

HAND IN HAND FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

6th Annual National Days of Action for Colombia

ORGANIZER'S PACKET



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With **five million internally displaced people**, Colombia now has the **world's largest displacement crisis**. Ongoing conflict has forced half a million people to flee to neighboring countries. Unequal land distribution is at the heart of Colombia's conflict. The homes and lands of indigenous people, Afro-Colombians and small-scale farmers in Colombia continue to be violently and illegally seized by paramilitary and guerrilla groups who profit from the sale of these lands to unscrupulous companies. The new Colombian government's attempts to address the issue is one step towards justice, but U.S. policy also needs to change to ensure the complete and fair return of land to the millions of people who have been displaced.

Up until now, instead of protecting and defending the rights of Colombian communities, the U.S. and Colombian governments have prioritized economic, corporate and military interests. Over the past decade, **the U.S. government has given more than \$7 billion to Colombia—largely in the form of military aid**. We cannot waste any more time or taxpayer dollars on an anti-drug strategy that not only doesn't work but also exacerbates Colombia's humanitarian crisis.

Colombians are calling for peace, justice and repatriation.

We join them!

Get Involved in this Year's National Days of Action for Colombia

Create Hands for Peace for Colombians Under Threat.

Ask your student club, church group or community organization to organize an educational event and make Hands for Peace artwork to be sent to Colombian communities under threat.

See page 3 for more info.

Organize a Hand in Hand for Peace in Colombia Public Demonstration

The Hands for Peace assembled during educational events will be displayed through public demonstrations across the country in April. Organize or join a demonstration in your city.

See page 4 for more info.

Dedicate a Worship Service to Colombia

Ask that your faith community leaders hold a worship service focused on Colombia in April to raise awareness and pray for peace.

Download resources at WitnessForPeace.org/DOPA2011.

Flood Congress with Demands for New U.S. Policies towards Colombia

Contact your congress member during the month of April: Send postcards, letters, make phone calls or meet with them in person.

See page 2 for campaign demands and page 5 for information about ordering postcards

HAND IN HAND FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

6th Annual National Days of Action for Colombia

Advocacy Statement



This April, thousands of people are coming together to advocate for peace and justice in Colombia and take action through the Days of Action for Colombia. Acting in solidarity with millions of displaced people in Colombia, we:

...Believe that U.S. policy should support negotiations for a peaceful end to the armed conflict. After 50 years of war, with a new Colombian Administration there is now a window of opportunity to reach a peace agreement that the U.S. can support.

...Do not believe the U.S. government should move forward with a free trade agreement (FTA) with Colombia. Experience indicates that the FTA will exacerbate Colombia's human rights and humanitarian crisis. Already union leaders are being assassinated, the land rights of farmers and indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are being undermined and millions of people have been violently robbed of their homes.

...Believe that the U.S. should forge economic ties that spur people-centered development and help create opportunities for the rural poor and endangered workers. The United States should support victims' quests for truth, justice and reparations. The protection of human rights defenders, community and religious leaders and people working for land return must be a priority. They should be afforded the opportunity to live in peace and without threats of violence from any armed groups, including the military.

...Do not believe that the U.S. should continue military solutions to the conflict. Our military strategy in Colombia has only fueled violence and displacement. It is not a "success" that should be replicated elsewhere. Demilitarization of U.S. policy should begin by cancelling U.S. contracts for construction on Colombian military bases and suspending assistance to the Colombian military.

...Believe that the United States must prioritize social and humanitarian funding to protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. The U.S. should promote lasting solutions for the Colombian refugees and IDPs.

...Do not believe in the continuation of inhumane and ineffective forced eradication programs, including aerial fumigation. A decade has proven that these programs displace farmers, threaten food crops, and jeopardize human health and the environment even as they fail to reduce coca production.

...Believe that policymakers should invest in drug prevention and rehabilitation programs to reduce demand for drugs here at home. They should also increase funding and accountability for programs that promote sustainable economic development in Colombia. The United States should ensure that such programs are designed in consultation with Colombian small-scale farmers, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and not be carried out in partnership with the military.

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How to Get Involved: Create Hands for Peace for Colombians Under Threat

Colombian communities and human rights organizations take huge risks everyday to work for peace in their country. Join us in lending them a voice of support by creating *Hands for Peace* artwork that will be distributed to Colombian communities and organizations under threat. *Hands for Peace* are a symbol of solidarity during difficult times.

Preparation

1. Pick a date and a venue that would be convenient for your student club, congregation, community organization, and/or friends.
2. Invite people to come.
3. Find or buy materials: construction paper, scissors, paint, fabric, banners, markers, camera, etc.
4. Print fact sheets, sign up sheets, and order postcards from your regional organizer or Jess Hunter-Bowman (jess@witnessforpeace.org)



During the Event

1. Hand out fact sheets and read the descriptions of the different Colombian communities that will be receiving the *Hands for Peace*.
2. Play an online video that documents the struggles of various Colombian communities (go to WitnessForPeace.org/DOPA2011 for links to videos and other educational resources).
3. **Create** the *Hands for Peace*. The photos on this page provide a few ideas. We encourage groups to make big fabric banners.
4. Write messages in English and Spanish on the *Hands for Peace*. See message ideas below.
5. Take lots of pictures and videos and post them on [Facebook.com/DoPAColombia](https://www.facebook.com/DoPAColombia)
6. **Send** the finished hands to: Witness for Peace, 3628 12th Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20017.
7. **Consider organizing a** *Hand in Hand for Peace* public demonstration in your university, town, church, etc. (See page 4 for more info.) The hands will be delivered to the Colombian communities highlighted on pages 5-8.
8. Encourage everyone to sign postcards and **send them to their congressional representatives**.

Message Ideas in English and Spanish

- End U.S. Military Aid to Colombia (No más Ayuda Militar a Colombia)
- No FTA with Colombia (No al TLC con Colombia)
- Peace for Colombia (Paz para Colombia)
- No to Impunity (No a la Impunidad)
- Justice for Colombia (Justicia para Colombia)
- Peace with Justice for Colombia (Paz con Justicia para Colombia)
- No more violence (No más Violencia)
- Dignity (Dignidad)
- Solidarity (Solidaridad)
- No more fumigations (No más Fumigaciones)

HAND IN HAND FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

6th Annual National Days of Action for Colombia



How to Get Involved: Organize a *Hand in Hand for Peace in Colombia* Public Demonstration

By organizing a public demonstration, you'll help shed light on our hemisphere's hidden humanitarian crisis while calling for much-needed U.S. policy changes. With public demonstrations, we'll expose an invisible crisis and fuel the movement for U.S. policies that would alleviate – not exacerbate – forced displacement in Colombia. Here's how:

1. Pick a date and a place: in front of your legislators office, a public park, your church, a public space in your university, etc.
2. Collect as many *Hands for Peace* as possible and decide on a creative way to display them publicly. See photos below for ideas from previous years.
3. Don't forget to bring sign-up sheets, fact sheets (page 9-10) and postcards (you can order postcards from your organizer or from Jess at jess@witnessforpeace.org) to the demonstration.
4. Invite local media to the event. Send press releases a few days in advance and make media calls the day before. Include facts and messages from this packet in your media materials.
5. At the end of the event, collect all the hands and send them your organizer or to Witness for Peace, 3628 12th Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20017. **All the hands will be sent to Colombian communities and organizations under threat.**
6. Take lots of pictures and videos and post them on www.facebook.com/DoPAColombia,



DEDICATE A WORSHIP SERVICE TO COLOMBIA

Hundreds of faith communities in the U.S. and Colombia will honor Colombia's displaced people during their weekly worship services to raise awareness and pray for peace. Suggest that your faith community leaders incorporate a prayer for peace in Colombia or even dedicate the entire service to Colombia.

Go to WitnessForPeace.org/DOPA2011 to download the faith packet.

HAND IN HAND FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

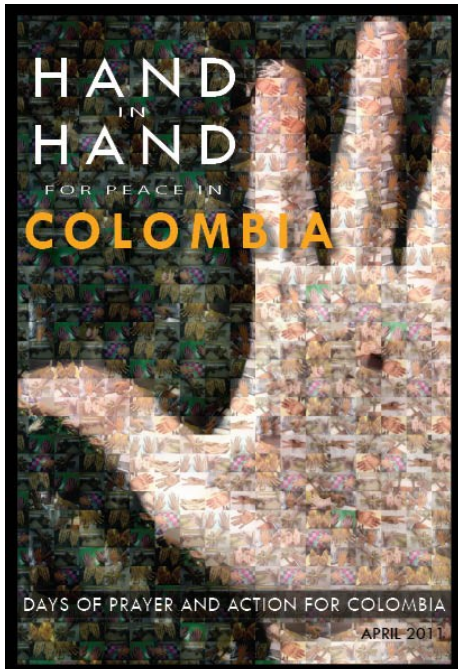
6th Annual National Days of Action for Colombia



How to Get Involved: Flood Congress with Calls for New U.S. Policies towards Colombia

Help us flood Congress with messages of peace and justice for Colombia! During the National Days of Action for Colombia we will call on our government to pursue policies that protect communities at risk of displacement, small-scale farmers and Colombian human rights advocates. The U.S. should stop funding the Colombian military and pushing the unfair U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement.

You can request a packet of postcards to send to Congress calling for new U.S. policies toward Colombia.



Support a new Colombia policy in the new Congress

To the Honorable _____,

With an ongoing conflict that has internally displaced over 5 million people and forced another half a million to flee to neighboring countries, Colombia now endures the largest displacement crisis in the world. After a decade of spending billions of dollars on failed and harmful military strategies, we need to send aid to Colombia that will help alleviate the crisis and promote human rights, not more unfair trade agreements that will only push more people off their land. The new Colombian government has made positive changes in tone about land return and prospects for peace, but community leaders and human rights defenders continue to be threatened and killed.

I ask that you:

- Prioritize funding to support displaced people, refugees, and victims of violence
- Stop sending military aid to Colombia that fuels the war
- Promote a negotiated end to the conflict and a just peace
- End fumigation programs and support alternative development aid
- Do not move forward with any U.S.-Colombia trade agreement that could cause further mass displacement and cement drastic inequalities

Please make these changes to promote human rights, support small-scale farmers and indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and restore displaced people to their lands.

Sincerely,



Name

City, State

To: _____

Your Congress Member

Address

City, State, Zip

Can you help us get the message of peace for Colombia onto Capitol Hill?
Email jess@witnessforpeace.org if you would like to be sent a packet of postcards.

HAND IN HAND FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

6th Annual National Days of Action for Colombia

Solidarity with Colombian Communities



The Days of Action for Colombia are dedicated to Colombian communities, human rights organizations and churches that risk their lives to promote peace and respect for human rights. What follows is a list of some of the communities that will receive the *Hands for Peace* artwork created by activists across the country this April. The *Hands for Peace* are a symbol of our support for their work for peace and justice.

Santander de Quilichao

The Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca was established in 1994 in the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, north of the department of Cauca in southwestern Colombia. The ACIN includes 14 reserves and 16 indigenous councils. The ACIN is one of the most widely recognized indigenous movements in the country. It is guided by the following principles: unity, land, culture, community participation and autonomy.



La Perla Amazonica

The communities located in the Perla Amazonica, Putuamyo - one of the most biodiverse regions of the world- have been ravaged by U.S.-funded fumigation programs. Fumigation has wreaked havoc on the delicate Amazonian environment, destroyed food crops and water sources, and displaced entire towns. U.S. funded development projects have failed to generate sustainable and viable alternatives to coca production. Some communities in the Perla Amazonica have spent the last four years independently working to eradicate coca crops. These communities now produce all their own food. These communities are empowering themselves to find peaceful alternatives to fumigations and militarization. However, the Colombian government and U.S. aid fail to provide them with adequate social services or access to markets for their crops.

Peace Community of San José de Apartadó



On March 23, 1997, a group of small-scale farmers in San José de Apartadó established a Peace Community in response to sustained aggression perpetrated by many of the actors involved in Colombia's conflict. The Peace Community is comprised of villages located in the Abibe Mountains of the Urabá region. Economic interests and the geographically strategic position of this area of the country have made it a focus in the armed conflict since the 1970s. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Urabá region saw hundreds of political assassinations. In 1996, several families fled San José de Apartadó and established a temporary refuge. A government-sponsored commission negotiated the displaced families' return, but once the return was complete, several community leaders were assassinated. With few alternatives left, some of the survivors founded the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó.

The Inter-church Justice and Peace Commission

The Inter-church Justice and Peace Commission, founded in 1988, is one of the leading NGOs for community organizing and human rights in Colombia. It provides accompaniment to Afro-Colombian, Indigenous, and mixed race communities who have been victimized and affirms their rights without the use of violence in zones of armed conflict. It supports processes for truth, justice, and reparation, and favors political negotiations that seek to end the internal armed conflict. It has an inter-disciplinary approach to helping communities rebuild their social fabric.



The Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (ACVC)

The ACVC was founded in 1996 during a series of marches demanding that the government provide social investment and respect human rights. In 1998, the ACVC participated in the peasant farmer exodus and months of negotiations, which persuaded then-President of Colombia Andrés Pastrana to meet some of their demands.

The ACVC is a regional organization bringing together community proposals from 120 community action boards, cooperatives, fishing committees, and other rural worker associations. The organization has approximately 25,000 members, all of whom are small-scale farmers. The ACVC carries out social, political and community work in nearly 120 small rural communities throughout eight municipalities in the region of the Magdalena Medio. The organization focuses its work on the Peasant Farmer Reserve Zone and its Sustainable Development Plan, focusing on issues of human rights, education, health, and agriculture.

The Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movice)

MOVICE is a national association of human rights organizations, social organizations and family members of victims of human rights crimes. Their central objective is to vindicate victims of crimes committed by state security forces or paramilitaries receiving support from the government. They demand truth, justice, comprehensive reparations and a guarantee of no repetition. The organization also honors the memory of hundreds of thousands of men and women who have taken a stand to create a Colombia at peace and with social justice.



Community Process of Garza and Nueva Esperanza (Simití, South Bolívar)

Garzal and its neighboring community Nueva Esperanza belong to the rural municipality of Simití, south Bolívar. The communities have asked us to accompany their struggle to retain possession and gain title to the lands. They have occupied and cultivated for generations. Title of the land was granted to a drug lord, who operated a cocaine processing laboratory on until his operation was closed down in the 1980s. He disappeared for about twelve years, but later returned with paramilitaries threatening the lives of anyone who did not vacate “his” land. He has since died, and his heirs are trying to sell the property to agro-businesses that want the land to mono-crop palm oil. Despite death threats, the community is remaining on the land. The community is currently embroiled in a legal struggle to have their right of possession recognized and titles granted to community members.

Guaviare

Guaviare is one of the Amazonian regions of Colombia hardest hit by failed U.S. anti-drug policy. ASOPROCEGUA is a *campesino* (small-scale farmer) initiative in Guaviare whose members have voluntarily eradicated their coca and work together to produce alternative products. The members of ASOPROCEGUA associate coca with its violent history—from armed actors to violence against the environment through fumigations. ASOPROCEGUA fosters viable, sustainable, peaceful and empowering alternatives to coca production. They strive to live in harmony with the environment and speak out against the devastating impacts of fumigations in their bio-diverse region.





The Displaced Community of Las Pavas

In 1997 more than 500 people organized themselves as the Buenos Aires Farmers Association (ASOCAB) and began working communally on the Las Pavas farm. In 2006 the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (INCODER) visited Las Pavas and verified that the families met the conditions to begin the process of transferring the ownership of the land. After this visit, the farmers were threatened by Emilio Escobar, a group of armed men and a paramilitary group. The farmers abandoned Las Pavas and a few months later a land contract was signed between Escobar and a subsidiary of Daabon. In January of 2009, the families returned to Las Pavas and planted their food crops. Daabon sought a court order to have them evicted and riot police prohibited the people from returning to their fields and Daabon workers destroyed their entire 60 hectares of food crops. Fourteen houses that belonged to the community were demolished. Daabon cut down a communal forest and is drying up wetlands in order to plant palm. CPT Colombia began accompanying the people of Las Pavas in April 2009 and is part of a coalition of human rights organizations that are working to enable for the community to return to the farm. Daabon, the main palm oil supplier to The Body Shop, The Body Shop and Daabon both claim to maintain high standards for human rights and environmental protection.

Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó Humanitarian Zones

In 1997 in the region of Colombia nearest Panama, paramilitary death squads and the Colombian army's 17th Brigade violently displaced 15,000 people. More than 100 people were killed. Sustainable farms and forests in the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River Basins were replaced by large cattle ranches and monocrop plantations, especially oil palm. Despite death threats, some displaced people have returned in a nonviolent effort to regain their stolen lands. While the courts delay in restoring the land, the returning communities are establishing a toe-hold in the region by forming humanitarian and biodiversity zones. A humanitarian zone is a living area of a few acres surrounded by a barbed wire fence. The community puts signs on the fence proclaiming that it is a civilian zone, and nobody with a weapon is allowed inside. A biodiversity zone is an area that the communities set aside for subsistence crops and the restoration of the forest. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has decreed that armed groups, including official armed forces, should stay out of the civilian areas. But the destruction, threats, intimidation and violence continue.

Alto Guayabal

Alto Guayabal is an Embera indigenous community on a tributary of the Jiguamiandó River in the Urada Indigenous Reserve. The Embera are struggling to preserve a mountain on the reserve which they consider to be sacred. However, mining corporations also have an eye on the mountain, for gold, copper, and molybdenum extraction. The Afro-Colombian and Mestizo communities in the region are also endangered by international mining operations. They live downstream and know the mines would contaminate the rivers on which they depend. The two companies that want to mine on the Indigenous Reserve are Muriel and Rio Tinto. Muriel is a U.S. corporation. Rio Tinto, a British and Australian corporation, is one of the largest mining enterprises in the world. Both corporations have headquarters in Colorado. Backroom deals and fraud have ensured that these powerful corporations receive authorization for their mining operations on the reserve.

Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, Bogota

The Justice and Peace Committee of this faith community works with internally displaced people, whether they remain in Bogota, resettle in another area, or return to their original land. Every Wednesday the committee hosts a "Moment for Peace" which includes a bible reading, discussion related to current events and peacemaking, and simple soup. There is also time during these gatherings for pastoral and psychological support for both groups and individuals. A wide variety of people participate in these gatherings, including children, families, and older people as well as local supporters and church members.



THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN COLOMBIA'S CRISIS

FACT SHEET: National Days of Action for Colombia



“Things became unbearable when our community council, of which I was a part, gained legal access to 182 hectares of land that other people with business interests wanted. The community occupied this territory, but then people started to be violently murdered.”

Daira Quiñones, displaced Afro-Colombian community leader from El Porvenir,

U.S. Military Aid to Colombia: Your Tax Dollars at Work

- Since 2000, the U.S. has given more than \$7 billion to Colombia – mostly military aid for the war on drugs and the war on terrorism.
- Over 5 million Colombians have been displaced during this time.
- U.S. military aid has been used **to buy helicopters and weapons, fumigate coca plantations and train Colombian soldiers** who have, in turn, killed innocent civilians and then presented them as guerrillas killed in combat. While it is impossible to estimate exactly how many people have been displaced as a direct result of U.S. military aid, we do know that fumigations and assassinations have been reason enough to make civilians leave their homes and search for safety elsewhere.

The Colombia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

This year the Obama Administration is pushing for the adoption of a free trade agreement between Colombia and the United States. If the FTA were to pass it would provoke increased displacement, particularly among rural farmers and communities. Here's how we know:

- With the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, subsidized U.S. grains flooded the Mexican market, provoking a 70% drop in corn farmers' income. In the first ten years of NAFTA, two million small-scale Mexican farmers were displaced.
- Like Mexican farmers, **Colombian farmers cannot compete with heavily-subsidized U.S. agribusiness.**
- For every dollar that the Colombian government spends on agriculture, the U.S. spends \$222.
- If the Colombia FTA passes, U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia would jump by an estimated 70% in the first year to 4.6 million tons, dwarfing the mere 93,000 tons Colombia would export to the U.S.
- Colombian farmers and indigenous people have resolutely condemned the agreement. In a series of opinion polls, 98% of wheat farmers, 98% of highland farmers, 99.6% of rice farmers, and 98% of indigenous people stated opposition to the FTA.

The FTA would encourage Colombia to lower minimum wages and weaken labor rights. This is incredibly dangerous in a country like Colombia for the following reasons:

- During President Obama's campaign in 2008, he promised to not support a FTA with Colombia until labor conditions improved. They haven't. There were 49 trade unionists killed the year he made his promise and 51 killed in 2010. There are more trade unionists killed in Colombia than anywhere else in the world. Since 1991, over 2,200 Colombian union members have been murdered. Impunity rates remain at 96%.
- U.S. corporations like Coca-Cola, Chiquita, and Drummond Coal have already been accused and sued for **hiring paramilitaries who kill, threaten, torture, and kidnap Colombian union members.**

THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN COLOMBIA'S CRISIS

FACT SHEET: National Days of Action for Colombia

Forced Displacement: the Scope of the Problem

With over 5 million displaced people, Colombia is home to the world's largest internal displacement crisis.

- A half million refugees have spilled over Colombia's borders into neighboring countries.
- From 2004 to 2010, the number of internally displaced people grew by 300% in Colombia. During that time the internally displaced population grew from 1.5 million to over 5.2 million.
- 78% of internal displacement between 2002 and 2010 came from the collective territories of Afro-descendants

In 2010, over 280,000 Colombians were displaced. That is an average of 778 people displaced every day.

Why Are People Being Displaced?

Issues over land rights are central to Colombia's conflict. Often times displacement is framed as a byproduct of the internal dispute. However, U.S. economic and military interests encourage guerrillas, paramilitaries and the state to violently control certain areas of Colombia's countryside. 30,000 paramilitary fighters have demobilized, but the land they illegally appropriated through assassinations and massacres has not been returned to its rightful owners. The Colombian government estimates that 4 million hectares have been stolen from forcibly displaced Colombians during the past twenty years.

Enrique Petro

Displaced family farmer from Curvarado, Urabá



"We were really happy on our farm—it was thriving. In 1997, they murdered my two sons and I fled with my wife and children. They stole everything so that they could plant oil palm. Now I am trying to reclaim my land. There are huge threats against my life every single day, but I will never let them displace me again from here. As a small scale farmer, I have no choice—without my land, I am nothing...nothing."



Aerial Fumigations: the Basics

- The U.S. has been funding the forced eradication of coca—the raw material in cocaine—in Colombia since the 1990s. Fumigations intensified with the implementation of Plan Colombia in 2000.
- Fumigations are carried out with planes that fly over large swaths of land and spray the herbicide glyphosate (a high powered version of Monsanto's Roundup) and other unknown chemicals onto the crops below.
- **The strategy is a failure.** The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime reports that coca cultivation has remained stable since 2003, despite steady increases in eradication efforts. Meanwhile, aerial fumigations have contributed to the mass displacement of civilians: once crops have been sprayed and die, farmers have to leave their lands in search of other areas to cultivate. For example, in 2008 forced eradication displaced 13,450 people in just 3 of Colombia's 32 departments.

**Get involved in the National Days of Action for Colombia
Go to www.witnessforpeace.org/DOPA2011 for more information**