



Toronto, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.**  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

**Honourable Chrystia Freeland**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
510-344 Bloor St W, Toronto, ON M5S 3A7

**SUBJECT: Letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau concerning a Call for Life and Peace in Colombia**

Dear Honourable Prime Minister Trudeau,

With great respect and admiration and due to your great influence in the world and now that the planet is talking about peace and human rights, we would like to call your attention on this crucial moment that Colombia and Colombians are facing:

Violence against social leaders, many of them Afro-Colombian and indigenous has increased dramatically since the signing of the peace accords between The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC) and the Colombian government back in 2016.

Every three days a social leader is murdered in Colombia. More than 400 social activists and 143 disarmed FARC members have been murdered since the peace agreement was signed.

Colombia's Ombudsman and humanitarian agencies have said that the main targets have been peaceful land-claimants and community leaders opposing the fracking large-scale mining. Almost half of the threats and other forms of intimidation committed against social activists were targeted at women.

This is the reason why several solidarity, grassroots and human rights organizations in Toronto are joining a significant number of Canadian-Colombians and other Latin-American people who are organizing **A Walk for Life and Peace in Colombia on July 26<sup>th</sup> 2019**. This five kilometre Walk for Life and Peace is part of an **International Day of Mobilization and Solidarity**- and it



starts at 6:00 pm at the Matt Cohen Park. The route includes important points of convergence in Toronto such as the Ministry Chrystia Freeland office and the statue of Simon Bolívar (Trinity Bellwoods Park).

The same day in other Canadian cities, such as Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, and from South and North America, Asia and Europe, and of course, other **179 cities in Colombia** are also organizing the same Walk for Life and Peace in Colombia.

The historic peace agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC which was applauded by the international community and sectors of Colombian society is under serious threat today - encountering mayor challenges with political legitimacy and implementation. The Colombian government of Ivan Duque has systematically attempted to undermine agreement and failed to move quickly and reintegrate ex-combatants into civilian life, and dismantle paramilitary armed groups. It has reneged on its commitments to address the needs of the rural population for land, all this is leading to an escalation of violence in which local community leaders are being threatened and killed.

The organizers are calling on the government of Canada to act immediately and pressure the Colombian Government to refrain from further criminalizing social activists and to ensure the protection of life and the human rights of all social leaders in Colombia, some of which are exposed to violence related to Canadian extractive mega projects. In 2018, total bilateral merchandise trade between the two countries reached \$2.04 billion, increasing by 18.2 percent from 2017. Canada must ensure its economic interests do not prevail over human, labour and social rights, and its ability to effectively monitor the implementation of a sustainable peace process.

Sincerely,

Sandra Cordero

CASA

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