Adam Isacson: [00:00:00] Thank you for tuning into the WOLA podcast, I’m Adam Isacson.

I’m just pointing out that these podcasts will always be free and will always be ad free, because all of WOLA’s work is made possible by generous contributions from people who care deeply about advocacy for human rights in the Americas. I hope you are one of those people. If you’re already one of our contributors. Gosh, thank you so much. If you’d like to be—please visit wola.org and click the donate button in the upper right. It means a lot and it helps a lot.

Today’s episode is with Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli. She is our director for the Andes at WOLA. And of course, we’re talking about Colombia, recording this on May 13th. The third week of widespread protests is just starting up around the country. The death toll, mostly from attacks on protesters, is somewhere from the mid forties to the mid fifties, with a few hundred people still missing. As we record this, things are nowhere near a conclusion and it’s not really clear where it’s going to head. So I to talk about this with Gimena, who works almost full time on Colombia and has remarkable networks of contacts with Colombian civil society in several parts of the country.

And here she makes a rather important point that these protests we’re seeing are not just an urban phenomenon, although that’s what’s perceived a lot in the sort of attention and coverage. There is a broad based multi-sector movement going on. Rural and urban people are a lot of struggles are coming together. And, you know, this is all if it turns out OK, it brings some hope for Colombia to become a more democratic and inclusive country, sort of getting closer to fulfilling the promise of its 2016 peace accord. That is happening in a process that doesn’t seem to have a lot to do with Colombia’s election cycle.

So she explains all of this. She also explains why she gives the Biden administration a three or four out of 10 grade in its handling of the situation so far. And with that, let’s listen.

Adam Isacson: Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli, thank you for joining the podcast today.

Gimena Sánchez: Hello.

Adam Isacson: I know this is a super busy time. We are talking on May 13th. Colombia has just entered the beginning of the third week of street protests in several cities around the country. And I’m following this to some extent also. And I know in the run up to April 20th, when the so-called Comité del Paro, the strike committee, said that they were going to be calling a national protest against a tax reform bill, Colombia was in this third wave of covid. Four hundred plus people dying per day. I think people thought that there wouldn’t be that much of a turnout, that this was going to be sort of a small thing. Instead, it has really developed its own momentum and is continuing. Why do you think that the protests have had so much participation and so much buy-in?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:02:56] So the protests really are a continuation of a series of different protests that have started since [President Iván] Duque has taken office. And while the news media has mostly focused on the national protests in the urban areas that involve basically middle class to lower class youth, the students movement and others that were really protesting
educational reforms and so forth, what we’re seeing is that these other protests, the ones that were led by Indigenous people, mostly in the southern part of the country, as well as protests led by Afro Colombian people, are basically also starting up again.

So on the one hand, we have the protests that were called for by the labor unions that were very much directed towards the different tax, labor, education reforms that Duque wanted to put in place, and also voicing anger for the police repression that has never been dealt with since 2019. You have the other Colombia that’s protesting about the fact that the government hasn’t been implementing the peace accord, that the government hasn’t done its part in terms of helping to bring the state in a manner that respects rights in a manner that basically allows people to be able to advance in their areas.

There’s also tremendous discontent with how the pandemic was handled in these parts of the country. First of all, Colombia was good in putting lots of restrictions, but that basically squashed the informal economy, the rural economy. It put people in a situation that they were at a breaking point. It didn’t stop. However, the security concerns, illegal armed groups continued to be able to operate in a lot of these areas, something that many of the rural Afro-Colombian, Indigenous and campesino folks have asked about: how is that possible?

We also saw in certain parts of the country an upping of anti narcotic efforts, such as forced eradication, which was highly contested by a lot of the local communities. And so I think all of these things came together at basically a breaking point and it became a joint effort between that other Colombia and then the more middle to urban Colombia to basically protest against a whole series of things that they were concerned about with the Duque government.

Adam Isacson: [00:05:57] Let me ask you more about the “other Colombia” protests, because if you’re following news coverage, including Colombian news coverage, this seems like an entirely urban phenomenon. Bogota, Cali, Barranquilla, Manizales, Pereira. There’s also a lot of activity now in the countryside, and particularly in areas where Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups predominate. But that’s not getting much attention. So what does it look like? And did it start on the 28th also?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:06:31] No. So after Duque took office, we started to see a series of different types of protests called humanitarian caravans throughout the Pacific Coast, in particular, some of the those caravans, which were basically just public displays of protest against Duque’s reticence to advance the peace accord. Reticence to advance even the PDTEs in the way that Afro-Colombian and Indigenous people thought they should move forward, protests against the possible resumption of aerial fumigation with glyphosate, which is highly problematic for these communities. Many of those were even on boats, on canoes. And we saw this throughout the Pacific coast, especially in areas like Buenaventura, especially in areas near Riosucio, in different parts of Nariño, including the city of Tumaco. And so those protests were taking place. They took on a different level after April 28th.

And in areas like Cauca, the Indigenous Minga that had already had two major protests in the past two years that Duque had completely ignored because he refused to dialogue with them, although those Indigenous groups had first done a regional protest that was focused on Cali, the
president didn’t come to meet with them. So they organized a protest that went all the way to Bogota and they went to Bogota and in Bogota, the government also refused to dialogue with them.

Those, all these protests I’m talking about, joined forces with this urban protest. I should also add that there’s another protest that is more urban that started taking place basically in Cali since last year, when we saw the massacre of five youths in the marginalized area of Llano Verde, which is an area made up of mostly thousands of displaced Afro Colombians from the entire Pacific region. And there are children there. We have seen that there’s been incredible discontent and there are already efforts to organize, especially by the youth, because of the fact that the sense was that, well, first, the police are very brutal, racially profiling the youth. And at the same time that the police allowed sort of this massacre to take place.

And so what we’re seeing is a bringing together of the “multiple Colombias,” basically, taking advantage of the discontent that exists with this tax reform that has been withdrawn to basically tell the government: you’re not listening to us, you don’t care about us, and we really have nothing to lose now. Because after the pandemic kind of devastated the little economic activity that was possible for a lot of these people, people—especially youth—can be out in the streets indefinitely.

Adam Isacson: [00:10:01] So you’ve got a narrative here of a real movement waking up around the country, urban, rural, mestizo, ethnic, multisectoral. That’s exciting. It’s also very uncertain where it could head. But before we talk about where it’s headed, let’s talk about the government response. We’ve seen in urban areas, a vicious police response to this. And with seeming rhetorical encouragement from some of the top levels of government. In the “other Colombia,” are they seeing similar repression?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:10:34] Yes, they are. We get reports from different parts of the country, not just in the urban areas of Cali, but also in smaller towns, of the electricity being cut off, of the Internet being blocked, and repression taking place at night, basically. And this isn’t just “fog of war,” police shooting indiscriminately and by accident, people get killed—although there is a lot of that. We see like actual pursuit of different people, reprisals and an increasing number of death threats against the entire social movement leadership for all of this. In the case of Cali in particular, this has been really problematic. And we we see that it’s actually quite racialized, that disproportionally the worst part of that violence, the more grave abuses such as assassinations and killings are of youth that are Afro descendant. So it’s just important to mention that while you have this overall general violence, which is highly problematic and very deadly, it does have this other company. That isn’t making the headlines like it should

Adam Isacson: [00:12:03] In Cali, where the Indigenous Minga sent about six thousand people up the Pan American Highway from Cauca, they confronted not just police, but we saw a lot of video that I’m sure the Afro Colombian neighborhoods of Cali also see, of plainclothes people, people just in shorts and t shirts with guns, shooting at people in broad daylight. So it’s not just police. And I imagine these sort of night raids you’re talking about aren’t just uniformed police either. Who are these gunmen or who do we think they are?
Gimena Sánchez: [00:12:34] Well, we’re not sure exactly who they are. Some of the local professors say that they’re urban paramilitaries. Others say that they’re basically police that are just plain clothes and off duty. Others are saying that they are the security details of the prominent families of Cali, and that these are coordinated attacks with the police. But again, all of this really needs to be truly investigated to understand what’s going on.

But this is actually not—the attacks against Indigenous people in this manner by folks that are dubious, let’s say, that are armed, is not a new phenomenon. With the Indigenous Mingas of the past five years, what we’ve seen is that the Indigenous movement, the Nasa there, basically have been determined to take back the lands that they believe that the large scale sugar plantations, which are basically run by Cali’s elites, have taken over many years ago. And so by doing that, we’ve seen confrontation of this nature before.

We’ve also seen criminal allegations against even some of the most prominent Indigenous leaders, like Feliciano Valencia, who was put in jail due to false accusations and who later was released and is now a senator. We’ve seen this kind of reaction by the Cali elite in conjunction with police and even paramilitaries for a while.

What’s made matters worse recently has been the high level statements by members of the Democratic Center Party that have basically been using this us-versus-them narrative, saying these Indigenous are invading Cali. They’re blocking the roads. They’re stopping our ability to be able to function economically.

And that doesn’t come from now. It comes from the fact that the government has—governments of Colombia have signed over one thousand agreements with Indigenous people, many of whom have been in agreements signed in this part of the country with this movement in particular, and they haven’t complied. So what do the Indigenous do? They go when they take over the Pan American Highway. I’m not saying that’s correct, but I’m saying it’s the only way they get attention.

And so they’re just doing what they normally do in this case. And that’s angered the right in particular and the Cali elites. We see lots of misinformation. We see lots of, like, doctored videos going around that basically put the blame on the Indigenous calling them terrorists, saying that they’re armed, which we haven’t found any credible information that that’s true. And the Democratic Center is, including the former president, egging this on at the same time on social media.

Adam Isacson: [00:15:55] Let me just dig into that a bit, because it does seem that the epicenter of the protests in the last several days—again, speaking on the 13th—has moved to Cali and its environs. And a lot of the discussion has been especially on the right, but even a lot of centrist politicians have been railing against this tactic of blocking roads as a form of protest. There’s claims that you can’t get gas and parents can’t buy milk for their children. The shelves are empty. And it really feeds into this really racist rhetoric—it seems to be a real verbal tic they have—to make a distinction between Indigenous people and citizens. I keep seeing that reflected, which is very telling.
But I mean, so you’ve made this case pretty clearly. This goes back to very local land tenure and other longstanding disputes, which, of course, the national and international discussion doesn’t really understand. But first of all, there’s two things I would like to ask about, about this, and then we can move on away from Cali. But first, these claims that the Indigenous groups are committing acts of violence. I thought that the Indigenous guard—and maybe you should explain who that is—have a pretty strong ethic of non-violence. And second is this tactic of using blockades. Has it proved to be sort of an “own goal” for them or a double edged sword?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:17:21] So the Indigenous guard basically is members of the Indigenous community that take their traditional sticks, or bastones. And nonviolently, their tactic is to use sort of crowd prevention. So what they do is if they see an incident going on, you’ll have upwards of 40 Indigenous people come and try to negotiate an end to that. They also disarm people or they stop people if they see them attacking and killing or doing something that they’re not supposed to do or they take away anything that could be problematic. So sometimes you’ve had situations where they’ll see, like, sand bags of one of the armed groups, and they’ll take them away so that you don’t have a cross fire taking place right in the middle of the community.

This is a non-violent strategy. It’s not an attack strategy. And what we’ve seen since the killing of one of their governors recently in that region that they do, basically, a protest where they go out and try to verify what happened, they catch people who they think are part of of any of these abuses, and then they bring them before Indigenous jurisdiction, which is kind of like a public court, sort of parallel justice system. And if the person is Indigenous, that falls within their jurisdiction. And so, for example, they’ve had people who are Indigenous sort of infiltrate protests and cause havoc or violence and that kind of thing.

So the first thing to say is that the theories and the practice of the Indigenous Guard has been pacific. And we’ve seen that they’ve even received human rights awards for this. So they receive the Frontline award this year.

Anyhow, in this case, what happened was that armed people started shooting at them, actually leaving more than nine of them severely wounded. And their strategy for going to Cali was not to invade, but was to provide support to the multiple different protest points going on throughout the city. To protect them from police brutality and other armed people who might be attacking people who were protesting.

Does the tactic of blocking roads work? Well, the Indigenous came together right before 2016, a couple of years before that, with the Afro Colombian people to present basically a proposal to the parties that were negotiating in Havana at that time, the government and the FARC, saying, “Hey, we need to negotiate something for our people.” And they came up with the Ethnic Chapter, which is imperfect and is very much not being applied at this point. And so they they changed their tactic. The tactic of the taking over the roads was really a desperate one, prior to that. But during the peace talks, they took a different tactic and that tactic was negotiation. The problem has been that it’s fallen on deaf ears.

And then under the Duque government, there’s been zero effort, zero political will to want to really advance all the mechanisms that form part of the Ethnic Chapter and the peace accord
overall. And so they’re going back to what’s I would say tried and true for them to get attention, because all of their other efforts are failing.

There is an actual dialogue, formal table, that includes all of the Indigenous groupings and the government. And that table—it’s been impossible for them to get heard or to get anything to advance. And so it’s not that they just go out to the streets. They try the diplomatic ways to do things. They try the channels that the government has set up with them to do things, all of which come from the whole 1991 constitution, and is within what the government of Colombia and the state of Colombia has agreed to. But none of that is working. And so this is really kind of the last method.

Now is that causing situations where people can’t get food, ambulances can’t fully get through and things? Yes, of course it is. It is causing problems and it is causing resentment towards them from members of the middle and upper classes especially, but also others in Cali, Valle del Cauca, who are affected by the situation that’s going on and can’t do their daily economic activities without disruption.

Adam Isacson: [00:22:32] So, yeah, it’s a desperate last resort tactic that does carry a cost in public opinion. But talking—now, zooming out nationwide—there’s a lot of desperation around Colombia right now. Even the numbers now show more than four in 10 Colombians is below the poverty line in the midst of a pandemic. So going back to the theme you were talking about, that people are increasingly mobilized all around the country. It seems like that is an imperative for this government, which has another 15 months in power, to negotiate—maybe a different way that it has before. Is that even possible? And what do the dialogues that have begun in this week look like? Are they something worth pursuing further?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:23:17] Ok, so I think that in 2019, you know, the national dialogue that was set up by the Duque government, which basically favored a lot of their friends and their close allies, but included some dialogue with the affected parties, didn’t go anywhere. That doesn’t bode well for this dialogue just because that went nowhere and we saw no major changes. But even if Duque were able to get an actual dialogue that is moving forward, which he hasn’t, because the first attempt after three hours with the representatives of the committee of the Paro, which is basically just the labor unions, not including the student youth, not including the Indigenous and Afro Colombian, which in the case of the Indigenous said that they don’t feel represented there, that there is another story. Even if you were to get somewhere with that, that’s not going to be sufficient.

Why? Because this has become much broader than that. And it’s become a combination of multiple different sectors with multiple different grievances at different levels: national, regional and local level. And so you would really need to do a whole dialogue, peace negotiation, so to speak, at many levels and in different parts of the country. So that’s not going to work.

Secondly, the attitude that is presented, at least in the press and elsewhere of the government saying that they’re talking but they’re not going to really negotiate anything is not helping. Which is basically what the minister of the interior said yesterday in Washington, an event at
CSIS. “We’re talking,” but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a negotiation that’s not going to get you anywhere.

What they need to do is show some empathy, some humility, accept responsibility for some of the abuses that have taken place beyond just saying, yes, we respect international humanitarian law and we investigate abuses. No, they need to show that they actually care. And they also need to go back to the peace agenda. So they need to start there. They need to go back and say, OK, this is the peace agreement. There are structural things in this peace agreement that are trying to be addressed that are at the root cause of everything that’s going on, first of all.

Second, we have this pandemic and we have to revive the economy, but we can’t revive the economy, only favoring a certain sector of Colombia. We have to figure out how this works for all of Colombia or at least a much broader part of Colombia. And that’s where they need to start. Then looking at the labor issues, which they’ve been trying to make more flexible in favor of companies and so forth, but that doesn’t work for the majority of the working class Colombians, then they need to look at the long standing Indigenous issues, longstanding Afro-Colombian issues. Some of the classist issues and the rest of what I’m talking about. They need to go back to the peace, plus to really rebuild the country and gain credibility again.

And I’m not sure that this government is able to really do that, because the way that they’ve been responding to any criticism, so forth, is with blunt force repression, and basically an attitude of justifying what they’re doing. That’s not going to work. So I’m not particularly optimistic.

What I am optimistic about is that potentially this situation can allow for more diverse voices to take up leadership in the country, which is very needed. Colombia has been entrenched in this sort of Left-Right narrative that really doesn’t serve Colombia, nor many countries in Latin America well.

We need more plural leadership, a leadership that looks at democracy beyond who’s in power and takes off and goes more towards coexistence and how you can have a multiplicity of movements in terms of politically, that can enter the Congress and so forth. How do you get the corruption more down in politics? How do you make access to newer leadership, have more viability in real debates, to address many of the issues that they need to address?

But I think they need go back to the peace agenda first. And they need to basically figure out how they can show that other part of Colombia, the Colombia that is really protesting in the rural Afro, Indigenous and younger Colombia, that they actually care about them.

Adam Isacson: [00:28:17] So you’re proposing an agenda of empathy and return to the peace framework and structural change to a governing party, the Centro Democratico, that—maybe has some moderate, pragmatic members that would be interested in having a conversation about that, but who’s most visible faces—ex-president Álvaro Uribe, a lot of the legislators who spend their day on Twitter attacking people—seem to prefer actually to just escalate this and to make it more polarized.
At the same time, you have this optimistic vision of really—you’ve got this new generation and this more, as you say, plural, more participatory post-peace accord ethic of people who really are participating. And you can see them on the streets. This is a very politically engaged generation that’s coming up in Colombia, given the combination of deep pessimism and some optimism for the next. Colombia has legislative elections next March, presidential elections next May. Is anything—Is there any hope for progress or even laying a foundation for progress between now and then, especially as Colombia’s campaign heats up in about six months?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:29:26] One of the big problems with Colombian politics in most recent times has been that the electoral cycle, the elections, don’t really conform with the realities. And so, you know, my fear, perhaps in another scenario we would say, OK, the politicians that are going to be running should take advantage of what’s happening now, to present new agendas, agendas that actually address this, agendas that bring people that they normally don’t have on board to their side of what should be done about the situation. That’s what we would say in a different scenario.

In the Colombia scenario. We still have way too much corruption and clientelism happening in these elections. And unfortunately, a large populace, even that which is protesting, that will vote based on how much their vote is going to get paid and what have you. So there is a lot of vote-buying, there’s a lot of manipulation. And so my fear is that we’re not going to see that tremendous opportunity taken advantage of by the people running.

We’re actually probably going to see violence, increased polarization, and basically a real conflict in terms of the different campaigns around the country, and probably a hardening of the approach, especially on the right, and especially from the Centro Democrático. At which point I would seriously recommend that whomever can get the ear of former President Uribe, that they tell him to “sit this one out.” But I’m not sure that’s possible.

So I’m not sure that this is really going to happen. But the peace accord brought about a couple of things which were positive, which was that for the first time, the left, which is also heavily divided, was able to get more attention ahead.

They were able to have at least do campaigns without getting shot at or killed. And so that allowed for much more of a political space. And I think what we’re seeing in this upcoming campaign is already the inheritance of that with Francia Marquez, an Afro Colombian leader who got a lot of votes in former congressional elections, actually having a campaign running as president—I mean, running as vice president on a feminist ticket.

So I think we’ll have the entry of newer voices and a newer generation, which I hope will help steer the debates and move things forward. But in terms of the traditional political parties and so forth, I think there’s a tremendous way that needs to go.

And and there I think the issue is more about civic education, about the responsibility on citizens. When you vote, you know, what does that mean? It shouldn’t be a short term gain because you get the long term effects of that, and that kind of thing. And you also need to have the ability for smaller parties, or parties that don’t have the funds, to be able to do tons of rallies with tons of t
shirts and take up tons of TV programming, to be able to have their messages go out and resonate beyond just their local area. So I don’t think this is going to be resolved now. My hope is that this whole situation is a wake up call, that those are the types of things that need to happen.

Adam Isacson: [00:33:27] So the movements that you’re talking about are almost running independent of the electoral cycle, with exceptions like Francia’s campaign, but even that is more of a movement building exercise.

So before we finish, we haven’t talked about U.S. policy. And we should just say, how would you—what sort of a grade would you give the Biden administration as this is happening? I mean, the United States has a very long history with Colombia. Colombia is often portrayed as our closest ally. It is by far the largest recipient of military and police aid in the Western Hemisphere. And even if the Biden administration doesn’t approve of everything the Duque government says, I don’t hear it always disapproving very strongly either. But how would you frame this?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:34:15] Ok, so the administration I would give them a four or even a three out of 10. Yeah. And this is because this is the moment where you need to speak up. And not just do a tweet, but actually put out a statement that helps guide the situation towards a constructive end. The United States has invested so much money in Colombia, its number one ally, it is constantly speaking out about situations similar and worse in other parts of Latin America and elsewhere.

It can’t let this just happen and say, OK, we just want restraint. I mean, it has to say, look, we’ve been training you guys all these years. We’ve been working with you guys jointly on the antinarcotics stuff. And you guys need to be an example for other countries, you know? And so I think that that’s the first thing: that this is the moment to be very public, and to make it very clear what the position is. They also need to be saying, go back to the peace. You know, this was the big thing that everybody rallied around and worked so hard to have a shift in history in Colombia. And they had—

Adam Isacson: [00:35:31] So invoke the 2016 peace accord.

Gimena Sánchez: [00:35:32] Exactly. So that’s what I think should be happening. And I don’t think that’s being critical—yes, it’s critical in the sense that what is being said may not be something that the Democratic Center wants to hear, but it’s just the responsible thing that they should be doing now. If not, the question’s going to be, why are they being so silent and how is the U.S. behind the lack of an appropriate response?

So that’s the first thing. On Congress: obviously, some of the members of Congress that have been following Colombia for many years, have already put out tweets, have done press on the issues. But there, too, I would say it needs to be a much broader message, a bipartisan message that comes out about this. Because this situation could severely spiral even more out of control and really undo much of the progress that’s happened since the peace accord. And we don’t want that.
There are plenty of countries that are up in flames with many problems. It is not to the advantage of the United States to have Colombia be one of them too. You know, if you look at it just from the pure strategic point of view of U.S. interests, the U.S. is interested in having the situation in Venezuela resolved, and Colombia is where you’re getting most of the Venezuelans streaming out of that crisis. And so you need to have a stable Colombia.

You don’t need to have a situation where the Venezuela situation, the Colombia situations all get interlinked together, and then you have a double disaster. You really need to nip it in the bud right now and do the hard work.

This is this the moment for both the Biden administration to take that stance and to exert leadership in this situation and for the Congress in a bipartisan manner to think about what can they do right now to change course in the situation. So that actually advances U.S. interests in a manner that is constructive and doesn’t undo most of the investment that they’ve made in the country politically and financially for years.

Adam Isacson: [00:37:58] I agree that I’m seeing in the Biden administration sort of a reluctance to antagonize, in their view, people who really we should be trying to marginalize because they’re trying to escalate the situation. Just finally, you said twice that this should be bipartisan. Probably some of our listeners said, really? Do you think that bipartisanship is possible on this right now or why do you think so?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:38:22] Well, you know, even with the incredible lack of bipartisanship that exists in our country on many things, Colombia has been one of the weird cases where you have—of course, you have extreme, more extreme views on one side or the other side, but you have a general sense, just by the way the Congress has voted in all these years, in terms of the financing and what they fund, that there’s a general idea that there should be peace in Colombia and that Colombia needs to be constructively supported to advance both Colombia, but also U.S. interests.

And so I don’t think it’s that impossible to get a bipartisan effort there. I also think a bipartisan effort is needed because you have a government in Colombia that’s very partisan, so to speak. And so their closer friends need to speak out, too, and not make matters worse, but try to contain it.

Adam Isacson: [00:39:20] Thank you, Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli. So, probably, if you’re reading any news coverage of Colombia, you’ve seen some of the things she has been saying, the statements on WOLA’s website, wola.org, as well as at our Colombia Peace dot Org website that we’ve maintained for, gosh, about eight years now. Lots of information there. Are there any other resources you want to point people towards right now?

Gimena Sánchez: [00:39:42] I would just say that Temblores and Indepaz, that have been now translating, they’ve been joining forces and translating and doing quick infographics would be two Colombian sources I would point you to.
And also just to say that, you know, it’s very important to continue to follow this situation, to do what you can from whichever table you’re sitting at. If you’re in the U.S., make sure to contact your members of Congress about it and express your concern and ask that they act.

Adam Isacson: [00:40:21] Yes, I totally agree. And that’s just to reiterate, that’s Temblores and Indepaz, two NGOs that have done an amazing job of documenting what’s happening, particularly with police abuse on the ground and their Twitter accounts, probably even more than their websites at this point, are worth following. Thank you, Gimena.

Well, thank you for listening, I sure learned a lot from Gimena in that conversation. Between having to work separately under Covid, the fact that both of our work does overlap a lot on Colombia and that has meant just, you know, 24/7 engagement—you know, we hadn’t had the chance to sit for 45 minutes to exchange notes and to talk about we were hearing and how we’re viewing this wave of protest and what it all means.

So that was a great opportunity for me as well. I’m glad that you all got to listen to us have that exchange. Stay tuned, because more episodes of the podcast are coming shortly. If you’re just hearing the WOLA podcast for the first time, search for WOLA Latin America Today on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Overcast. Wherever you get your podcast, we should come right up. We’ve been around for a while. So thank you again for your time. And do stay well and we’ll be back really soon.