

To: Foreign Policy Aides, U.S. House of Representatives
Date: April 13, 2010

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals in the United States and Colombia, ask that you co-sponsor H. Res. 1224, which recognizes and honors the important work that Colombia's Constitutional Court has done on behalf of Colombia's internally displaced persons, in particular Afro-Colombians, indigenous communities, and women, who are disproportionately affected by this widespread humanitarian problem. The resolution which is led by Representative Hank Johnson (GA), calls on the Government of Colombia to fully implement the Constitutional Court's orders concerning these displaced populations, urges the United States to work with Colombian authorities to ensure that the orders of the Colombian Constitutional Court are fully implemented and affirms that Colombia's human rights record will continue to be relevant as Congress deliberates relations between Colombia and the United States. The resolution's original cosponsors are: Representatives Barbara Lee, James McGovern, Donald Payne, Gwendolyn Moore, Bobby Rush, Raul Grijalva, Mike Honda, James Moran, John Lewis, Jan Schakowsky, Keith Ellison, Lynne Woolsey, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Jose Serrano, Diane Watson, Danny Davis, Alcee Hastings, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Linda Sanchez, Michael Michaud, Sam Farr and Laura Richardson.

Colombia's internal displacement crisis, affecting over 4 million civilians with 280,000 newly displaced in 2009 alone, disproportionately affects Afrodescendants, indigenous communities and women. It is an invisible tragedy in our hemisphere that merits more attention. While Colombia contains some of the most advanced norms in the world for addressing the problem of internal displacement, the rights enshrined in these norms remain largely on paper and are far from being applied. This gap between the norms and the reality faced by Colombia's internally displaced population led Colombia's Constitutional Court to pronounce in April 2004 that the situation of protection of the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country was unconstitutional because the state had not guaranteed a wide range of rights, including the most basic human rights to political, economic and cultural rights for its internally displaced citizens. In January 2009, the Court issued orders 004 and 005, which addressed the specific, deteriorating situation faced by Afro-Colombian and indigenous IDPs. The Court ordered the authorities to develop a differentiated strategy for ethnic populations affected by internal displacement and generate emergency action plans for the 34 indigenous groups in need of urgent attention and 72 Afro-Colombian areas at high risk of displacement. In 2008, the Court also issued order 092 on IDP women that urged the government to enact a series of measures to prevent the disproportionate impact of armed conflict and displacement on women. These include creating thirteen programs to fill the existing gaps in public policy for the assistance of displaced persons from a gender perspective so they address the "gender risks" associated with armed conflict.

These over 4 million persons in situation of displacement are men, women and children whose lives were devastated due to the internal armed conflict, violence, and human rights violations, as well as in some cases, the impact of aerial fumigation. They include people like Jose*, an Afro-Colombian displaced from Cauca who fled his home due to combat between the Colombian military and the FARC guerillas, and who is now in Cali organizing other Afro-Colombians so that collectively they can figure out how to feed their families. Jose, like most

internally displaced, lives in absolute poverty in the district of Agua Blanca, without enough food, proper sanitation, electricity or the possibility of gainful employment. Many like Jose are not only faced with the trauma of witnessing their relatives killed at the hands of illegal armed groups but are also having to survive amongst the drug traffickers and violent illegal armed groups situated in the shantytowns who wish to forcibly recruit their children into their ranks. Colombia has over fifty Afro-Colombian internally displaced groups like Jose's who continue to organize their communities with hope despite their circumstances, trying to regain their rights. It is these leaders to whom the Constitutional Court listened when it developed order 005.

Currently many indigenous communities' human rights and collective land rights are violated by all parties to the conflict. They experience both a general lack of state attention and violence, in part due to the imposition of large scale and extractive development projects without their previous consent. This grave situation led Colombia's Constitutional Court to issue Order 004, which states that 34 indigenous groupings are in danger of physically and culturally becoming extinct unless the government implements a series of immediate protection measures to rectify this situation. The National Indigenous Congress of Colombia reports that 32 indigenous groups currently have a population of less than 500 members. Of these groups, 18 have less than 200 inhabitants and 10 less than a hundred. Internal displacement is one of the central factors leading to the near- cultural and physical extinction of these groups.

It is our belief, as concerned individuals and members of diverse organizations in the U.S. and Colombia, that Colombia's rich cultural diversity must be protected, and that all its citizens' rights to a dignified life must be respected. It would be helpful if the U.S. Congress would demonstrate support for the efforts of a Colombian institution, the Constitutional Court, which is fighting for the rights of its citizens and thus strengthening the rule of law and democracy in Colombia. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you co-sponsor H. Res. 1224, which will help bring attention to the important work done by Colombia's Constitutional Court and help implement these historic court orders.

Thank you very much for your attention to these important matters. We hope that we can count on your continued support for the promotion of the human rights of the internally displaced in Colombia.

Sincerely,

United States Organizations

AfroPresencia.com

Amazon Watch

Amnesty International USA

Association for Internally Displaced Afro-Colombians (AFRODES USA)

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)

Center for International Policy (CIP)
Center for International Policy- Americas Program, Mexico
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN)
Christian Peacemaker Teams Colombia
Church World Service
Colombia Human Rights Committee
Ecos Del Pacifico Afrocolombia "EPA!," Illinois
Fellowship of Reconciliation Task Force on Latin America and the Caribbean
Foreign Policy in Focus
Global Exchange
Global Rights
Grupo Folklórico Afro-Colombiano Tangaré
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Leadership Excellence
Lutheran World Relief (LWR)
Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office
Network for Advocacy in Solidarity with Afro-Colombian Grassroots Communities (NASGACC)
Peace Brigades International USA
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Washington Office
Refugees International
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights
School of the Americas Watch (SOA Watch)
The Barnes Findley Foundation
The Episcopal Church

TransAfrica Forum

US Labor Education in the Americas Project (USLEAP)

US Office on Colombia (USOC)

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Witness for Peace

Colombian Organizations:

Actualidad Étnica

Alianza de Organizaciones Sociales y Afines

Archipelago Movement for Ethnic Native Self-Determination AMEN-SD of San Andres, Providencia and Santa Catalina Islands

Asamblea Permanente por la Paz

Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca (ACIN)

Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca (ACONC)

Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios de Timbiqui

Asociación de Desplazados de Condoto (ASODESCON)

Asociación de Desplazados de Novita (ASODESNOV)

Asociación de Ingeniero Afrocolombianos, INGEDSA LTDA.

Asociación de Desplazados del Baudó (ASODESBA)

Asociación Campesina Nuevo Porvenir de Paloblanco (ACANUP), Buenos Aires Cauca

Asociación de Desplazados Dos De Mayo (ADOM)

Asociación de Familiares de la Violencia Política de Riosucio, Chocó

Asociación de Familias Desplazadas Buscando Futuro (ASGADEBUF), Antioquia

Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes de Yolombo (ASOMUAFROYO)

Asociación de Mujeres Desplazadas (ASOMUDESPA)

Asociación de Mujeres Mineras de Paloblanco, Buenos Aires Cauca

Asociación de Organizaciones Populares de Micay (ASOPOMY)

Asociación de Zona Humanitarias y de Biodiversidad de los Consejos Comunitarios de Curbaradó y Jiguamiandó

Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados (AFRODES)

AFRODES Bogotá – Cundinamarca ABCUN

Asociación de Afrocolombianos Desplazados- Regional Buenaventura (AFRODES Buenaventura)

Asociación Agroindustrial de Productores Agropecuarios y Mineros Afrodescendientes (ASOYOGÉ)

ASDEP

ASODEFENSA

ASOSISALUD

Asociación Juntos por el Progreso (JUNPRO)

Asociación Juvenil Comunitaria (ASJUCOM), Buenos Aires Cauca

Asociación MINGA

Asociación Municipal de Mujeres (ASOM), Buenos Aires Cauca

Asociación Unidos de Tumaco

Asociación Para La Investigación y Acción Social (NOMADESC)

ASO MANOS NEGRA

ASOMUJER y TRABAJO

Autoridad Nacional de Gobierno Indígena - National Authority for Indigenous Government (ONIC)

Campaña Permanente, Tierra, Vida y Dignidad

Campaña Prohibido Olvidar

Centro de Pastoral Afrocolombiana (CEPAC)

Chocó Joven

Clamores

Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (CCAJAR)

Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ)

Comisión de Seguimiento a la Política Pública sobre Desplazamiento Forzado (Monitoring Commission on Public Policy on Forced Displacement)

Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz

Comisión Vida, Justicia y Paz de la Diócesis de Quibdó

Comité Desplazados Gestión y Veeduría Departamental (CODEGEVED)

Comité Municipal de Derechos Humanos -Buenos Aires Cauca

Comunidad de Vida y de Trabajo de La Balsita, Dabeiba

Consejería en Proyectos/Project Counselling Service (PCS)

Consejo Comunitario Afrodescendiente de la Toma

Consejo Comunitario de Bajo Naya

Consejo Comunitario Bajo Saíja

Consejo Comunitario de Chanzará

Consejo Comunitario de Cuerval

Consejo Comunitario de Napi

Consejo Comunitario de Sanjoc

Consejo Comunitario de San Francisco

Consejo Comunitario del Alto Dagua

Consejo Comunitario del Bajo Mira y Frontera

Consejo Comunitario del Calima

Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Río Raposo

Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Río Sataqui (COCOMACUSAL) Chocó

Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Río Mallorquín

Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Rio Yurumangui

Consejo Comunitario de Samurindo

Consejo Comunitario General del San Juan (ACADESAN)

Consejo Comunitario Integración

Consejo Comunitario los Manglares de Micay

Consejo Comunitario Mamuncia

Consejo Comunitario Mayor de Istmina y Medio San Juan (COCOMIMSA)

Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Cuenca del Anchicayá

Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Organización Popular Campesina del Alto Atrato (COCOMOPOCA)

Consejo Comunitario Negros en Acción

Consejo Comunitario Negros Unidos

Consejo Comunitario Parte Alta Sur del Saíja

Consejo Comunitario Patia Norte San Bernardo

Consejo Comunitario Playón Rio Sigui

Consejo Comunitario Renacer Negro

Consejo Comunitario Rescate Las Varas

Consejo Comunitario Rio Guajui (Guapi)

Consejo Comunitario Rio San Francisco (Guapi)

Consejo Comunitario San Pablo Adentro

Consejos Comunitarios y Organizaciones del Bajo Atrato (ASCOBA)

COPDICONC

Cooperativa de Mujeres Productivas de Guapi (COOPMUJERES)

Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados Unidos (CCEEU)

Coordinación de Consejos Comunitarios y Organizaciones de Base del Pueblo Negro del Pacifico Caucano (COCOCAUCA)

Corporación Ancestros PCN

Corporación Hileros

Corporación Justicia y Dignidad

Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro

Corporación Palenque Siglo XXI

Corporación Sisma Mujer

Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)

DeJusticia

Diálogo Inter-Agencial en Colombia (DIAL)

El Pueblo Cofan

Familias de los Consejos Comunitarios de Cacarica (CAVIDA)

Federación Afrocolombiana de Asociaciones y Consejos Comunitarios de Antioquia (FEDEAFRO)

Fundación Caminando

Fundación Caminos de Paz por Colombia

Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (FCSPP)

Fundación Dos Mundos

Fundación Huellas del Pacífico (FUNHUPAC)

Fundación Infancia Feliz, Barranquilla

Fundación Integral Pacífico Nariñense (FIPAN)

Fundación Mujer y Vida

Fundación Nuevo Milenio, Meta

Fundación Rostros y Huellas del Sentir Humano “Garifuna”

Fundación Siempre Unidos

Fundación Social Afrocolombianos del Pacífico Colombiano (FUSAFROPAC)

FUNDADESPLAZADOS

Grupo de Investigación Presencia Cultural Afroamericana

Grupo de Mujeres Flor del Campo de la Balsa -Buenos Aires Cauca

Grupo de Mujeres Las Orquídeas de Cascajero -Buenos Aires Cauca

Grupo de Mujeres Nuevo Amanecer de Agua Blanca -Buenos Aires Cauca

Grupo de Mujeres Productoras en Acción -Buenos Aires Cauca

Grupo de Mujeres Renacer de Honduras- Buenos Aires Cauca

Instituto de Estudios Para el Desarrollo y La Paz (INDEPAZ)

Jurídica Vida

Justapaz (Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action)

Justice and Life Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO)

Juventud 500

La Asociación Abriendo Brechas por la Vida de Tumaco Nariño

La Asociación de Afrodescendientes Desplazados del Departamento de Arauca (ASDEAFRO-ARAUCA)

La Asociación de Productores del Consejo Comunitario de la Toma (YOGÉ)

La Red Agenda Caribe, el Programa Suizo de Iniciativas por la Paz en Colombia – (SUIPPCOL)

La Red de Apoyo Entre Mujeres por la Justicia

Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas

Mencoldes (Colombian Mennonite Foundation for Development)

Mesa Municipal de Organizaciones de Población Desplazada de Tumaco Nariño

Movimiento de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado (MOVICE)

Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado Capítulo Valle del Cauca

Movimiento Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Comunidades Afro-Colombianas (CIMARRON)

Observatorio Género, Democracia y Derechos Humanos

Organización de Barrios Populares del Chocó (OBAPO)

Organización de Población Desplazada de Tumaco- Nariño “El Porvernir” (Miller Angulo)

Organización Desplazados del Pacifico

Organización Indígena Kankuama

Oxfam Internacional

Palenque Regional el Congal- Buenaventura

Pastoral Afro

Pastoral Indígena

Pastoral Social

Pax Christi Colombia

Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL)

Pensamiento y Acción Social

Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos Democracia y Desarrollo

Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN)

Programa Somos Defensores (PNGPDDH)

Red de Alternativas a la Impunidad y la Globalización del Mercado

Red Latina Americana del Caribe para la Democracia

Regional Indian Council of Cauca (CRIC)

Resguardo de Alto Guayabal, Coredocito Jiguamiandó

San Basilio de Palenque- Cartagena

Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social (SNPS)/Cáritas Colombiana

Servicio Jesuita Refugiados – Latinoamérica y el Caribe

SINALSERPUB

SINTRAEMCALI

SINTRAEMSIRVA

SINTRAEMSDES

SINTRACUVALLE

SINDISTRITALES

SINTRENAL

SINTRAESTATALES

SINTRAOFIEMCALI

SINTRAMUNICIPALES

Sub Comisión de Planeación Consultiva de Alto Nivel de Comunidades Negras,
Afrocolombianas y Palenqueras

Techo Común

Universidad de los Andes –Observatorio de Discriminación Racial

UNETE/CGT

Individuals (US):

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Rolando Roebuck, Member of NASGACC

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Reformada

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