



Statement by International NGOs

It is the Duty of the State to Prevent Aggressions Against Indigenous Communities of the CRIC and other Participants of the Protests

10 May 2021

The international NGOs subscribing to this statement express their concern for the acts of armed violence against the communities of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca - CRIC, who participated in the protests that took place yesterday in the city of Cali. On repeated occasions, armed men have fired weapons from pick-up trucks against members of the Indigenous communities, without the State security agencies having acted to prevent these events nor to arrest those responsible. During the days of protest, [47 people were killed](#) while protesting peacefully due to the actions of security force members and other gunmen who shoot from vehicles or who fire weapons in front of members of State security agencies.

Last night, acts of vandalism and destruction were reported at the CRIC headquarters in Bogota. **We warn about possible acts of violence against the headquarters of the CRIC and other social organizations in Popayan, as well as the headquarters of other organizations throughout the country, in addition to the aggressions against members of these organizations.** It is the duty of the State authorities to protect the life and physical integrity of the people, and the property and facilities of their organizations. The decision to participate in the National Strike and express their right to protest does not make them enemies of the State nor do they lose their right to be protected from criminal actions.

Democracy in Colombia is not viable if armed groups are able to act with total impunity and can attack people who express their disagreement with the government. The facts show a possible complicity of the State concerning the attacks suffered by participants in the protests. In addition, the attacks by members of the security forces that have been recorded in countless videos blur the rule of law and the legitimacy of the government and other authorities. The Colombian State should be committed to protecting the rights of all citizens, in accordance with international human rights treaties, the Colombian Constitution and the law.

Diakonia (Sweden), Oxfam Colombia, ForumCiv, Garabide, PeaceWorks, Washington Office on Latin America –WOLA, Protection International, Act Iglesia Sueca, ODHACO