: Death Threat, Displacement and Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Dayris Mejía and family, of the World Missionary Movement Church

**Date:** December 11, 2007

**Location:** Dibulla, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Dayris Mejía was the president of the Ebenezer Association of Displaced Peoples. In response to the threats and displacement that the paramilitaries were creating, she went to the Prosecutor General's office to file a report. In the Prosecutor's office, she was surprised to find one of the paramilitaries that had threatened the farmers. The man effusively greeted the officials in the office. So Dayris could not file an official report of the events.

On December 14, there was a meeting in the Dibulla Municipal Ombudsman's Office between the Municipal Ombudsman and leaders from the Ebenezer Association. During the meeting, the Ombudsman received a phone call that threatened her, saying she shouldn't do anything to help the people from Campana Nuevo. After these failed attempts to report the events, Dayris received a phone call where they threatened to kill her, which made her forcibly displace with her family, leaving her children in another city. This all happened because she was declared a military target by the Black Eagles of Los Nevados paramilitary group.

### C. Death Threat

#### Case 83: Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Salvador José Alcántara Rivera, of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** September 1, 2007

**Location:** Simití, Bolívar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries - Army

**Description of the events:** The Army called Pastor Salvador Alcántara to ask him to identify two paramilitaries that they had captured.

The pastor explained, “I didn’t go. I understood that it was a set up to get me into trouble with the ‘paras.’ The Army is complicit.” That afternoon the Army freed the two people it had captured.

A few days later, the pastor was at a community meeting in El Garzal and a group of people, some on horse and four on foot, passed by. Then, the pastor saw that the Army showed up. He thought that maybe it was to provide accompaniment to the international organizations that were accompanying the meeting, but then the Army proceeded to arrest two of the people walking in the group (who accompanied the men on horseback). Later they found out that the people were drug traffickers, accompanied by paramilitary guards.

At that time, there were rumors circulating that said that the pastor was a “rat” [informant] for the Army. The pastor looked for the person that was spreading the rumor about his links to the Army; the man was dressed as a civilian, but he was a known paramilitary. The paramilitary said he was spreading the rumor because the pastor wanted to take land away from the person that threatened him, a landowner with large extensions of land with palm oil plantations. (Case 59).

#### **Case 84: Death Threat**

**Victims:** Santiago Arbeláez\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** December 15, 2007

**Location:** Buga, Valle

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Santiago Arbeláez\*, 40 years old, is married and has three daughters and two sons. Santiago is a businessman, owns a bakery and fumigates sugar cane fields.

Santiago\* received threatening phone calls from people belonging to a paramilitary group, where they told him to, “get out of here.” The threats continued and got stronger: they told Santiago\* that if he wanted to see next year, he had better leave, “What happened to Gonzalo\* and Jaime\* will happen to you.” From then on, Santiago\* didn’t return to his bakery.

In 2007, Santiago Arbeláez\* economically supported his friend Gonzalo’s\* campaign for councilperson. Then paramilitaries killed a young man named Jaime\*, who Santiago\* had contracted to transport Gonzalo\* around on his motorcycle. In August 2007, Gonzalo\* was killed by the paramilitaries.

## **Cases 2008**

### **A. Homicide**

#### **Case 85: Homicide**

**Victims:** Adanien Alfonso Franco Arrieta (artisan), of the Inter-American Church of Colombia, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** October 22, 2008

**Location:** El Bagre, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Adanien Alfonso Franco Arrieta, 27 years old, worked as an artisan and had two children. Alleged paramilitaries from the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces stopped and killed him on the road between Caucasia and Zaragoza. Some residents of the area witnessed the crime. The motive is unknown since he was not a leader in the church or community and he had not received death threats.

## B. Forced disappearance

### Case 86: Forced Disappearance

**Victims:** Pastor William Reyes Piedrahita, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia.

**Date:** September 25, 2008.

**Location:** La Paz (Robles), Cesar.

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** William Reyes was married to Idia Miranda, both pastors; they had one son and two daughters (the son is an adult, and the daughters were minors when the crime was committed). In November 2005, just a few months after the family had moved to Maicao from Antioquia, Pastor William began to receive threats from unidentified people who asked him for money using phone calls and text messages.

William was victim to several attacks in September. On September 1, 2008, when Pastor William was on his motorcycle, two men stopped him, brutally beat him, stole his rings and pointed a gun at him to take his motorcycle. As a truck approached, the men fled, managing to take just his rings and the keys to his motorcycle. On September 2, William received his last threatening message on his cell phone, which referenced the previous day's robbery. On a trip that the pastor took, he called his wife,

Pastor Idia Miranda and told her that he was in a car with other passengers. He said that they were passing through La Paz (Cesar) and he would be arriving to Maicao in a couple of hours. Since that call, William has not been seen or heard from.

This information is complementary to the information presented on the case in 2008 in [A Prophetic Call 4 \(Case 20, LP4\)](#).

### Case 87: Forced Disappearance, Death Threat and Sexual Violence

**Victims:** Adolfo Rengifo (storekeeper) and Ángela Martínez, of the Colombian Alliance Church

**Date:** October 8, 2008

**Location:** Medellín, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Adolfo Rengifo, 38 years old, is married to Ángela Martínez, 28, and has two children (both minors at the time of the events). Adolfo is Miriam Rengifo's brother; she is a pastor of the Colombian Alliance Church. Adolfo sold photocopiers, computers and printers in Medellín, Montería and Cali.

On October 8, 2008, after sending a shipment of printers to be sold in Envigado, Adolfo disappeared on the road that connects Medellín to Envigado. His family explains that Adolfo had been receiving extortive threats from a Black Eagles paramilitary group, and from the Envigado Office drug trafficking organization, who was extorting him for these organizations.

A few days after being forcibly disappeared, Adolfo's car was found in Sabaneta, Antioquia. The family also received a call saying that they should give a certain amount of

money to have Adolfo liberated. After that call, they didn't receive any more communications. The case was reported to the authorities but there hasn't been any information that clarifies what has happened to Adolfo.

### C. Sexual Violence

#### Case 88: Sexual Violence

**Victims:** Mónica Giraldo\*

**Date:** April 19, 2008

**Location:** Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Mónica Giraldo\*, 11 years old, is the daughter of Pastor Rosendo Giraldo\*. Mónica\* was victim of violent rape perpetrated by a member of the Águilas Negras paramilitaries who operate in the area.

The day of the crime, Mónica\* passed by the perpetrator's house and his sister, who had become friends with the girl, called to her. At that moment, the victimizer arrived and forced the girl into a bedroom where he sexually abused her. His sister didn't do anything to stop it nor did she give any notice of what happened. It seems that it was planned by the two siblings.

The investigation of this crime was carried out in the Prosecutor General's Office in Montería, and up to the time of writing, there had not been any news of an arrest warrant for the two suspects, despite the summons issued by a community defender. The perpetrator and his accomplice continue living in the same house where the crime was committed.

#### Case 89: Death Threat, Forced Recruitment of Children and Sexual Violence

**Victims:** Antonia Figueroa\* and Pastor Constanza Agamez\*, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** November 15, 2008

**Location:** San Pedro de Urabá, Antioquia

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Antonia Figueroa\*, 16 years old, was recruited by the paramilitary group commanded by "Don Mario." Antonia\* left her high school and "Don Mario's" group encircled 22 students, including boys and girls, and took them away to be trained. Among them was Antonia\*.

Her mother, Constanza Agamez\*, began to look for her, but no one could give her answers. This search was done covertly because all of the parents of the recruited children were threatened and could not file reports nor carry out searches for the children.

Three months later, an acquaintance (allegedly a paramilitary) told Constanza\* that he had seen her daughter armed with other colleagues at a paramilitary roadblock. Antonia\* says that they taught her how to use all types of weapons. One day they told her that she had been selected to guard "Don Mario" (a drug boss) whenever he came to Chocó. She was also trained in first aid. This all happened in about three months. In the process of working as a nurse, she says that a colleague died of leishmaniasis (a disease that rots the skin).

According to her mother, Antonia\* was in the ranks of "Don Mario's" group in the Chocó jungles for six months. She got leishmaniasis in the jungles, one of the many diseases common in that area. She had twelve insect bites and she

tells of how she was raped and sexually exploited. Antonia\* says that she saw a young person die of leishmaniasis. She also knows of five girls who were recruited and went crazy. The girls were taken to a witch to be cured. But as they weren't cured, the girls were tied up and taken away, and she doesn't know what happened to them. Antonia\* tells that some pregnant girls were forced to have abortions. Antonia's\* mother says that she thinks that her daughter saw people being killed, but that she herself hadn't killed anyone. Antonia\* didn't want to talk about it.

Besides teaching how to use weapons, the paramilitaries taught them the hymn and the creed of the paramilitary group. They forced them to drink gunpowder, and the soldiers were prohibited from talking to other people, family or friends, something particular to the paramilitaries, because if you did speak to anyone, they would kill you. The girl said that the paramilitaries had many training camps and she stood out as one of the best with weapons.

The girl explains that she was allowed to leave the group and come home because of her leishmaniasis, so that she could heal and then they would come for her. She arrived home with one of her legs rotting. Her mother took her to the hospital, but didn't share any information with anybody to protect their lives. Her mother received a call that told her not to say anything about where the girl was or where she was, and that when she was better, they would take her away again.

The mother stated that every time the men from "Don Mario's" group come to San Pedro, they sent for Antonia\*. "She goes with them and they get her drunk and sexually exploit her, and not just Antonia\*, but all the girls that returned home. And they remind them that they have to return to the group. They haven't taken Antonia\* away yet because she continues to be sick." Antonia\* says that if she goes with them again, it will be out of fear.

## D. Attempted Murder

### Case 90: Death Threat and Attempted Murder

**Victims:** Herminda Restrepo\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** November 10, 2008

**Location:** Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca

**Alleged perpetrators:** Police

**Description of the events:** Herminda Restrepo\*, eldest daughter of Marta Caramés\* (*Case 101*), has a three-year-old son. Herminda\* was enjoying the sunshine with her son in front of their house when two men approached. They identified themselves as members of the Police and began to ask her questions. They told Herminda\* that she had to go with them, and they took her by her elbows. She demanded that they identify themselves because she wasn't going anywhere. The men began to push her and she began to scream because she was holding her son. One of the men put a gun to her stomach and a shot was heard. People began to come out of their houses and children who were playing began to cry and run. Herminda\* looked to see if her son was hurt, and fortunately no one was injured.

### Case 91: Death Threat and Attempted Murder

**Victims:** Pastor Manuel Miranda Díaz, Pastor Nicolasa Mesa Ochoa, Antonia\* and Francisco\*, of the Foursquare Church

**Date:** December 17, 2008

**Location:** Montelíbano, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Manuel Miranda Díaz and Nicolasa Mesa Ochoa, a pastoral family (*Case 28*), were

at home the evening of November 17, 2008, when a man that said he was a spokesperson for the Black Eagles paramilitary group came to the pastor's house, located next to the church. In the visit, he told the pastor that they wanted him to help them out with either 30% of the church's income or 5 million pesos (about US \$2,500). The pastor refused to give them the money, so the man threatened him and said he should leave town within 24 hours. The pastor insisted that he did not have any money and could not give them any.

Three days later, on November 20, the pastor received a phone call that again demanded the money and threatened the pastor. Unknown persons began to pass by the house in the days afterwards, and a message was sent to the pastor through a church member, saying that if he didn't pay the money, "they have three grenades for him."

The next month, on December 17, at 4:30 a.m., they threw a grenade at the pastor's house, which damaged the windows, doors, and roof. The pastor and his family were not hurt, though they were sleeping inside.

The media covered the situation with the grenade, and the church leaders were meeting to try to find a solution to the situation.

### E. Forced Recruitment of Children

#### Case 92: Forced Recruitment of Children

**Victims:** Rebeca Espinosa\*, of the Colombian Alliance Church

**Date:** March 1, 2008

**Location:** Buenaventura, Valle

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Rebeca Espinosa\* is a girl that attended the Compassion International project at the Colombian Alliance Church in Buenaventura. Her older brother became friends with the city's paramilitary boss, named "Diego." The boss came by Rebeca's\* mother's house and gave her money to help with the family expenses. He did this throughout 2008.

In March, "Diego" told Rebeca\* that she had to join the paramilitary group and she had to go with them for training. She had to do it. After training, "Diego" assigned Rebeca\* a salary and sent her to work under the orders of another paramilitary called "Jaime" to help control a neighborhood in Buenaventura.

### F. Arbitrary Detention

#### Case 93: Arbitrary Detention, Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Santiago Arbeláez\*, Elizabeth Contreras\*, Manuela Arbeláez Contreras\*, Concepción Arbeláez Contreras\*, Isaac Arbeláez Contreras\*, Diomedes Arbeláez Contreras\* and Mabel Arbeláez Contreras\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** August 2, 2008

**Location:** Buga, Valle

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Santiago Arbeláez\* (40 years old) is married to Elizabeth Contreras\*, they have three daughters: Manuela\*, Concepción\* and Mabel\*, and two sons: Isaac\* and Diomedes\*. Santiago is a businessman; he owns a bakery and fumigates sugar cane fields. Armed men from a paramilitary group came to Santiago's\* house and "razed the house with gunshots." Santiago\* was going down the stairs to the bathroom and the men saw his

shadow through the glass. They fired at him through the glass in the door. The glass was riddled with bullet holes, but Santiago\* was unhurt.

According to a witness, three or four people showed up in a red truck and two men on a motorcycle, who were the shooters. The same night, they put a note under his door. It had a cemetery drawn on it and said, "Mr. Santiago, we don't want to see you all here anymore. Sincerely, Death." The next day, Santiago\* and his family left their home displaced.

In the city to which they fled, Santiago Arbeláez\* reported the events that caused their displacement. While he was leaving the mayor's office, three men on two motorcycles crossed his path and told him, "Get on." Santiago\* got on the motorcycle and they took him to a nearby town that is known for its paramilitary activities. They let him off in an area without anybody around and said to him, "You are an informant and infiltrator for the national forces, the Police." They also accused him of not being displaced, saying, "Furthermore, you are hiding behind a false displacement because you are not the person you claim to be." The men finished by saying, "If you don't leave town in less than 48 hours, you'll suffer the same as the Ramones\* family did." The Ramones\* family had been targeted by the paramilitaries.

Santiago\* and his family had to leave, again being displaced. This family had received threats before from the paramilitary group (*Case 84*).

## G. Displacement

### Case 94: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Norma del Carmen Benítez Mejía, Esperanza Munevar\* and John Munevar\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** January 4, 2008

**Location:** Tumaco, Nariño

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries - Army

**Description of the events:** Norma del Carmen Benítez, 36 years old, is a widow and head of household, and has a son John\* and a daughter Esperanza\*, both minors. Her husband was killed by paramilitaries with the alleged consent of the Army (*Case 71*).

On January 4, 2008, two men arrived on two motorcycles to Norma's house and threatened her, saying that they didn't want to see her in Tumaco and that they would kill her if she stayed. Norma displaced with her children to the capital of the country. Norma attended the hearings with the Justice and Peace Law about the case of her husband's execution.

### Case 95: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Zabaraim Fandiño Quitian, Neila Cruz Aguilar, Nicolás\*, Alfonso\*, Johan\*, Rafael\* and Andrés\*, of the Mennonite Church

**Date:** August 1, 2008

**Location:** Putumayo

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Zabaraim Fandiño Quitian, a 40 year old farmer who works in agriculture and construction. He is married to Neila Cruz Aguilar, and they have five children, all of whom were minors at the time of the

events. The family lived on La Sevilla farm in Putumayo province. The guerrilla at that time was receiving a lot of pressure from the National Army, so they forced farmers to bring them supplies.

“When it was my turn, they asked me for three million pesos (about US \$1,500) and they showed me a list of things they needed: boots, sugar, rice, black cable, toiletries,” Zabaraim explains. He refused to help them with their request, so the guerrilla accused him, “You have been working for the government for many years because you never have helped us with anything.” This scared Zabaraim. Nevertheless, he sent his three oldest sons to go work in the fields, and thus away from the meeting. The three men who had asked for his help with the supplies told him that they were going to call Commander Joaquín Villa. The three guerrillas left, going in the same direction as where his three sons were working. They told the sons that since their father didn’t want to help with the supplies, they were going to take the three of them to join the guerrilla. One of the sons asked for permission to say goodbye to his parents. The guerrillas gave them 15 days to say goodbye and said that they would return in 15 days to see if the family would give them the supplies. Finally, they said that when they returned, if they hadn’t brought the supplies, they would kill Zabaraim in front of his children and then recruit the sons to the guerrilla group.

Zabaraim and his family displaced at night towards Caquetá. On August 6, 2008, they arrived to the Red Cross in Florencia. Zabaraim entered the office while the family waited outside. An hour later, a man named Beto arrived. The family recognized him from the Los Ángeles community because in the past he had tried to recruit the sons for the guerrilla. He asked them where Zabaraim was, and they said that he had gone to the farm, he then left.

In this risky situation, an official helped them by calling some taxis. The Police provided them with protection and accompanied them to the Human Rights Ombudsman’s office in Florencia. The Ombudsman took them to a hotel where they stayed the night, and helped them with the costs of food and lodging. The next day, they went to the capital.

On August 22, 2008, Zabaraim was looking for a cheap house in Bogotá when a man on a motorcycle greeted him. He asked Zabaraim if he remembered a community called Illusion. Zabaraim then recognized the man, named Pedro, as a member of the FARC-EP guerrilla Front 32 from Putumayo. Realizing who it was, he began to run. He heard Pedro say to his colleague, “light him up” [shoot him], but he didn’t hear any gunshots.

In early October, Zabaraim began working in a pawnshop. One day at the end of October, a young man arrived and asked him the price of refrigerators and grills. He also asked what time Zabaraim left work. It seemed to him a weird question, and he responded that he didn’t have a set schedule. He left to go home and never returned to work again. The next day, the owner of the pawnshop called him and told him that a man had come by asking where Zabaraim lived, and he had told him that he didn’t know. A few days later, another man on a motorcycle stopped by looking for Zabaraim, saying that he needed his address.

Since he was young, Zabaraim has been regularly harassed by the FARC-EP who pressured him to join their ranks or do favors for them, but he has always rejected their offers and requests. In 2002, his 22-year-old brother was murdered by the guerrilla for not helping them, and a short time later, his brother-in-law was also killed by the FARC-EP.

### Case 96: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Obdaly José Magdaniel, Pastor José Agustín Magdaniel and José Magdaniel's family, of the Assemblies of God Church

**Date:** August 15, 2008

**Location:** Maicao, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** DAS (Administrative Security Department).

**Description of the events:** Obdaly Magdaniel, 28 years old, is married and has three children. Obdaly is a Christian and son of Pastor José Magdaniel, who is 55 and married with four children.

Obdaly began to receive threatening and extortive calls that asked for money and threatened that if he didn't pay, he would be made into mince meat. They gave him a name and an ID number so that he could deposit the money to them. With this information, his father Pastor José, called a friend in the GAULA [anti-kidnapping unit] and reported the death threats. After the call, Obdaly received a phone call saying, "Now we know that your dad is with the greens [the army]."

At the end of September, 2008, they called Obdaly telling him that he had 48 hours to deposit the money or leave Maicao, or they would kill him. Obdaly left the city the next day.

On October 22, 2008, men from the DAS [Administrative Security Department] approached the house of Obdaly's wife in a car, asking for him. She told them that he wasn't there. The men told her that he owed them money and that they knew where his family lived. They told her to get in the car and they took her to her father-in-law's (Pastor José's) house.

### Case 97: Death Threat, Displacement, Collective Threat and Collective Displacement

**Victims:** Omer Ochoa and three families from the Los Rosales farm

**Date:** September 19, 2008

**Location:** Dibulla, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Omer Ochoa was the legal representative of ASOROSALES and a member of the Citizens' Reconciliation Commission in La Guajira. Omer lived with his family on Los Rosales farm, where 30 families had been relocated after having been forcibly displaced from different parts of the country.

On September 19, 2008, Omer left with his sister to accompany her in filing a report of several murders in the Prosecutor General's Office. Three days after filing the reports, presumed paramilitaries went to the farm looking for Omer, but he wasn't there. The men that came to the farm watched his wife carefully to ensure that she didn't warn him of their presence. However, as he was arriving to his house, a neighbor warned him to not go because they were looking for him to kill him. Omer left that same day for Riohacha, and the next day he had to leave for another city. Three other families were also threatened and displaced.

### Case 98: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victim:** Johan Sierra, of the Christian Crusade Church

**Date:** October 17, 2008

**Location:** Riohacha, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** GAULA (Joint Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Colombian Armed Forces)

**Description of the events:** Johan Sierra was a motorcycle taxi driver and drove Jorge's motorcycle; Jorge is one of Pastor Piedad Ospino's children. Johan was the young man who heard alias "Pichi," a member of the GAULA, say that he had sent Alexander to be killed (*Case 79*).

On October 17, Johan was robbed of the motorcycle. During this event, the thief said that he was going to kill him. This frightened Johan and he decided to not sleep at his house that night.

The next day, Johan found out that the same night some men had entered his house, looking to kill him. On October 18, Johan decided to flee to Venezuela.

#### Case 99: Death Threat and Displacement

**Victims:** Antonio Muñoz\* (human rights defender), Verónica Pontevedra\*, Penélope Muñoz Pontevedra\*, Federico Muñoz Pontevedra\*, Yesenia Muñoz Pontevedra\* and Ana Muñoz Pontevedra\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** November 4, 2008

**Location:** Pereira, Risaralda

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Antonio Muñoz\*, 45 years old, is married and has three daughters, two of whom are minors, and a son who is a minor. Antonio\* has actively participated in the defense of human rights since he was a young man, working with neighborhood, youth and union organizations, and in the last few years, with organizations that defend the rights of displaced populations.

In November 2008, Antonio\* received a threatening phone call that demanded that he stop working with people who had been forcibly displaced. Days later, a man came to his

office when Antonio\* wasn't there. The man warned his secretary that he was looking for Antonio\* to kill him.

A few days later, while Antonio\* was walking on the street, he was stopped by a man who threatened him. He warned him that his time was running out and he should leave the city.

As a result of this threat, Antonio\* had to be displaced, leaving behind his family in the city. While he was displaced in a new city, men belonging to paramilitary groups continued calling him and they told him that he and his family had been declared military targets. Antonio\* has requested refugee status abroad (*Case 22*).

#### H. Death Threat

##### Case 100: Death Threat

**Victims:** Javier Murcia\* (nurse), Adriana Cantillo\*, Paula Murcia\*, Gisselle Murcia\* and Adrián Murcia\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** May 15, 2008

**Location:** Puerto Gaitán, Meta

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Javier Murcia\* is an indigenous leader from the Cubeo ethnicity in Vaupés. He is a nurse and businessperson, and was a candidate for Congress in 2006. Javier\* is married to Adriana Cantillo\*, and has a son Adrián\* and two daughters Paula\* and Gisselle\*, all under 18 years old at the time of the events.

The family had a farm with cattle, a pharmacy, a clothing store and restaurant. Javier\* and his family began to receive verbal threats and was being extorted by the FARC-EP. Years prior, they had been extorted for 12 million pesos (about US \$6,000) by Front 39 of the armed group.

In May 2008, a letter from a commander of the FARC-EP arrived, asking him for 8 million pesos (about US \$4,000). Javier\* refused to pay and reported the situation to the Army. In June of that year, an armed man went to Javier's\* pharmacy and threatened to kill him if he didn't pay the money they requested. That same month, Javier\* reported the incident to the Police. A commander of the Army told him not to worry because they would protect him. However, the Army didn't fulfill this agreement (*Case 24*).

#### Case 101: Death Threat

**Victim:** Marta Caramés\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** September 6, 2008

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Marta Caramés\*, 39 years old, is a health promoter, community leader, and has three daughters (one daughter is an adult and has a son; the other two daughters are minors).

Marta\* was approached by two men, one called alias "Patabrava," presumably belonging to the FARC-EP. The two men called her a "rat, s.o.b." [informant]. They had a file about her process and told her that they knew how many times she had filed official reports. They showed her the documents that contained the reports and they threatened her.

Days later, some men arrived to the women's foundation that Marta\* leads, and asked about the activities and work that the foundation does. Marta\* wasn't there, but the people who were there told her about the incident.

On September 26, 2008, at about 4 p.m., Marta\* was walking on 24<sup>th</sup> Street with Seventh Avenue, and she real-

ized that two men were following her. They came up beside her and said, "You didn't know the magnitude of what was coming to you." Marta\* remained silent and entered into a café to escape.

In October 2008, Marta\* was with some leaders of her organization in the Municipal Ombudsman's Office. There she saw two soldiers from the FARC-EP that had lived in San Vicente del Caguán (where she lived previously). She doesn't know if they followed her there or if they were already there. They came up to her and threatened her, verbally abusing her and mistreating her for a few minutes. They told her that they "were going to kill her piece by piece, but first they would begin with the smallest pieces, her children." She went pale and sat down. Only one of the friends that accompanied her realized what had happened.

Marta\* continued receiving frequent threatening phone calls. She had previously been threatened by members of the FARC-EP (*Case 60, PC3*).

#### Case 102: Death Threat

**Victims:** Pastor Manuel Francisco Tordecilla Calderón, of the Shiloh Christian Center Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** December 8, 2008

**Location:** Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Manuel Francisco Tordecilla Calderón, 37 years old, is married to Marian Enith Romero Vega, 31, and has four sons and one daughter, all of whom are minors. They are the pastoral family in the community where they live. The church, which belongs to the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC), keeps its doors open to the community by offering high

school degree programs and courses because the village only has elementary schools. It has also helped many displaced families that have arrived to the town. The pastor has become a leader among the displaced communities.

The morning of December 8, 2008, Pastor Manuel found a note on his front door with the logo of the Black Eagles paramilitary group. The letter demanded that the pastor give them five million pesos (about US \$2,500) and lend them his motorcycle for three days. The pastor spoke with the church leaders about the topic and after praying, decided to not cooperate. However, the pastor and his wife went together to the location named in the letter to find out who was asking for the money and motorcycle. They waited for an hour and a half but nobody came to the meeting point. They think that perhaps the perpetrators were scared by the increased military presence in the area.

After this incident, some local community leaders (who are not related to the church) looked into who was behind these extortions. They spoke with some of the high-ranking officials from Black Eagles paramilitary group, who insisted that they weren't responsible because for them, "pastors and churches are sacred." However, they told the leaders that the pastor "should watch out because it is possible that someone wants to harm him" (*Case 19*).

## I. Collective Threat

### Case 103: Collective Threat

**Victims:** Fellowship of Evangelical Ministers of Maicao (FRAMEM)

**Date:** May 15, 2008

**Location:** Maicao, La Guajira

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Pastor Amir Conde, from the Inter-American Church, received a letter signed by the FARC-EP Front 59 that was directed to all the pastors in Maicao. The letter asked the Inter-American Church for \$50,000,000 (fifty million pesos, about US \$25,000) and the other churches for \$20,000,000 (twenty million pesos, about US \$10,000) for the benefit of the armed group.

## Cases referenced from previous editions of A Prophetic Call

### Case 43, PC4 (Case 4, PC5): Forced Displacement and Death Threat

**Victims:** Jorge Vides, his wife Orlina and daughter Heidi, of the Canaan Evangelical Church of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** March 16, 2008

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Jorge and his wife Orlina had a one-year-old daughter and were expecting their second child at the time of the crime. Jorge was a community leader in the Villa Madeira displaced person resettlement community. The family had resettled in Villa Madeira in 1996. Alleged members of the Black Eagles paramilitaries threatened Jorge, leading to his family's displacement. Jorge reported that on March 16, "two men showed up at my door at around 9:00 p.m. They put a gun to my head, said they were from the Black Eagles and accused me of being a police informant. They said that they would be back the next day and I had to leave or they would kill me." Jorge spent the night at his in-laws' house and then

went into hiding in a local Tierralta church that offered him refuge. He, his wife and daughter were forced to flee to another city on March 20.

Weeks prior to the death threat, a group of Black Eagles had demanded Jorge give them food and he had refused to do so. The day prior to the death threat, Jorge had reported that incident to the Tierralta Police Chief.

**Case 19, PC4 (Case 4, PC5): Forced Disappearance, Forced Displacement and Death Threat**

**Victims:** Azaél Hernández, Fanny Montiel, Edil Hernández, Roger Hernández, Nelson Hernández, Leonel Hernández and families from Murmullo Medio, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** June 15, 2008

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Azaél Hernández was a community leader. He and his wife, Fanny Montiel, had four children between the ages of three and sixteen. Alleged rearmed paramilitaries under the command of Rafael Benjamín Contreras forcibly disappeared Azaél Hernández. Hernández left his house for Tierralta at 9:30 a.m. on a motorcycle. He was last seen when he was stopped near Batata by a group of men identified as rearmed paramilitaries.

Local witnesses indicated that the group took him to El Rebolíatico where they shot him and threw his body into the Urrá Dam. Days later, while searching for his body, family members learned that many of their names were on a rearmed paramilitary hit list. Consequently, 27 families were displaced from Murmullo Medio to Tierralta on June 24.

For some families, this was their third forced displacement by the paramilitaries since 1996. As of the date of this writing, many of these families continue to face death threats and are living in a school in inadequate conditions.

Azaél's wife, Fanny Montiel, reports that, "we are afraid that all of us are at risk because we dared to speak out and report what happened to the Mayor's office, the Army, and other government officials. Today, if we were to return to our community, I am afraid none of us would survive."

Despite being indicted by the Prosecutor General's office, the alleged paramilitary commander Contreras has continued to threaten Fanny, saying that she "will pay just like Azaél."

**Case 37, PC4 (Case 4, PC5): Forced Displacement and Death Threat.**

**Victims:** Twenty-seven families related to Azaél Hernández, of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC)

**Date:** February 2008

**Location:** Tierralta, Córdoba

**Alleged perpetrators:** Paramilitaries

**Description of the events:** Twenty-seven farming families who were relatives of the late Azaél Hernández, were threatened and were forcibly displaced. Generalized pressure from newly rearmed paramilitaries was compounded by threats due to Azaél's disappearance and the appearance of the names of eleven family members on a paramilitary hit list, causing the families to again be displaced.

Many of these families had already been forcibly displaced twice before by paramilitaries and had returned

to work on a farm between Batata and Murmullo Medio when they were displaced for the third time in ten years.

**Case 51, PC4 (Case 15, PC5): Forced Displacement and Threat**

**Victims:** Juan Pablo Sandoval\* and his family

**Date:** October 2008

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Forty-two-year-old Juan Pablo\* is a farmer. He and his wife have three children, ages five, nine and ten. He and his family were threatened by alleged guerrillas from the FARC-EP. He was displaced after a death threat due to his participation in the Forest Ranger Program (*Case 50, PC3*). Two alleged guerrillas, dressed as Usme hospital workers, went to Juan Pablo's rented house in the Alfonso López neighborhood and asked if they were home. The house's owner said that they were not home. He later called the hospital and was able to confirm that they had not sent anyone to the house. Due to this persecution, the family was displaced again.

**Case 16, PC3 (Case 50, PC5): Torture, Threat and Homicide**

**Victims:** Pastor Joel Cruz García, his wife and daughter, of the Christ the Center Church

**Date:** July 5, 2007

**Location:** Colombia, Huila

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Joel was a 27-year-old farmer and pastor who lived with his wife in the village of La

Legiosa. On July 5, 2007, two people, identified as members of the Front 25 of the FARC-EP, took him from his home under the pretext of interrogating him. They accused him of being a government informant and then tortured and shot him to death.

According to testimony from area residents, the Army had arrived a few days before and was patrolling around the church. Joel's widow and family report that they have continued to receive death threats from the guerrilla group, as well as a letter on July 9 confirming that the FARC's Front 25 had killed Joel for being an informant. Joel was killed along with Pastor Humberto Méndez.

**Case 65, PC4 (Case 50, PC5): Death Threat**

**Victim:** Martha Parra. Christ the Center Church

**Date:** June 2008

**Location:** Colombia, Huila

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Martha was threatened by alleged FARC-EP guerrillas while she was walking on her farm. They told her not to monitor the area because "we don't want informants." Martha's brother, Pastor Joel Cruz García, was murdered by alleged FARC-EP guerrillas on July 5, 2007 in Colombia municipality, Huila (*Case 16, PC3*). Her family has since received death threats. This incident occurred in an area where there is frequent fighting between the Colombian Army and the guerrillas. Residents have not filed official reports on these incidents as they do not trust the Colombian Army.

**Case 20, PC4 (Case 86, PC5): Forced Disappearance**

**Victims:** Pastor William Reyes, Idia Miranda, William Reyes Miranda, Luz Nelly Reyes Miranda and Estefanía Reyes Miranda, of the Inter-American Church of Colombia

**Date:** September 25, 2008

**Location:** Valledupar, Cesar

**Alleged perpetrators:** Unknown

**Description of the events:** Pastor William Reyes, married to Idia Miranda and the father of William, 19, Luz Nelly, 16, and Estefanía, 9, disappeared when he was traveling from Valledupar to Maicao. To date, the Prosecutor General's Office has not reported any progress in the investigation.

Hundreds of community members marched in protest of the pastor's disappearance.

**Case 60, PC3 (Case 101, PC5): Death Threat**

**Victims:** Marta Caramés\*, accompanied by the Mennonite Church

**Date:** February 15, 2007

**Location:** Bogotá

**Alleged perpetrators:** FARC-EP

**Description of the events:** Marta,\* age 38, is a mother of three. Alleged FARC-EP members threatened her. As the victim reported, "I was waiting for the Transmilenio bus at the Tintal station when two men came up to me. One of them is known as "Butcher Hand" and he gave me a CD saying, 'Look, girl, this isn't a game. They sent you this so that you realize that this isn't a game. This is how you all will end up.' The CD had photos of some victims' injuries caused by a bomb that exploded in the Ciudad Bolívar neighborhood of San Vicente del Caguán where I had been a community leader."

*Christian Kogui Indigenous: Justice and Life Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, IELCO*



## C h a p t e r 3



## Chapter 3.

# A quantitative look

In 2009, we registered 69 cases of violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) against leaders or members of Protestant and evangelical churches in the Colombian provinces of Antioquia, Atlántico, Bolívar, Caquetá, Cauca, Chocó, Córdoba, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Norte de Santander, Tolima, Valle del Cauca and the Bogotá.

Within these cases, 206 violations were committed against 137 individual victims, and in 18 cases of collective violations, there were approximately 553 victims.

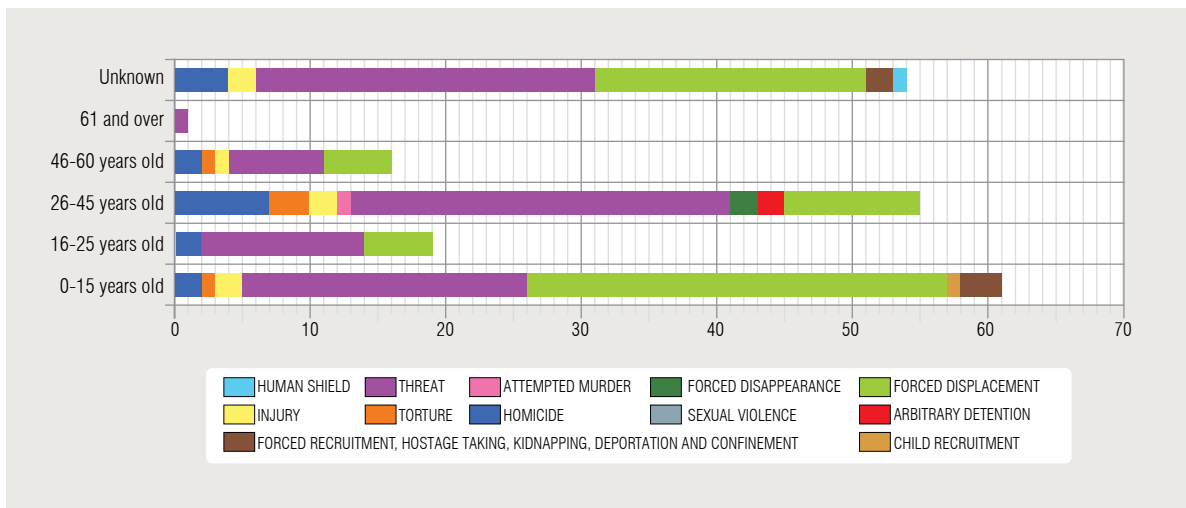
### A. Victims' demographics

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Graph 1 shows how the human rights violations were distributed by the victims' age group: between 0 and 15 years old (61 violations), 16 and 25 years old (19 violations), 26 and 45 years old (55 violations), 46 and 60 years old (16 violations) and there was one case committed against a person over 61 years old.

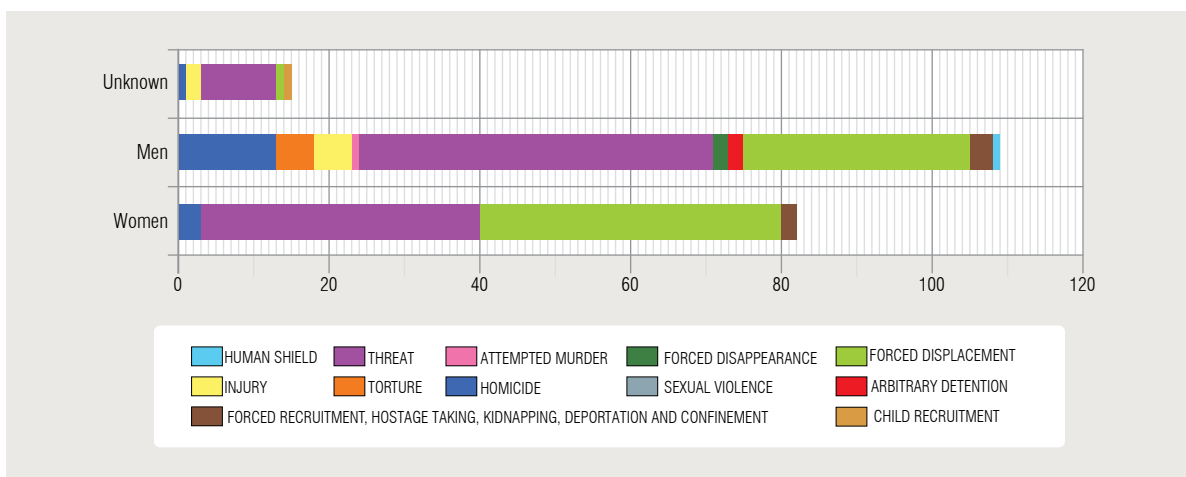
In the age group between 0 and 15, there were 2 homicides, 1 torture, 2 injuries, 21 threats, 31 displacements, 1 child recruited, and 3 hostage-takings/kidnappings.

**Graph 1. Violation by age group.**



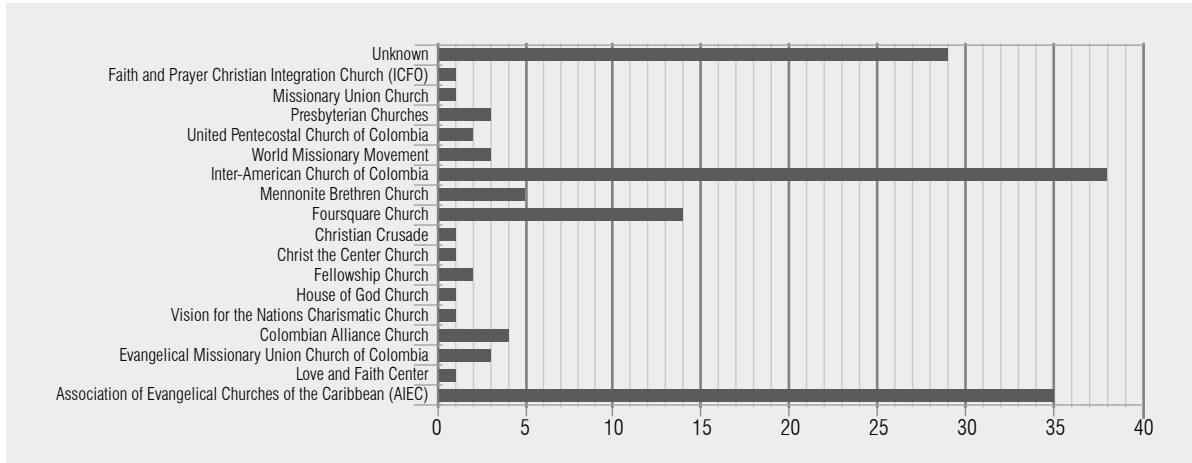
In 2009, we documented more violations being committed against men (109) than women (82). Forced displacement was committed against more women than men, with women registering 40 violations and men registering 30 violations (see Graph 2).

**Graph 2. Violations by gender**



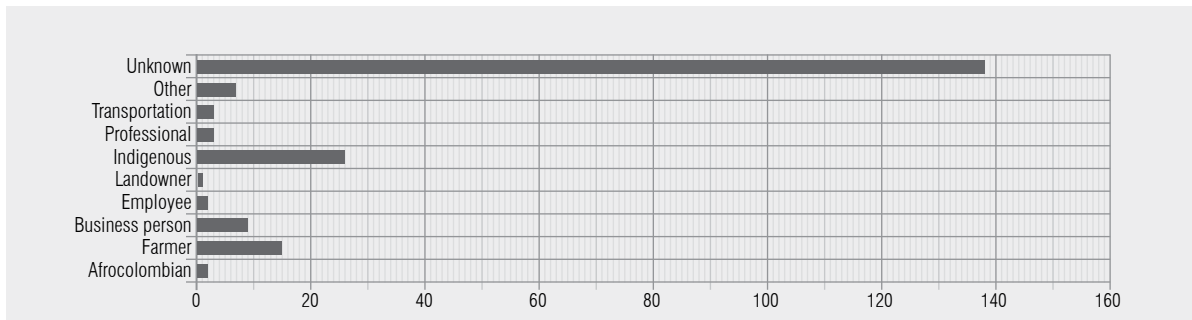
Human rights and International Humanitarian Law violations were committed against the members of 21 Protestant and evangelical churches, including The Inter-American Church of Colombia (38 violations), the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC) (35 violations) and the Foursquare Church (14 violations) (see Graph 3).

**Graph 3. Violations by Church**



Graph 4 shows that the social sectors that suffered the largest number of violations were indigenous (26), farmers (15) and business people (9). In terms of the victims' occupations, 38 violations were committed against pastors, 10 against church leaders and 8 against human rights defenders connected with a church. Some of the victims belong to social organizations; the organizations with the greatest number of cases are religious groups (50), displaced peoples (24) and farmers (17) organizations.

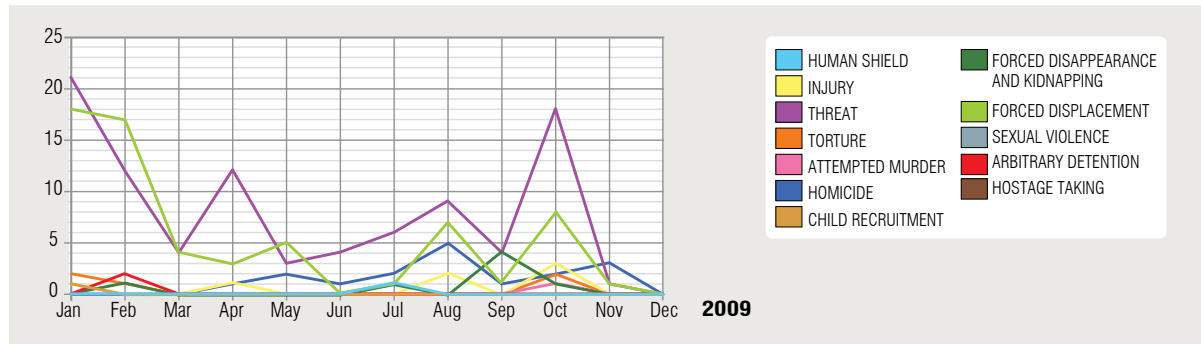
**Graph 4: Violations by social sector**



## B. Location of the victims

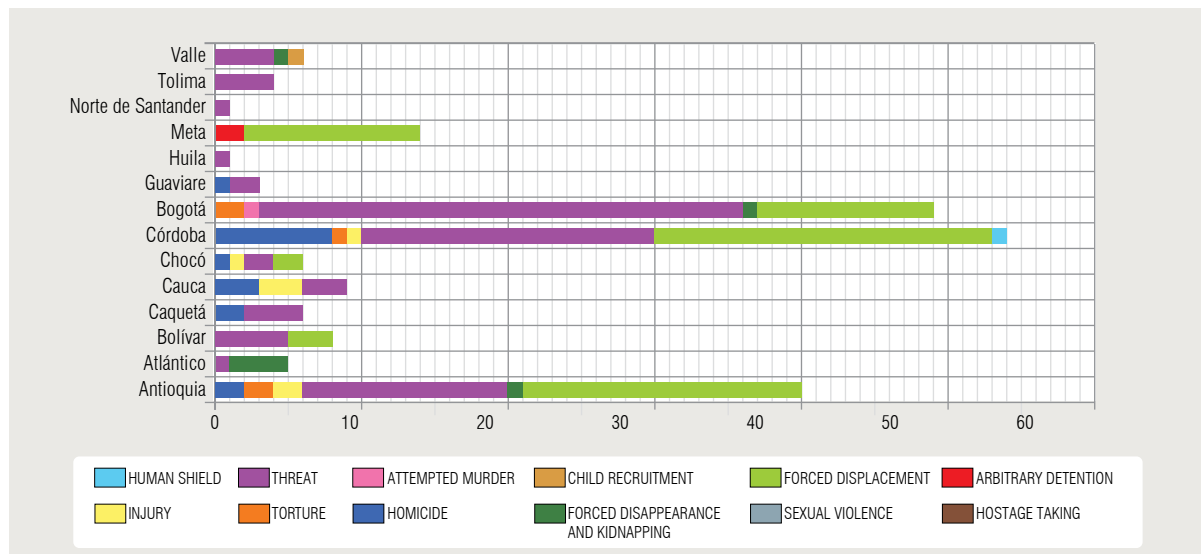
In terms of when the violations occurred, a greater number of violations were committed in January, April, August and October 2009 (see Graph 5).

**Graph 5. Violations by month.**



In terms of geographic location, Graph 6 shows the provinces with the greatest number of registered violations of human rights and IHL. The provinces with the greatest number included Córdoba (54), Bogotá (49), Antioquia (40) and Meta (14).

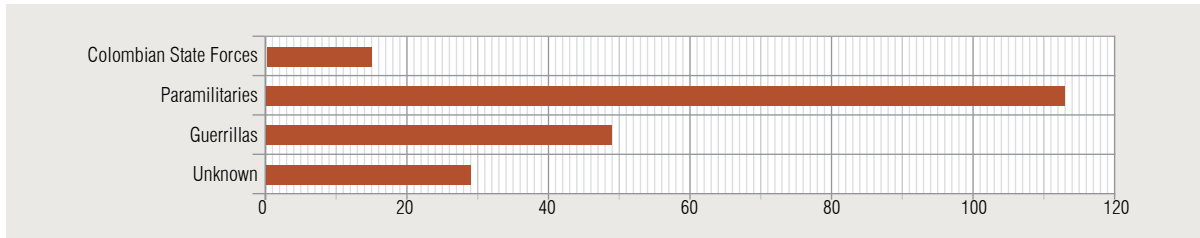
**Graph 6. Violations by province.**



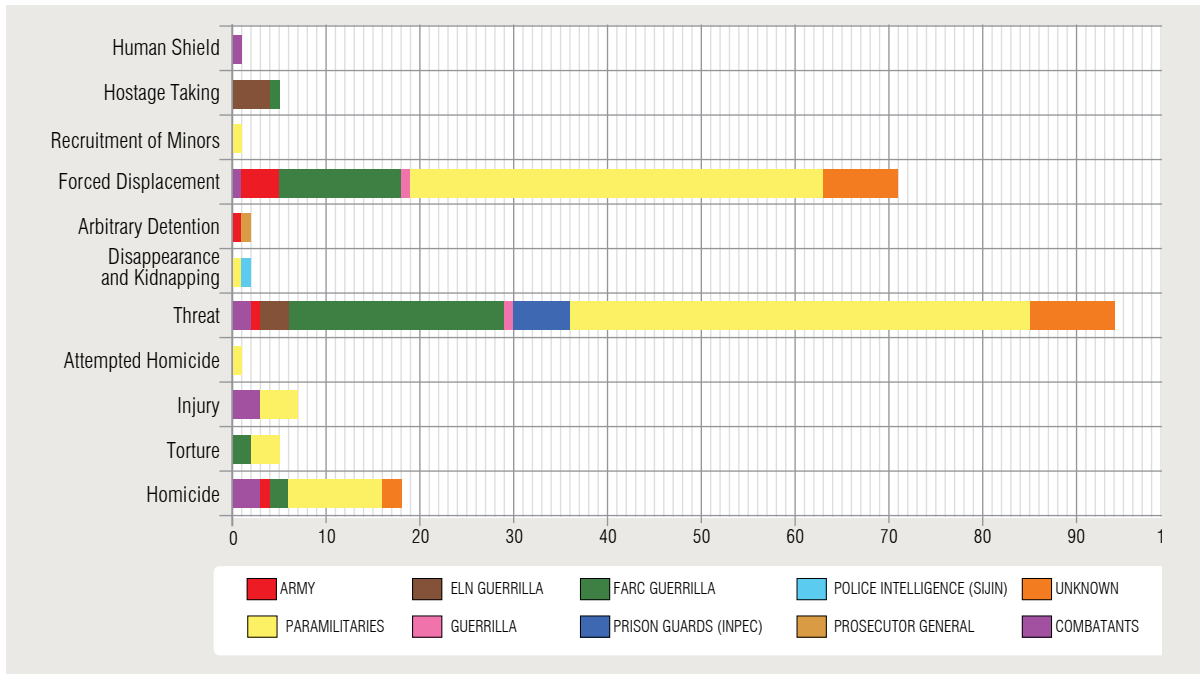
### C. Alleged perpetrators and types of violations

The alleged perpetrators include paramilitary groups (113 violations), guerrilla groups (40 violations) and Colombian State Forces (15 violations). In 29 violations, it was not possible to identify the perpetrators (see Graph 7).

**Graph 7. Violation by alleged perpetrator.**



During the period analyzed, the most frequent violations registered were: threats (94), forced displacement (71), homicide (17), injury (7), torture (5), hostage taking and kidnapping (5), forced disappearance (2), arbitrary detention (2), child recruitment (1), attempted murder (1) and human shield (1) (see Graph 8).



## D. Collective victims

The following table shows the 18 registered cases that resulted in an estimated 553 victims of collective violations.<sup>1</sup> The table presents the cases that occurred in 2009 by date, with province, alleged perpetrator and approximate number of people affected.

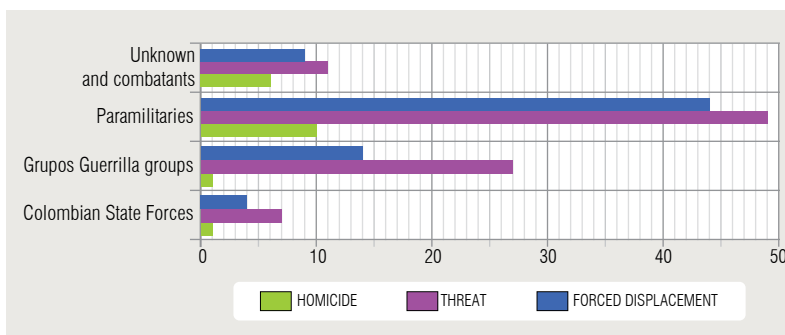
DATE	PRIVINCE	ALLEGED PERPETRATORS	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
02/06/09	Cauca	FARC-EP	30
02/15/09	Cauca	ELN	30
02/20/09	Huila	FARC-EP	5
03/03/09	Norte de Santander	Paramilitaries	5
03/05/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	18
05/28/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	3
06/01/09	Antioquia	Unknown	50
06/28/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	124
07/10/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	50
08/01/09	Cauca	Army	30
08/01/09	Cauca	Guerrilla	30
08/08/09	Córdoba	Unknown	30
08/09/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	8
08/27/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	50
08/28/09	Córdoba	Combatants	30
09/09/09	Córdoba	Guerrilla	5
09/14/09	La Guajira	Combatants	50
11/29/09	Córdoba	Paramilitaries	5

Tabla 1. Casos identificados en 2009.

## E. Victims by threat, forced displacement and homicides

In 2009, we registered a rise in the number of violations committed against members of Protestant and evangelical Christian churches that included threats, forced displacement and homicide. These crimes were committed by alleged paramilitaries (103 violations), alleged guerrilla groups (42 violations) and alleged members of the Colombian State Forces (12 violations) (see Graph 9).

Graph 9. Violations by threat, homicide and forced displacement.



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When a collective violation is registered, it is difficult to obtain exact numbers and individualized details due to the nature of the aggression and the reduced possibilities for documentation. In these cases, we estimate there are five people per family and thirty people per church.

Photograph by the Bogotá Forced Displacement Working Group - Mencolde



# C h a p t e r 4



## Chapter 4.

# Theological Reflection

This chapter provides a theological perspective on situations related to human rights and International Humanitarian Law facing Protestant and evangelical churches based on both international and domestic contexts and the cases documented in 2009.

This analysis attempts to take a deeper look at one of the issues driving the Colombian armed conflict, developing a liberating theological perspective on land as it corresponds to human rights and human dignity.

### **Land is life and liberty<sup>1</sup>**

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The story of God's people, as outlined in the Bible, begins in the very first pages with a promise of land and ends with eyes resting on the promised land. In the Bible, and in the deepest recesses of our being, land plays a fundamental role. Human beings come from the earth, live off of the land, grow on land, and when we close our eyes for the last time, we return to the bosom of the earth.

This intimate communion with the earth is held much more closely by the communities that have daily contact with the earth, working their fingers through it: indigenous, Afrocolombians and farmers. These communities see land not as something to exploit but as a mother that must be respected and loved. This millennia-old perspective of native peoples calls them to revere and be in harmony with the land that they till and care for. This attitude transforms work, growing food, harvest celebrations, and the revelry of the community into an encounter with God.

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1

Written by Reverend Jairo Suárez, Lutheran Church of Colombia pastor and member of CEDECOL.

The formulas and values of a globalized, capitalist world see land simply as a means of production, an object to buy, sell and technically modify. It is seen as an instrument of power through which areas and cultures are dominated. Landscapes are transformed into get-rich-quick models. As this ideology penetrates the soul of the landholders, little by little it begins to destroy the intimate relationship that existed between the human being, land and God. This painful experience of separation has started to affect farmers, especially in the last three decades during which the ideology of the oppressor has forced an exodus and an internal exile in Colombia.

Stealing land, indiscriminate exploitation of land and subsoil, mono-cropping that replaces the richness and diversity of traditional agriculture and leads to erosion, the use of cheap manual labor, and the loss of individual's control over their own lives are aspects that shift land ownership into a privilege of very few.

It is hard to believe that a farmer or indigenous person that feels free on his or her own plot of land is now forced to feel like a prisoner on the land that witnessed his or her birth. With tears and desperation, inhabitants flee violence becoming internally displaced persons or refugees that not only find new geographic borders but also cultural and economic borders that lead to a loss of dignity.

The story of the meek is repeating itself. It is the story of a power struggle in which those with a violent spirit dominate those that have lost the spirit of hope. But this time the story occurs not in the Old Testament, where the prophets are compelled to denounce the abuses that many times were carried out by the authorities that were supposedly protecting the rights of the peasants (Amos 2:6-8).

The displaced back then were not so different from those of today in that they are pawns in a game between forces that violently struggle to control the lives of others. The practices that take land from farmers and benefit large landowners are condemned by God through his messengers (Micah 2:1-5; Proverbs 15:25; Nehemiah 5:3-5, 7-11).

Being left without land was one of the worst things that could befall a person given that, in an agrarian society, a person without land or possessions had to sell his/her labor and was exploited or had to sell his/herself into slavery in order to survive. Therefore, the Biblical writers severely condemn amassing land as it runs contrary to God's liberating plan. This Biblical stance is one of deep respect for human rights and human dignity.

Amassing land brings with it an impending human slavery. From a Biblical perspective, God is the creator of earth and the land belongs to him (Psalm 24:1-2). He has decided to give it to his creation so that they will care for it and make it productive for all (Psalm 68:10; Genesis 2:15). There are limits, therefore, put on how this holy and promised land (Exodus 3:4, Joshua 5:15) can be administered. Land and those that live on it should be respected in order to ensure equality and dignity. Respect for land implies respect for all those that consecrate it and dampen it with the sweat of their brows.

The reason there are internally displaced people is because the wisdom of our indigenous and Biblical ancestors is not respected. They would distribute land according to the needs of each family: more mouths to feed, more land (Numbers 33:54). Taking these measures ensured needs of the family were met despite the intentions of the few that took advantage of their violent power to increase their landholdings (Deuteronomy 19:14, 27:17).

Contrary to the promise of a land of milk and honey in the Bible, internally displaced persons and communities caught in the armed conflict are given unmet promises. They are offered resettlement on arid and unfertile lands. In addition to the killings of their loved ones and community leaders, they are treated with contempt and often lose family stability. They lose their identity in the masses of the city. They even lose hope in once again seeing, much less, owning their own land.

This exacerbates the hopelessness of the victims who are forced into a second or even a third displacement and who sell themselves under the watchful, albeit indifferent, eyes of a society dominated by fear.

This is precisely where the unity of Christian people should show its face as an agent of peace and liberation, carrying the word of salvation learned from Christ. He, who had everything and yet became one of us, stands in solidarity with the poorest of the poor, as a displaced person. He had no place to be born, was landless and walked with the gospel inviting us to be disciples (Luke 9:23).

We are called to come together, to act, to give dignity back to displaced people, to the landless who wander hungry through the cities. We are called to organize in this way, with displaced people as key actors, just as the people of God did.

Yet we must come to a reasonable agreement with the requirements of our faith. We must be consistent with the values of the Kingdom of God so as not to be contaminated by the negative values of the kingdom of this world. These negative values deny us the ability to live life according to a true Christian ethic and rather impose on us moralizing rhetoric leading people to rejoice in the death of their enemy when we know that life is sacred and only God has power over it.

In the context of a faith that saves and frees, the society that dedicates itself to this cause must know it is not alone. As churches today we are called to unity in favor of life and defending human rights for all. But we must understand that efforts to dignify and restore these displaced sisters and brothers, and the land rights of Afrocolombians and indigenous communities will bring with it victories and defeats. There will be joys and failures, obstacles and assistance. However, faith must move forward to make it known that these goals will be accomplished because as the church of Christ today we are still led by the eternal owner of the earth.



Bread and Peace March, Teusaquillo Mennonite Church. Photograph by Shalom Wiebe





## Chapter 5.

# Seeds of Hope

## Peacebuilding proposals from Protestant and evangelical churches

Running contrary to the violence and death that are rampant in Colombia, the Research and Advocacy Program has found several initiatives, projects and programs developed under the leadership of churches rooted in the values of the Kingdom of God and God’s prophetic work, which seek to break the cycle of violence and transform society.

This chapter compiles these “seeds” that little by little have generated changes and produced hope. These are “seeds” that with effort and dedication are pointing to a new society: one that is based in respect for human rights, solidarity and reconciliation.

### A. San Nicolás Comedor<sup>1</sup>, Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, Bogotá<sup>2</sup>

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San Nicolás is a neighborhood in Soacha municipality, near Bogotá. From the main streets you can see mountains and open skies. There are stores in the community and children play in the streets. However, this neighborhood has more difficulties and problems than one might initially imagine.

Many families came to the community because they had to escape violence in other parts of Colombia. This community has suffered substantially due to drug trafficking and consumption, forced recruitment by armed groups, as well as abandonment, hunger and poverty.

In 2004, the needs of three families in the area were so evident that a group of members of the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church felt called to help them. This desire to help was motivated by having witnessed abuses committed by the armed forces.

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1 *Comedor* is a Spanish word meaning “eating place, or dining room.” In this context, a *comedor* signifies a place where children can go to be fed, but also receive physical, academic, social, and emotional accompaniment for the difficulties they have experienced in a violent and disruptive context.

2 This testimony was written by Jennifer Chappell Deckert, a member of JUSTAPAZ and the Research and Advocacy Program.



"We want peace for San Nicolás"

The initial purpose of their work was to provide basic necessities as well as personal connections. These tasks which were initiated by the calling from God to work for broader changes in the San Nicolás community.

Each of the three families had specific needs. The mother of one family died of cancer. Another family witnessed the murder of their father. The third family had small children that were left alone all day. Many families in this community were led by single mothers because their spouse had been killed, had abandoned them, or had joined an armed group. Because of this, these mothers had to work long hours in difficult jobs to earn enough to feed the family, maintain the house, and provide clothing for the children. This is why so many children were left alone all day, without resources or money to attend school or meet their basic needs.

Some key factors supported the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church members' decision to try to provide hope and security for the children in this community. The members were able to open a *comedor* for the most vulnerable inhabitants of the San Nicolás community with the help of a call to the ministry; significant financial assistance from their sister church in Tucson, Arizona; food from the United Nations World Food Programme; and a building constructed by Habitat for Humanity. The *comedor* was created with the objective of offering meals to the children who are left home alone or who do not have other options for meals.

When the program started, 35 children received meals and participated in activities led by three to four volunteers. The program grew and now has 93 children regularly participating, with the help of more than ten church members. Initially the program was for children and youth between five and fifteen years old, but these children and youth frequently bring their little brothers and sisters between zero and five years old because they taking care of them during the day. For many of these children, the food they receive in the *comedor* is the only meal they eat each day. For many children, the space is unique for them because it is secure and free of forced recruitment, criminal gang activities, or threats.

The *comedor* is a space for children and youth as well as other community members. Beyond providing food, the team that works in the *comedor* offers comprehensive assistance with a diversity of activities. Every morning, a devotional is held for the children, the children are led in activities to develop motor skills, there is homework assistance for a small group that attends school, and classes are given on life values, dance and theater. The volunteers accompany the children to a park for recreation time. They also provide economic assistance to purchase textbooks and uniforms, and offer referrals for health issues. All of the classes and programs are coordinated by volunteers, some of whom are from the community and many of whom are from the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church in Bogotá.

The San Nicolás community has responded positively to this program. The *comedor* has an open door policy. The children who want to participate in the programs are welcomed and are provided a space that is free of drugs, gangs, and other com-

mon problems in the neighborhood, where there are high levels of unemployment, alcoholism, drug-abuse, violence, stress and pain.

The *comedor* has also helped raise awareness in the community and encouraged families to participate in the annual Bread and Peace campaign. Initially, the campaign was organized as a direct response to the forced recruitment that takes place in the community. Armed groups offer 11 and 12 year old children incentives to join their group, such as a promise of receiving new boots, good food, a clean uniform, or maybe some money for the family. Sometimes these incentives are enough for the child to accept their offers.

Other times, the youth receive threats in the form of “formal invitations.” These invitations are slid under their front door and dictate when and where the youth should show up to begin training with the illegal armed group. If a youth rejects the “invitation”, the armed group may threaten to kill one of their brothers or sisters. The community also suffers from significant problems with extrajudicial executions, known as “false positives” (youth have been taken by the armed forces and later are presented as members of guerrilla groups killed in combat).

When the *comedor* program began, children that participated were aggressive, bad-tempered, and difficult to work with. The majority of the youth have been directly affected by or have witnessed traumatic events. However, with the assistance and generosity of many people who have invested in the *comedor*, the children have changed. Now the children have a better understanding of how to get along with each other. They have built healthy relationships with hope and the love of God. The volunteers for the *comedor* have seen a substantial decline in levels of aggression and an increase in understanding and managing basic skills. With confidence and prayer this seed of hope will extend to the youth’s family members and friends in the community. In the words of one of the volunteers, “The families will see the changes in their children, which will create a change in their lives as well.”

## **B. The wealth grounded in smiles, Missionary Union Church, Mondomo, Cauca<sup>3</sup>**

Toribío, in Cauca province, is in the middle of green mountains that seem hand-woven together by an artist, and form an unending chain of beauty and wealth. The mountains, covered by a layer of thick clouds that are filled with water, life and hope, border a town that you have to see for yourself to feel its beauty and the vitality of its land and people.



Children doing their homework in the San Nicolás Comedor.  
Picture by Shalom Wiebe.

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3 This testimony is provided by Hermes Yatacue, a leader of Missionary Union Church in Colombia.

In 2005, Toribío witnessed how a leader of the church and the community managed to plant a seed of hope amidst soldiers, guerrillas, successive bombings and the clatter of gunfire. Otoniel was tired of waiting for the opportunity to do something, and instead worked resolutely with friends to create an opportunity.

Otoniel's goal was to create new agricultural projects. With other equally forward-thinking people he began to plant, produce, and process achira.<sup>4</sup> For many people, planting and producing this product was pure insanity; however, for Otoniel and his friends, it was the perfect opportunity to prove to themselves that they could achieve their goals.

This appealing, yet difficult project was mainly seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for this town, but it was also developed with the idea of replacing the "plant that kills".<sup>5</sup> The process began by suggesting to several people the idea that they could replace their coca crops with achira, tomato or lulo fruit crops. Several people timidly accepted the call, but gradually, more people began replacing their coca with the new crops.

In June 2007, they faced their first challenge: overcoming the difficulties of overproduction. Working together, the group was able to find contacts in order to sell their product. It was then that the Mondomo municipality became the project's greatest ally because the municipality had the machine needed to process the achira flour.

With time, they had to decide whether they would continue renting the machinery from Mondomo or buy their own. They looked for loans and eventually the group was able to access a six million peso loan (approximately US \$3,000) from the Agrarian Bank to buy the machinery, which made it easier for them to produce the final product.

Currently there are eleven families involved in the company. The families saw the project as a light at the end of the tunnel. The experience continues, although often with difficulty because of inadequate capital, which often limits their aspirations. Despite the difficulties, families from the Missionary Union congregation as well as the broader community have joined the project, due to the community's many needs.

The church has been strengthened by the project because its members now have a source of food and income, which in turn has helped the church's finances. Thus, in the midst of difficulties, despair, challenges and threats, a seed of hope has been growing that helps many people and families who have lost faith to smile once again knowing that despite life's merciless storms, calm is waiting patiently on the other side.

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4 "In Colombia, the starch in rhizomes is extracted to make bread, achira biscuits, sago bread, cakes and other baked goods, custards, candies, drinks and pastas. The achira plants are also ornamental and can be used as fodder." CORPOICA, (2001). Socioeconomic and technical analysis of the achira's agro-industrial micro-production. Technical report. Colombian Corporation for Agricultural Investigation (CORPOICA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia, Bogotá, p97.

5 "La mata que mata", "the plant that kills", is a campaign of the National Anti-Narcotics Directorate that has been broadcast since November 28, 2008 over the national radio and television stations in Colombia. The campaign argues that the evil of narco-trafficking is centered in the coca, its planting and distribution. The campaign's audio tracks: <http://www.dne.gov.co/?idcategoria=4034>

### **C. Theology from Hope: Faith and Politics Conference Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, Bogotá<sup>6</sup>**

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The Theology from Hope: Faith and Politics Conference was held in Bogotá from April 7 to 10, 2010. This event, convened by the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, included the participation of 120 representatives from 17 indigenous, Afrocolombian, and mestizo communities, from churches such as the Eternal Gospel, House of Zion, United Pentecostal, Foursquare, the Inter-American, Seventh Day Adventist, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Independent Catholic and Roman Catholic Churches. The conference invited delegates from organizations representing the United States, El Salvador, Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as musicians, university students, and socio-religious witnesses and researchers.

The conference allowed for different perspectives to be shared on the role of faith, religiosity, and the sacred, and connecting experiences of different churches, communities, persons and organizations, that work to support the rights of marginalized communities in Colombia.

During the conference, the words, symbols, pictures and objects of murdered or forcibly disappeared people surfaced and were shared with the group. Participants also saw the palpable memory of forced displacements that were caused almost entirely by military and paramilitary structures. There was a recognition of the victims and leaders who resist destructive economic models, and who are inspired by a multiplicity of religious expressions and meaning.

The conference affirmed that the communities are testimony of the fact that faith provides strength in moments of persecution, death and forced displacement. Faith encourages the processes that seek to assert communities' rights and that have blocked multinational corporations or national economic groups from stealing their resources and territories.

There was also time for the different perspectives present to dialog about the relationship between faith and politics. The dialog included the community representatives, men and women theologians, priests, pastors, religious leaders, church leaders, socio-religious researchers and international guests. The conference members were able to learn lessons from the diverse experiences of the faithful in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador and movements in the United States. Theologians, biblical scholars and researchers shared the biblical testimony that demonstrates the people of God affirming their hope in life being protected in their territories.

During the course of the conference, an altar was constructed of the different symbols that represent the communities' suffering and struggles. Words were loaded with images that helped everyone to understand the hope that exists amidst destruction. From faith in God or the sacred, which inspires action for dignity, the recovery and care for the biodiversity of

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6 Taken and adapted from the declaration of the Faith and Politics Conference: Theology from Hope, convened by the Inter-ecclesiastical Commission on Justice and Peace, Bogota, 2010.



the land and the diversity of cultures, final declarations and commitments were made:<sup>7</sup>

1. We unite in actions for life and freedom to close the School of the Americas; in particular we unite around those actions taken in the United States, El Salvador and Colombia, and we take the actions to the United States embassies in the countries that had participants in the conference.
2. We will hold our next conference in Bolivia so that the communities in Colombia and the other countries present who work to assert their rights can learn about the participation of peoples of faith in the formation of participative, economic, and social democracies.
3. We will share our action agendas with each other, prior to our next conference, with the goal of making ourselves present with each other spiritually and/or physically.
4. We will maintain our training in faith and politics, and consider the possibility of creating a training school with set periods of time in which we can join together.
5. We will participate in the conference that the communities of Chocó, Colombia will be holding in a humanitarian zone.
6. We will publicize the contributions of this event, by distributing photocopies.
7. We will make a CD of the music that the members of diverse communities performed at this conference.

#### **D. “Teusaquillo a single temple”, Local Mayor’s Office of Teusaquillo, Bogotá<sup>8</sup>**

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“Teusaquillo a single temple” is the motto that the Local Mayor’s Office of Teusaquillo and several spiritual leaders of the locality (Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, Community of Hope Presbyterian Church, San Alfonso Catholic Church, the Islamic Cultural Center and several ethnic Jewish people) have decided to use in their peace work for our country, beginning in their community.

This noble initiative has formed the Teusaquillo Peace Territory Permanent Working Group, with the goal of developing holistic work, with God’s message, that allows a greater connection to problem areas so that alternatives and concrete solutions can be created to benefit the individuals and families who live there and all the people who are one way or another related to the community (including the students of primary and vocational education communities).

<sup>7</sup> The Declaration is available at: <http://justiciapazcolombia.com/Declaracion-Encuentro-Fe-y>

<sup>8</sup> This testimony was provided by Luis Fernando Sanmiguel, pastor of the Community of Hope Presbyterian Church. For more information: <http://culturaformacionidentidad.wordpress.com/teusaquillo-territorio-de-paz/>

The group's objective is to construct paths to peace that generate a possibility for dignified life. This construction is based in faith and religious communities, and is united with civil society and other organizations. The group also hopes to have spaces for different faith denominations to interact and create solutions that respond to the social and spiritual needs in the community.

With this vision, a programmatic agenda has been proposed to develop several topics to support the final goal: *Peace with social justice*.

1. Citizen coexistence.
2. Respect for basic rights.
3. Peace with our environment.
4. Nonviolent conflict resolution.
5. Refusal to carry weapons and zero homicides.
6. Food security.
7. Negotiated solution to the armed conflict.
8. Citizens and authorities follow the law, united for peace.

The events that the Permanent Working Group has been holding –including discussions, liturgical celebrations, forums, seminars, and others– are showing encouraging results, which motivate their continued work, based on expressions of faith, seeking God's will, and God's Kingdom in the midst of all people. With this message, there is hope to integrate church

communities, schools, civil society, and non-governmental organizations so that they join and contribute to the work of the Teusaquillo Peace Territory Permanent Working Group.

#### **E. Education about the risks of landmines. Education to prevent anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnances accidents, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO), Bogotá<sup>9</sup>**

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Due to the Colombian internal armed conflict, armed groups have been using strategies that directly affect the civilian population, especially in rural areas.

One of the strategies that continues to be used by non-state armed groups is the indiscriminate laying of anti-personnel mines with the objectives of controlling territories, protecting illicit crops, and slowing the advance of enemy troops. These mines, being indiscriminate and inhumane explosive weapons, cause irreparable harm to victims and constitute a serious

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9 Taken and adapted from the Seed of Hope written by Fabián Wilches of the IELCO.

violation of International Humanitarian Law and human rights. The anti-personnel mines not only affect combatants, but also the civilian population. Minefields in Colombia are not properly marked and the situation is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the mines are homemade, which makes it difficult to identify and subsequently destroy them.

In addition, there is the problem of five decades of the armed conflict's unexploded ordnances (UXOs) that are remnants left behind after armed combat or after armed groups abandon their camps. These artifacts pose a latent danger because at any moment they can explode and kill or cause permanent injury. It is important to emphasize that the problem with anti-personnel mines and UXOs is not a short-term problem because these explosive devices can pose risks for thirty years or more.

According to the Landmine Monitor<sup>10</sup>, Colombia currently has the second highest number of landmine victims per year in the world. In 2007, there were 895 victims of anti-personnel mines. Of the 32 provinces in Colombia, 31 have had anti-personnel mine and UXO accidents. According to the Presidential Program for Comprehensive Action against Anti-Personnel Mines (PAICMA), the provinces most affected by this problem are Antioquia (19%), Meta (11%), Bolívar (9%), Caquetá (7%) and Santander (5%). Approximately half of the total recorded accidents occurred in these five provinces.<sup>11</sup>

In 2003, Pastor Jairo H. Suárez took a course on anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnances and their impacts, which inspired the beginning of a process of raising awareness and concern for the urgency of this problem in Colombia. Thus, training workshops and informational workshops were held in the church's communities with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia resources. They then sought out resources from sister Lutheran churches to hold trainings in other church communities, thus consolidating the program, which they named, "Education about the risks of landmines. Education to prevent anti-personnel mine and unexploded ordnance accidents." They have spread the program to cover numerous provinces: Norte de Santander,, Bolívar, Córdoba, Boyacá, Arauca, Casanare, Meta, Caquetá, Cundinamarca, Tolima and Santander.

The program is an initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia's Justice and Life Office. To date, the financing has come from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and Lutheran World Relief. The program aims to help men and women of all social classes, ages, and cultures throughout the country. The approach to the topic is rooted in a biblical-theological perspective on the church's social commitments.



*Kogui Christian Indigenous. Justice and Life Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, IELCO.*

10 The Landmine Monitor is a tool that allows for the monitoring of landmine problems. It reports on the progress of the nations who have signed the Ottawa Treaty (1996).

11 For more information: <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2008/countries/colombia.php>

The general objective is to train communities on preventing anti-personnel mine and unexploded ordnance accidents and educate them on the risks they pose. The program also seeks to empower communities to advocate locally in defense of the rights of victims and in pursuit of justice and reparations.

The program's specific objectives are: 1. Lower the risk of accidents from anti-personnel mines and UXOs through a prevention program that teaches safe behavior; 2. Accompany the victims of anti-personnel mine and UXO accidents to access comprehensive care from the State and emergency medical care; 3. Raise the awareness of authorities about the problems that anti-personnel mines and UXOs cause for communities, and to pressure authorities to fulfill their responsibilities in taking comprehensive action against landmines.

The program was found to have several strengths, including the ability to reach communities by using language that is suitable to evangelical church members. This aspect is important and differentiates the program's work, since evangelical communities are occasionally resistant to programs because of the non-Christian language used by the trainers from NGOs and the government. Another program strength is the support it has received from the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines and the recognition given by the Presidential Program for Comprehensive Action against Landmines, of the Colombian President's office. This has been useful in demonstrating the program's institutional support and credibility. The main challenge for the program is insufficient economic resources to continue the program and the limitations in some areas due to the armed conflict.

## **F. The social action of evangelical churches in Colombia, CEDECOL<sup>12</sup>**

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The book *Social Action of the Evangelical Churches of Colombia* was published by theologian and historian Pablo Moreno, the rector of the Baptist University in Cali. This research was the result of a process that CEDECOL initiated in 2003, and was carried out with the support of agencies such as Lutheran World Relief – USA, Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED) – Germany, and Bread for the World – Germany. The process had a research team that sought to verify if protestant churches in Colombia include social action within their efforts, and if so, what it is.

The research defined social action as all church efforts over the medium and long term to respond to the challenge of poverty, insecurity, poor health and violence, which affect churches and their communities.

To analyze the churches' spiritual perspectives on social problems and their respective responses, a quantitative and qualitative methodology was used. As part of this methodology, a national survey was carried out to determine the number and types of projects implemented with a biblical and theological basis in response to social problems. A qualitative study was also implemented, focusing on seven places in the country impacted by the armed conflict. The study looked at the actions taken by churches with a historical presence in the areas, when they are being impacted by the armed conflict.

The regions studied were the cities of Bogotá and Cali, the provinces of Córdoba and Sucre, and the regions: Magdalena Medio in Santander, the northern Cauca, and Urabá in Chocó and Antioquia. The period of time studied was between 1990 and 2005 because during that timeframe protestant churches went through a lot of changes in terms of growth and began to enter into electoral politics, having felt the impacts of the exacerbation of the internal armed conflict.

Social Actions of the Evangelical Churches of Colombia is divided into two parts. The first part has the following seven chapters:

1. General overview of evangelical churches' social action in Colombia, identifying the variety of evangelical churches established in the country using a comparison of different typologies, the history and stages of Protestant and Evangelical churches.
2. The results of the national survey, the methodology used, and tendencies of churches' social actions.
3. Analysis of biblical perceptions.
4. Evangelical church members' perceptions and conceptions about society, considering historical figures, events and social actors.
5. Who carries out the projects, in what areas and sectors, who are the beneficiaries, using what guidelines, and who assists and finances the churches' social action?
6. Comparisons between regions, which provides a basis for a better interpretation of the data and the recommendations.
7. Final conclusions and recommendations.

The second part of the publication has the case studies by region with a local and regional context for each region, a historical positioning of the churches in the region, and a listing and analysis of the different churches' social actions.

This publication is a starting point for systematically sharing the social action of Protestant and evangelical churches in Colombia, and it constitutes an opportunity to delve into the foundations, approaches and impact of this work in search of social change and transformation in Colombian society.

## **G. A church's accompaniment of victims of the armed conflict. A two-way relationship. Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, Bogotá<sup>13</sup>**

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The church, perhaps due to its central location or its relationships with agencies, has been blessed with the presence of many people who are suffering from being forcibly displaced. We say blessed because the truth of Jesus' words has been confirmed, when he says in Matthew 25 that when you receive the stranger, the hungry person, the person needing clothes,

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13 This testimony was written by members of the Justice and Peace Committee of the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church.

you are receiving him. This is how it has been for us. Displaced persons have been a blessing for the church, just as the church has been a blessing for them.

Approximately 11 years ago, the first people displaced by acts of violence came to the church. They had been pushed off of their lands by paramilitaries who were acting to benefit the Marulanda Family, owners of the Belacruz de Pelaya estate in Cesar province on the Caribbean Coast. With their arrival, the cruelty and injustice of forced displacement burst into the church's collective consciousness.

Since then, hundreds of people and families in similar situations have passed through the church, coming from the four corners of the country. Their situation when arriving to the city is a sad one. They have lost everything and are completely disoriented in their new environment. Furthermore, there is a hostility and distrust that they face in their new context. People from the city look at them with suspicion: they had to leave their lands "for some reason", and they ask themselves, "who knows who 'those' people really are."

So the first way in which the church "cuts against the grain" is by opening their doors to them giving them a warm welcome. Displaced persons are welcomed in the church. This situation, in a context in which at every turn they find rejection and distrust, is a huge step in overcoming loneliness and sadness. In the church, they find people who listen to them and give them advice; they find a community that prays and cries with them, and they find people with whom they share experiences.

As much as possible, the church has helped many people with material aid, but beyond that, the most important support has been the accompaniment that allows people to recover hope. The good news of God's love and power in their lives is shared with them, and their wounds begin to heal. They begin to think that they might have a future, and they find solidarity and support. Hundreds of people have found a new life, comfort, and hope in Jesus Christ, Savior and Liberator.

A crucial part in this process is the weekly meeting called "A Moment for Peace." In this hour, there is a Bible reading and prayer, and a discussion of current affairs. They might be conversations about Colombia's situation, guidance for displaced people, legal topics, practices and experiences, or work that people do in other settings. The majority of participants are displaced persons and they feel ownership over the space. When the Moment for Peace is over, a simple soup lunch is shared, which is prepared by participants who sign up in advance and make it with their regional flavor. This also makes them feel useful and is a valuable contribution to the group.



Moment for Peace's spiritual and social support is complemented by people trained in psychological accompaniment who offer to listen individually to people who would like to talk about how they have been affected by displacement and threats. After lunch, there is a time to speak and listen in a group, which is called "Sharing and Learning from Difficult Experiences". There, participants are invited to share their experiences caused by violence and how they have begun to rebuild their lives in the city, amidst all the difficulties they face. Letting it all out and sharing life experiences creates a feeling of mutual support and strengthens the participants.

Some people who come to the church are very frightened by the threats and persecution that they continue to suffer even in the city. For this reason, there is a Justice and Peace Committee in the church that is specialized in listening to people's reality and exploring options with them. By shedding their pain, fear and tears, they can begin to think about possible solutions: self-protection measures, whether or not to pursue legal action, the possibility of emigrating to another country, etc. The criteria used by the committee has been to offer a safe space where people can tell their story without fear and explore possibilities, with a focus on reconstructing their lives and saving others. The church has received people persecuted by left-wing insurgent groups, by paramilitaries, and by the Colombian military. All of them have been received and helped. Some of the cases that have been accompanied have been documented in this fifth edition of [A Prophetic Call](#).

This is not the work of one person, but rather it has been an entire faith community that has opened its hearts and has been willing to hear the insistent call of Jesus Christ to his church, telling them to meet one of the many urgent needs in Colombia.

People who have been forcibly displaced have given testimonies of the great importance that the church's worship services, prayer meetings and fasting, and other guidance and spiritual activities have been in their lives. They also have been active participants in opening the church's community food programs (*comedores*) and in its advocacy work to seek an end to the armed conflict and to build the foundation of peace with justice. Their involvement helps others, is an expression of their talents and skills, and contributes to an end of the armed conflict and the violence that has caused so much death and displacement.

With the passage of time, the powerful protection of God has been seen as it covers God's people like a cloud and frees the persecuted and threatened. The church has many testimonies of God's merciful hand that saves those who trust God from death. "We know that we are not alone, our protection is not provided by weapons. As Psalm 91 says, we 'dwell in the shelter of the Most High'."

*Bread and Peace Celebration in Ibaqué. Photograph by Shalom Webe*



# C h a p t e r 6



## Chapter 6.

# Recommendations

Based on the information contained in this report detailing violations that have been committed against members of Protestant and evangelical churches – violating their rights to life, personal integrity, personal freedoms, dignity, freedom of religion, and freedom of movement – and based on international human rights standards and International Humanitarian Law, we make the following recommendations:

### **A. Cease-fire and negotiations between warring factions**

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#### ***Colombian government:***

- Restart peace talks between the government and the armed groups, fully and officially guaranteeing the participation of civil society representatives, including Protestant and evangelical churches.
- Adopt a humanitarian agreement between the parties in the conflict guaranteeing civilian immunity and complying with the prohibitions and other duties set forth in International Humanitarian Law.

#### ***Armed groups:***

- Adhere to the demand of the Colombian people and implement a cease-fire and definitively end all fighting.

### **B. Churches in peacebuilding**

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#### ***Colombian government:***

- Broaden the understanding of the right to civic participation, and freedom of religion by respecting humanitarian and religious activities that include dialogue with armed groups and the Colombian armed forces.

#### ***Armed groups:***

- Respect the right to life, movement and integrity of pastors and church leaders who, due to their religious ministry, are at risk or under threat. Respect places of worship as required by International Humanitarian Law.

***United States, Canadian and European Union governments:***

- Actively support peace initiatives with political and diplomatic accompaniment. Reinforce this support with international aid for civil society peacebuilding initiatives. Develop reconciliation efforts with the help of churches.

### **C. Policies for peace**

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***Colombian government:***

- Re-convene the National Peace Council and the Regional Peace Councils, which were created by Colombian Law 434 of 1998, to advise the President on issues of peace on a local, regional and national level. Guarantee the full and effective participation of civil society in these councils.

### **D. Respect for the civilian population in conflict zones**

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***Colombian government:***

- Guarantee the right to exercise conscientious objection to mandatory military service, based on Article 18 of the Colombian Constitution and international norms. Develop and implement conscientious objection legislation as ordered by the ruling of the Constitutional Court.
- Adopt a policy to fight the impunity that surrounds the crime of forced recruitment, with concrete results in investigation and punishment.

***Armed actors:***

- Stop involving the civilian population in political and war strategies.
- End all forced military recruitment and the use of child soldiers.
- Respect the life and dignity of girls and women who continue to be used as spoils of war, and are victims of sexual abuse and exploitation by the different armed actors.

### **E. Truth, justice and reparations for the victims**

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***Colombian government:***

- Adopt and implement a process to defend and promote the rights of victims of illegal armed groups and of state crimes, in their rights to truth, justice and reparations as well as the right to non-repetition of violent acts.
- Adopt measures to ensure the safety and protection of victims. Facilitate their participation in public hearings and legal proceedings against human rights violators.

***United States government:***

- When the United States government punishes a US transnational corporation for violating human rights in Colombia, the fine should be used for reparations for the victims in Colombia.

## **F. Dismantle paramilitary groups**

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### ***Colombian government:***

- Guarantee the right of the civilian population to protection from the violence of armed groups that have reorganized following the paramilitary demobilization process.
- Guarantee the investigation, trial and punishment of paramilitary group members and their civilian, military, and government accomplices.
- Revise the legal proceedings for demobilized paramilitaries within the Justice and Peace Law framework to promote reconciliation.

### ***United States government:***

- As a donor to the paramilitary demobilization process, the United States should ensure the complete and definitive dismantling of paramilitary groups and their financial and political support structures. Unconditionally support victims' efforts in seeking truth, justice and reparation.
- Facilitate cooperation between the Colombian and United States justice systems so that the extradited paramilitary leaders are held responsible for the crimes against humanity they perpetrated as commanders of their armed groups. In no way hinder these legal processes and the effort to clarify the truth of the events and to provide reparations to the victims.

## **G. Institutional strengthening of the Colombian Government**

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### ***Colombian government:***

- Ensure the strengthening of the judicial system, and in particular, carry out the courts' orders and respect judicial independence.
- Strengthen the Human Rights Units and the Justice and Peace Law Units in the Prosecutor General's Office, and guarantee the impartiality of their investigations.

### ***United States government:***

- Prioritize assistance directed toward democracy building and strengthening of the rule of law.

## **H. Military and anti-narcotics policies**

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### ***Colombian government:***

- Respect and carry out all required consultation and approval mechanisms for the military base agreement signed between Colombia and the United States. We recommend to the Colombian Congress that it should not approve this type of military cooperation agreements.

***United States government:***

- Redirect military aid towards socioeconomic aid and peace initiatives.
- Adopt a new anti-narcotics policy that recognizes the negative impacts and the futility of aerial fumigations. We emphatically request that the new policy focus specifically on drug addiction and the demand for illegal drugs in the United States.

**I. Displaced persons and other vulnerable populations**

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***Colombian government:***

- Comply with the Constitutional Court ruling on the Colombian government's responsibilities to formulate and implement a public policy for the protection and prevention of displacement with an inclusive focus.

***United States, Canadian and European Union governments:***

- Invest in local and community peace initiatives developed by civilian victims of the conflict. Ensure that all assistance makes its way to the people in need.

**J. Human rights defenders**

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***Colombian, United States, Canadian and European Union governments:***

- Ensure the protection of human rights defenders and people who are committed to peacebuilding, with protective measures developed in consultation with the at-risk defenders.
- We value the spirit of the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders and we recommend other countries adopt similar policies that prioritize protecting human rights defenders.

*Photograph of the Bogotá Forced Displacement Working Group, Mencilde*





# Sources

- Teusaquillo Local Mayor's Office
- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP)
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
- Coalition Against Child Recruitment in Colombia (COALICO)
- Commission for Restoration Life and Peace of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL)
- Interchurch Justice and Peace Commission
- Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination Group for Human Rights (CCEEU)
- New Rainbow Corporation (CNAI)
- Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO)
- Organization of American States Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP-OEA)
- El Tiempo Newspaper
- Colombian Human Rights Platform
- Cambio Magazine
- Semana Magazine

# Glossary of Terms

## VIOLATION CATEGORIES AND RELATED TERMS

**Attempted Homicide:** An unsuccessful attempt to cause the death of a human being through a single, intentional act of violence.

**Extrajudicial Execution:** Homicide of a civilian by the State outside of the armed conflict.

**False Positive:** An extrajudicial execution reported as a death in combat. State agents often dress the civilian corpse in guerrilla camouflage and plant a weapon on their person to create the appearance of an enemy combatant.

**Forced Disappearance:** Consists of an armed group, usually the paramilitary or Public Security Forces, forcing a person to vanish. The victim is kidnapped, illegally detained, often tortured and nearly always killed. The corpse is disposed of so as to never be found. Fear of reprisals often keeps the family of a disappeared person from investigating the whereabouts and fate of their loved one.

**Forced Displacement:** Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are forced to flee their homes, but unlike refugees they stay within their country's borders. This forced migration is the result of a threat against an individual or community.

**Human Shield:** The use of a civilian as a means of protection by one of the armed groups.

**Homicide:** To cause the death of a person being through a single, intentional act of violence.

**Kidnapping:** Taking a civilian against their will and holding them with no legal authority. An individual's freedom is deprived to force payment to finance an armed group, as a bartering chip, or to impact public opinion.

**Threats:** Intimidation forecasting grave harm for an individual, member of his or her family or friends, or an entire community. Threats are designed to manipulate behavior and often lead to displacement.

## ARMED GROUPS

**AUC:** The Spanish acronym for the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia), a paramilitary umbrella group.

**Paramilitaries:** Illegal armed groups that have historically fought against the guerrilla and often operated in collusion with Public Security Forces. They have routinely targeted the civilian population suspected of supporting the guerrilla or withholding support from the paramilitary.

The Black Eagles (Aguilas Negras) and the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces (Autodefensas Gaitanistas) are two of various armed groups composed largely of formerly demobilized paramilitary who have rearmed and others who have joined their ranks. These reorganized paramilitary groupings are referred to by different names including “narco-paramilitary,” “emergent groups,” or “criminal groups.” They carry out operations similar to paramilitary activity and are heavily involved in drug trafficking.

**ELN:** The Spanish acronym for the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional), Colombia’s second largest guerrilla group.

**FARC:** The Spanish acronym for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), the oldest guerrilla group in Latin America.

**GAULA:** The Spanish acronym for Unified Action Groups for Personal Freedom (Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal), Colombia’s Public Security Forces specialized in fighting kidnapping, hostage taking and extortion.

Public Security Forces: Colombia’s military, police and armed investigative units.

## OTHER TERMS

**Campesino:** Subsistence farmers or small-scale agriculturalist. From “campo,” Spanish for countryside or field, the term indicates an economic status and social sector.

**Demobilization:** Action taken by illegal armed groups to hand over their weapons, withdraw from their group and submit to the Colombian justice system. As of 2005 those voluntarily demobilizing have access to reduced penalties through the Justice and Peace Law. Demobilization can be collective or individual.

**International Humanitarian Law:** Often referred to as the laws of armed conflict, it defines the conduct and responsibilities of individuals engaged in warfare, both in relation to each other and civilians (or protected persons). Use of the term International Humanitarian Law by Justapaz and the CRVP should not be taken as tacit approval of war making, but rather as a second language to ensure effective communication of the experiences of civilians in the midst of Colombia’s armed conflict.

**Justice and Peace Law:** The Colombian Congress passed Law 975 in 2005 based on a bill from Colombian President Uribe to provide a legal framework for the process of disarmament and demobilization of active paramilitary members. The benefits of this law are currently available for any member of an illegal armed group who voluntarily demobilizes.

A PROPHETIC CALL No. 5:  
COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES  
DOCUMENT THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE  
RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM



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