

# *IACHR concerned about structural violence in Colombia*

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Bogota, June 4 (RHC)-- Concern over the ongoing structural violence in Colombia, especially against human rights defenders, was one of the main conclusions in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) annual report.

"The Commission reiterates its concern about the persistence of structural violence in Colombia, and the effects specifically faced by human rights defenders and social leaders, as well as the impact on groups whose human rights have been historically and structurally violated, such as indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, peasants, children and adolescents, women and LGBTI people," the report reads.

The document is an x-ray of the human rights situation in Colombia in 2021, which was marked by the national strike and the social outburst against the government of President Iván Duque. In that sense, the IACHR says it received complaints of excessive use of force against demonstrators and people who were not part of the marches.

"The IACHR received serious allegations of the indiscriminate use of firearms against demonstrators and people who were not participating in the protests, especially in Cali (southeast) and different municipalities in Valle del Cauca (west), as well as in Pereira, Risaralda department (central west). The reports received to indicate the use of this type of weaponry allegedly by some members of the security forces, some of whom are not fully identified. The Commission also received extremely worrying information about the possible actions of armed persons dressed in civilian clothes", reads the text of more than 229 pages that compiles the most serious violations against citizens.

The international body invited the Colombian government to protect the right to life and protect its citizens' integrity and reminded it that the defense of human rights is vital for democracy. "The IACHR recalls that the defense of human rights is one of the pillars that sustain the functioning of democratic institutions. In this sense, it urges the State to redouble its efforts to protect their rights to life, personal integrity, and liberty and other fundamental guarantees," it reported.

Finally, the IACHR called on Colombia to implement the peace agreements between the FARC and the Colombian State in order to solve the country's structural problems.

"The IACHR calls on Colombia to redouble its efforts in the practical and effective implementation of the Peace Agreement, in the understanding that it represents an opportunity to address the structural causes of the historical violence in the country and to increase the comprehensive presence of the State in the territories most affected by the armed conflict," the report concluded.

This document is revealed on the same day that President Iván Duque met with the OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro, where he signed a declaration against anti-Semitism.

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