



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

COMUNICADO DE PRENSA- COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

17 January 2005

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

P
R
E
S
S
E
R
E
L
E
A
S
E

ICJ HIGH-LEVEL MISSION TO EXAMINE IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC SECURITY POLICY AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH PARAMILITARIES IN COLOMBIA

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) begins a ten-day high-level mission to Colombia today to assess the impact of the "democratic security policy" on human rights, the administration of justice and the rule of law in the country.

The mission team will be composed of human rights expert Mariclaire Acosta (Former Vice-Minister for Human Rights of the Mexican Government), Carlos Castresana (Spanish Public Prosecutor) and Isabelle Heyer (ICJ Programme Officer).

For decades, Colombia has witnessed serious and persistent violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Violations have been committed by armed and security forces, paramilitaries and armed opposition groups. These violations have been qualified by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as crimes against humanity and war crimes in several of its annual reports.

In the name of fighting against terrorism, the Colombian Government has promoted since 2002 a new security policy called "democratic security" policy. To implement this policy the Government has adopted or announced several measures, including legal and constitutional reforms and increasing involvement of the civilian population in the armed conflict. A number of these measures affect basic rule of law principles, the good functioning of the administration of justice and lead to new forms of human rights violations such as massive or individual arbitrary detentions.

In the framework of the current demobilization process of paramilitaries, the Government also adopted a series of legal measures that could result in impunity for perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICJ mission will therefore closely monitor this situation.

While in Colombia, the mission team will meet with Colombian Government officials, members of Congress, members of the judiciary, non-governmental human rights organisations and the international community. The ICJ will then produce a report to be disseminated internationally and presented during the next session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

For further information, please contact Federico Andreu, Deputy Secretary General at + 41 22 979 38 19 (in Geneva) or Isabelle Heyer, Programme Officer at + 571 376 8200 (in Bogotá)

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

81A, avenue de Châtelaine, P.O. Box 216, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41(0) 22 979 3800 – Fax: +41(0) 22 979 3801 – Website: <http://www.icj.org> - E-mail: info@icj.org