

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT**

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### **Colombia: Recent collective displacements and violence indicate the lack of non-repetition guarantees for Chocó's Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities**

The Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, FARC), signed in November 2016, was a milestone in the history of the country and the region. On various occasions, Amnesty International has reiterated that effective implementation of the agreement in territories historically affected by the violence could guarantee non-repetition of crimes and ensure that future generations do not suffer in the same way.

There are many challenges associated with implementation of the Peace Agreement, especially as Colombia continues to be immersed in conflicts and legal and illegal armed actors continue to fight in rural and isolated regions of the country. Although official figures indicate a reduction in the number of civilian deaths resulting from military action between the FARC and state security forces since talks about a peace agreement began, the potential for further conflict remains and, conflict has intensified in some regions, for example, the Pacific.

Amnesty International expresses its concern at the grave humanitarian situation in the department of Chocó. In the first half of this year, communities have complained that there have been at least two paramilitary incursions in the territory. The first incursion took place on 6 March and caused the massive displacement of families and the confinement of nearby communities in Peña Azul ([AMR23/5826/2017](#)). The second took place on 18 April, in the collective territory of Jiguamiandó, near to the Pueblo Nuevo Humanitarian Zone ([AMR23/6082/2017](#)).

Crimes against international law and human rights violations persist in the department of Chocó, including the selective killing of members of Afro-Colombian communities and Indigenous peoples, forced collective displacements, the confinement of communities and forced recruitment of boys and girls. The current situation is critical. Meanwhile, since the Peace Agreement with the FARC, the armed confrontation between the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN), state security forces and paramilitaries in the region has become more acute, casting doubt on whether it will be possible to implement the agreement in the territory. According to figures released by grassroots organisations and international agencies with a presence in the territory, there have been 21 recent collective displacements.

Amnesty International also warns of the grave risk facing Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities due to the planting of anti-personnel mines on their territories, which is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. For example, a young indigenous Wounaan man, Sebastián Carpio Maheche, was injured by the explosion of an

anti-personnel mine on 11 July 2017 in the Juuin Duur community on the Embera Wounaan Katio de Quiparadó reserve in the municipality of Riosucio, Chocó ([AMR23/6774/2017](#)).

Similarly, during his recent visit to Litoral del San Juan on 9 August, the Colombian Ombudsperson expressed concern about the potential effects of the conflict on the fundamental rights of communities in Chocó and expressed regret that communities are still feeling the effects of violence in this territory and that the authorities are not responding efficiently to the situation.

If state security forces and the ELN reach an agreement on a ceasefire, it should provide guarantees to protect communities historically affected by the conflict. At the same time, the Colombian state should take decisive steps to dismantle paramilitary groups in the region without delay in accordance with the agreement signed in Havana.

The effects of the violence in the department are dramatic and the Colombian authorities should urgently introduce comprehensive prevention and protection measures to guarantee human rights, as an essential condition for building peace in the territory, in accordance with international standards on reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. Affected people and communities must participate in the formulation of these individual and collective measures, in recognition of the central role of victims in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.