

COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT
CHURCHES DOCUMENT THEIR
SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE

Report No.1

A PROPHETIC CALL



JUSTAPAZ AND THE COMMISSION FOR RESTORATION, LIFE AND PEACE

DOCUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY PROGRAM

**A PROPHETIC CALL:
COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES DOCUMENT
THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE**

Bogotá, August 2006

Case Registry: January 2004 to July 2006

Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace

North Coast Region • Western Region • Antioquia-Chocó Region
Tolima-Huila- Caquetá Region • Central Region

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Executive Summary

A PROPHETIC CALL: COLOMBIAN PROTESTANT CHURCHES DOCUMENT THEIR SUFFERING AND THEIR HOPE

Bogotá, August 2006

Justapaz and the Commission for Restoration Life and Peace of CEDECOL¹ last jointly reported on the violence related to the armed conflict as it affects churches in 2003. Since then the two organizations have joined together to implement a grass-roots documentation program focused on the Protestant churches of Colombia, a minority group of more than five million people.

A careful assessment of field accounts shows that evangelical² churches throughout Colombia have undertaken significant social restoration and peacebuilding initiatives in the past three years – a period when they experienced high levels of violence and death from armed groups from across the political spectrum. Of particular concern is a new stream of violent abuse from allegedly demobilized paramilitary soldiers who revert to killings, intimidation and displacement of civilians, now often beyond the discipline of former militia structures.

1 CEDECOL is the Evangelical Council of Colombia, a federation that represents 70% of the Protestant and evangelical Christian population in Colombia.

2 In Colombia, “Protestant” and “Evangelical” have been used interchangeably. They encompass all expressions of non-Catholic Christian faith.

This collaborative documentation project trained individuals to gather essential data on each case in their communities, providing rich local context on how much information can be disclosed without causing further risk to victims. Many situations remain too sensitive to report.

During the report period January 2006 through July 2006, this report notes 29 assassinations of men, women and children linked to congregations, 84 cases of displacement, 21 civilian combat-related injuries, four arbitrary detentions and other human rights offenses. The details of the 47 cases presented in the report often include information that illustrates the context of violence and intimidation that surrounded the reported act.

In cases where the victims were willing or able to name a presumed responsible party, the suspected armed actors were a paramilitary group, 35% (of the 47 cases); a guerrilla group, 22%; and state forces, 14%. The perpetrators are listed as “unknown” in 29% of the cases.

Against this backdrop, Colombian evangelical churches claimed the gospel mandate of being good news and sought to sow seeds of peace through 16 initiatives detailed in the report. In just three significant overtures: 1) An estimated 150 Associations For Life with Dignity and Solidarity (ASVIDAS) have emerged as local initiatives of displaced persons and the historic poor to develop solutions for their needs

for food, education, training and economic opportunity. 2) Some 80% of the Community Mediators leaders chosen by communities in the Concentration Zones selected for intensive paramilitary demobilization efforts were associated with churches, showing strong respect for their status in seeking authentic justice. 3) Protestant Church leaders from across the country held a Peace Summit in February 2006. A roadmap for peace document collects the deliberations from this historic gathering and reports the churches’ call for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict.

These faith-based efforts are, however, mostly signposts of courageous hope within a context of pervasive social, criminal and military violence. To address the underlying factors that both cause and allow this unacceptable violence to continue, the churches call for targeted changes in Colombian and U.S. national policy. This report spells out the internal initiatives needed to help members of armed groups lay down their arms and successfully reintegrate into civilian life and bring about restoration of land, social fabric and hope for cooperative development.

We continue in the documentation process and will file a more complete report at a later time. Meanwhile, we invite you to **share** this compelling data, **pray** for the victims, the perpetrators and the peacemakers, and **advocate—speak truth to government officials**-- on behalf of those brave souls who, despite the smell of death, continue to give life to seeds of peace.

INTRODUCTION

This documentation project is the result of joint work between **Justapaz**³ and the **CEDECOL**⁴ **Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace (CRVP)**. These organizations have two complementary goals:

- 1) To document and make known the suffering and social violence experienced by the evangelical⁵ Christian churches of Colombia as a result of the armed conflict.
- 2) To show the positive responses and experiences that the churches have been able to implement as resistance and a life-giving alternative to sociopolitical violence.

The accompaniment by the global faith community has been essential in unveiling the injustice and letting people know about the seeds of hope that the churches are sowing and living out. We are grateful to the international church-based agencies that support this ministry: Diakonia- Swedish Ecumenical Action; Christian Solidarity; Mennonite Central Committee; and Kairos Canada.

3 Justapaz, the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Non violent Action, is a ministry of the Colombian Mennonite Church. This documentation work is done by the Documentation and Advocacy Program.

4 CEDECOL is the Evangelical Council of Churches of Colombia, a federation that represents approximately 70% of the Protestant and evangelical Christian population in Colombia.

5 In Colombia, "Protestant" and "Evangelical" have been used interchangeably. They encompass all expressions of non-Catholic Christian faith.



I. UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES: A contextual analysis

The Colombian population continues to be affected by injustice and structural violence. The effects of this multifaceted social trauma cause deep wounds. Recently Álvaro Uribe Vélez was re-elected as Colombia's president after obtaining congressional approval for reforms that made re-election possible. This is the first time that a president has been re-elected in Colombia. All indications are that, with some variations in emphasis, the Uribe Administration will maintain the same policy lines as the first term.

The Uribe Administration's Democratic Security policy is one such cornerstone. The government considers this policy to be of primary importance for peace in Colombia since it seeks to defeat or significantly weaken the armed groups as a strategy for ending terrorism and attaining peace accords. To this end, the goal is to strengthen the state and the armed forces, increase military intelligence with the involvement of the civilian population, and restrict civil liberties using state funds and U.S. resources. The Uribe Administration counts the peace agreements with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia-- AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*) as one of the success of its Democratic Security policy. A significant part of the peace process with the AUC has been the demobilization of more than 32,000 alleged combatants, which continues to generate significant social and political repercussions.

The population continues to suffer the effects of the armed conflict under these government strategies. Documenting this impact, the social and political violence, is the focus of this report⁶. Unarmed civilians and the poor (between 50-60% of the population) experience the majority of the political violence perpetrated by the different armed actors. Colombia's armed conflict pits the paramilitaries, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and various regular armed forces of the Colombian government, including the military and police, against the guerrillas, principally the

⁶ Although the Colombian population is also enormously affected by social and economic, which claims more victims annually than the armed conflict, the proposal of this program is to specifically document socio-political violence.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN).

The summary of cases presented in this document illustrates that the churches are not exempt from the violence practiced by illegal armed groups including that perpetrated by the AUC with the acquiescence or collaboration of the government forces. In addition to these long-standing threats, there is a new development in which the churches have been victimized by demobilized groups which continue with armed activities. The demobilized individuals sometimes form new paramilitary groups or maintain former paramilitary structures, despite their officially publicized change of status from paramilitary to civilian. The

warring armed groups carry out assassinations, indiscriminate bombings, illicit armed attacks, massacres, forced displacement of the civilian population, arbitrary detentions, hostage takings, disappearances, torture, the closing of places of worship, attacks, threats, persecution, extortion and pillage.

This is the complex and sad panorama within which many of the evangelical churches exist and carry out their activities. They share the fate of the poor majority, but at the same time they are seeds of hope, a sign and announcement of a better future in accordance with the Biblical passage in 2 Peter 3:13: *“But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.”*



II. WHAT IS HAPPENING? A CHRONICLE OF VIOLENT ACTS THAT HAVE AFFECTED THE CHURCHES AND THEIR MEMBERS

The information in this report is based on field work conducted mostly in 2006 through primary sources. Project coordinators and trained volunteer documentation team members interviewed victims, surviving family members, pastors, and church leaders. They sent their documentation to Justapaz where it was reviewed, corroborated with secondary sources when possible, categorized and registered into the database. Prior to publication all members of the national coordinating team reviewed all cases selected for inclusion in this report to ensure they met program accuracy standards.

Cases are documented for the period from January 2004 until July 2006, since the previous report published by Justapaz and CRVP covered cases that occurred in the year 2003. Many serious cases that occurred prior to 2004 have come to light since the publication of the last report. One example is of Juan David Ramírez (name changed) from Anserma, Caldas, who was taken from his home and tortured and assassinated by alleged paramilitaries in front of his family. We acknowledge and regret the high percentage of violence reported years after the fact or not at all.

It is unfortunately not possible to collect all the information about violations that took place over the period under review given the difficulty faced by some victims to denounce or make public their case for fear of reprisals. However, the cases that are shared are representative of the nature and level of violence in the country. Readers will note the high levels of “unknown” alleged perpetrators in the case profiles below. Fear of reprisals is one reason relatives of victims maintain silence or omit the information; the inability on the part of the surviving family members or community to determine the armed group of the responsible party is another factor.

Some of the names of the victims that appear in this document have asterisks beside them, indicating the use of a pseudonym in order to protect surviving victims as well as families and communities. Other names have been published with the consent and responsibility of their family members. Similarly, the churches

to which the victims of these violent acts belong or belonged are not identified with their situation and appear in summary at the end of this document (See Appendix 2). Only if the faith communities have given their explicit consent are the churches named in association with the victim.



III. DOCUMENTATION

Case 1. Victim: Giovanni Cano*, pastor

Date: January 1, 2004

Location: Puerto Libertador, Córdoba

Situation: Death threat

Alleged Perpetrator: Paramilitary or AUC

Case 2. Victims:

- Elizabeth*, teacher
- Martha*, pastor's wife
- Martha*'s mother
- Carmen*
- Elizabeth*

Date: January 10, 2004

Location: Tiquisio, Bolívar

Situation: Members of the armed group, under orders of their commander, set fire to the home of these women because a close family member was a candidate for mayor and did not represent the interests of the subversive group. The sisters, along with their mother, were forced to flee and were forcibly displaced. Members of the armed group took approximately 180 head of cattle, property of the family. With the knowledge that winning the mayoral race would make him a military target, the candidate dropped out of the running. Nevertheless, the alleged guerrilla are seeking to kill him.

Alleged Perpetrator: ELN

Case 3. Victim: Ángel Fonseca*

Date: June 14, 2004

Location: Prado, Tolima

Situation: Assassinated by armed men.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 4. Victims: Members of the Alliance Christian Missionary Church.

Heraldo Bernal (assassination)

María Lidia Martínez (assassination)

Adalberto Benavides (assassination)

Giovanny Hernández (wounded)

Jenny Luz Dary Zambrano (wounded)

Josué Chávez (wounded)

Jenny Chávez (wounded)

William Campo (wounded)

Marta Cerón (wounded)

Guadalupe Quijano (wounded)

Jorge Santamaría (wounded)

Oscar Aja (wounded)

Pablo Hernández (wounded)

Sandra Barco (wounded)

Elvia Cabrera (wounded)

Andrés Ortega (wounded)

One unidentified person (wounded)

Date: September 4, 2004

Location: Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Situation: The above-named individuals were assassinated or injured in a shoot out during a worship service. A young woman who was just outside the church was assassinated as well. Thirteen people were wounded, including two minors. At least three of them were permanently wounded and, at the writing of this report, are in wheelchairs or bedridden.

Alleged Perpetrator: unknown

Case 5. Victims:

- Alfredo Herrera*, pastor
- Dora* his wife
- Their two children.

Date: October 1, 2004

Location: Chinú, Córdoba

Situation: Alleged guerrilla members sought to forcibly recruit the children, still minors. When the parents refused to turn their children over to the alleged guerrilla the whole family received death threats and was forcibly displaced.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 6. Victims: congregation members

- Angelica* and her three children (minors),
- Lidereza* who works in her church's soup kitchen that provides meals to 170 under-privileged children daily
- Alicia,* married with two children (minors)
- Gladis,* a widow and housemate of above mentioned individuals.

Date: November 1, 2004

Location: Medellín, Antioquia

Situation: Death threats from alleged paramilitary groups operating in their neighborhood were received by these women and children. Alleged paramilitary ordered them to abandon their house so that they could occupy it. The women fled. Then, on two occasions, the armed men entered their church and ordered that

they relinquish the property titles. They "guaranteed" that they would kill the women and children if they did not follow orders. The families have since moved to yet another part of the city in an effort to hide; the women have had to quit their jobs and find new ones numerous times. Nevertheless, the death threats continue. They suffer many physical needs and live in constant panic as a result. "Living like this is a never-ending nightmare," said Lidereza.

Alleged Perpetrator: Paramilitary or AUC

Case 7. Victim: Jose Centeno* and his four children, unionized miner, 50 years-old.

Date: November 13, 2004

Location: Segovia, Antioquia

Situation: Death threats received for refusing to provide economic support to the United Self-Defense Forces (AUC) of Cordoba and Bajo Cuaca. Displaced along with his family by men who introduced themselves as members of the Self-Defense Forces (AUC) of Cordoba and Bajo Cuaca.

Alleged Perpetrator: Paramilitary or AUC

Case 8. Victim: Javier Segura González, single, 31 years-old, Pastor, La Victoria Mennonite church.

Date: November 28, 2004

Location: Bogotá, capitol of Colombia

Situation: Bomb explosion in front of the mayor's office as pastor passed by caused his immediate death.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 9. Victim: Guillermo Benavides*, pastor, wife Sandra Pérez* and their 4 children

Date: December 1, 2004

Location: Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Situation: Death threats preceded the kidnapping of pastor. Sandra* and their four children were forcibly displaced by the kidnappers.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 10. Victim: Sofia Arbelaez* and her four children

Date: January 1, 2005

Location: Bogotá

Situation: Threats by armed men who control the area, ordering that she abandon her home in the sector known as *El Cartucho*.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 11. Victims:

- Adolfo Pedraza*
- Sofia Gutierrez* his wife
- Their three children.

Date: January 1, 2005

Location: Cucuta, Santander del Norte

Situation: Death threats by an armed group received to force Adolfo* to join their ranks. Kidnapped by alleged members of the FARC. Sofia* and their children were forcibly displaced by the kidnapers.

Alleged Perpetrator: FARC-EP

Case 12. Victim: Camilo Ponguta*, pastor

Date: January 7, 2005

Location: south of Puerto Asís, Putumayo, along the Ecuadorian border

Situation: Forced to accompany alleged members of the 48th Front of the FARC while doing rural church visits. He was then tied up and informed of an order for his murder. The armed men interrogated him about the funding for his church's activities including a community radio station and a day care center for orphaned and needy children. They informed him that he was a military target and forbidden to leave the urban center.

Alleged Perpetrator: FARC-EP

Case 13. Victim: Jaime María Dusán*, 55 years-old, married with three sons ages 11, 15 and 18.

Date: January 9, 2005

Location: Zambrano, Bolívar

Situation: Killed, victim of a landmine intended for a group of soldiers.

Alleged Perpetrator: Guerrilla

Case 14. Victim: Luis Valencia*, nephew of José, mentioned in November 2004 case, also a unionized miner, husband and father. Member of same church as uncle.

Date: January 15, 2005

Location: Segovia, Antioquia

Situation: Assassinated in retaliation for the escape of his uncle José Centeno*,* widowing his common-law wife and orphaning their three-year-old son. The armed group decided that someone had to "pay" when their military target fled; Luis* was their victim.

Alleged Perpetrator: Paramilitaries or AUC of Córdoba and Bajo Cauca

Case 15. Victim: Alberto Correa*, pastor, his wife Celmira* and their two children.

Date: February 1, 2005

Location: Dabeiba, Antioquia

Situation: Family forcibly displaced from San Jose de Urama.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 16. Victim: Pedro Jimenez*

Date: February 1, 2005

Location: Zambrano, Bolívar

Situation: Kidnapped or disappeared in February of 2005. His wife and children still know nothing of his whereabouts.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 17. Victims: Matilde Rosa Marín Porras, widow due to the assassination of her husband several years ago, three children (all minors).

Date: February 6, 2005

Location: Simití, Bolívar

Situation: Threats from alleged members of the FARC forced them to flee from the region. A local church provided for their trip to the city of Medellín, Antioquia, where the CRVP and a local congregation took them in.

Alleged Perpetrator: FARC-EP

Case 18. Victims:

- Alberto Vallejo*, church leader, married with three daughters ages six, 10 and 17.
- Luzmina* his daughter

Date: February 9, 2005

Location: Saravena, Arauca

Situation: Assassination of father and daughter, perpetrated by an armed man riding by on a bicycle while the family was sitting outside their house at 6 pm. He fired shots, killing Alberto* on impact. Luzmina* died some hours later due to the shots to her head.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 19. Victim: Nicéforo Carrizosa*, pastor, and two youth from the congregation.

Date: March 5, 2005

Location: Between the states of Caldas and Risaralda

Situation: Death threats received by all three while at their church. The threats are attributed to the youth's refusal to join the ranks of the armed group in question.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 20. Victim: Gerardo Arenas*, married with four children ranging in age from 3 to 12 years, church leader.

Date: March 9, 2005

Location: Sincelejo, Sucre

Situation: Assassinated at 9 am in front of his house in the presence of his nuclear family and a number of friends. A group of armed men passed by and shot him.

Alleged Perpetrator: unknown

Case 21. Victim: Fabio Riveros*, married with one child, church leader.

Date: March 28, 2005

Location: Cali, Valle

Situation: Assassinated by two armed men who forced entry into victim's home and shot him in the head in the presence of his elderly father. He died in the hospital some hours later.

Alleged Perpetrator: Unknown

Case 22. Victims:

- Yorfam Armando Troches Pavi*, Union Evangelical Missionary church (IUMEC)
- Yuri Hilda Liponce*, 10-year-old indigenous (Murdered while fleeing from the bullets of the FARC with mother, Yorfam*.)
- Argemiro Tenorio, Bethesda church (Shot in the head has caused seemingly permanent mental damage.)
- Ricardo Urrego, pastor, Bethesda church (Wounded by a bomb or grenade, still has shrapnel in one of his legs.)
- Rocio Troches*, IUMEC, 16-years-old, pregnant at time of attack, (Suffered paralysis in half of her body due to the shock.)
- Víctor Aurelio Votry, IUMEC, (Wounded with shrapnel in his head.)
- Hernando Pavi Armando Chocué*, IUMEC, 12 years-old. (Wounded. His home was partially destroyed.)
- Alba Pavi Chocué*, IUMEC, 10 years-old. (Wounded, sister to Hernando*)

- Cresencio Trompeta, IUMEC, Lieutenant governor of the cabinet of the *cabildo*⁷ and member of the IUMEC church El Congo. (Went through surgery for severe wounds in his stomach. He was left with shrapnel in his face, leg and arm.)
- Ana Elia Pavi, IUMEC, lost her house in the armed attack due to a cylinder bomb explosion. (This was the second time her house was destroyed due to armed conflict in five years.)

Date: April 14, 2005

Location: Toribío, Cauca

Situation: The FARC used gas cylinders to attack the indigenous civilian population and civilian objects in Toribío, Cauca. The army arrived and armed confrontation ensued, resulting in the death and injury of various members of area churches. Three churches were destroyed in the warfare: The Union Missionary church of Colombia (IUMEC), with 120 members, Pentecost church with 40 members and the Bethesda Missionary Center with 40 members. The indigenous reservation of Toribío is recognized as a symbol of unarmed resistance to war.

Alleged Perpetrator: Guerrilla and army

Case 23. Victims: Juan de Dios García Julio,* wife and four children

Date: May 19, 2005

Location: Ocaña, Santander del Norte

Situation: In early morning, presumed members of the Colombian army arrived to the pastor's home, knocked down his door and threatened the family, calling them guerrillas. They shot Juan de Dios* as he ran outside onto the patio. The soldiers then dressed

the cadaver in camouflage, took pictures of it and left with the body. Several days passed and the cadaver was returned due to the formal complaints registered with the Inspector General's Office (*Procuraduría*) and high level officials in the area by a member of the CRVP and local church leader.

Alleged Perpetrator: Army

Case 24. Victim: Gilberto Benavides*, married, 45 years-old, two children and grandchildren, member of the Neighborhood Action Committee⁸

Date: June 23, 2005

Location: Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Situation: Assassinated by armed men.

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

Case 25. Victims:

- Felipe Arbeláez Ruiz*
- Sofía* his mother and
- Her three children

Date: June 11, 2005

Location: Bogotá

Situation: Felipe,* son of Sofía* (named in January 2005 case), a minor, assassinated by gunshot in the area known as El Cartucho, by an armed group. His eyes and other organs were removed and he was taken to the public hospital Santa Clara, Coroner's Office and the funeral home the week of July 11, 2005. An armed group killed three of Sofía's* other children in their "social cleansing" campaign. Brethren in Christ church members sought a safe place for Sofía* and her surviving children (two boys and a girl).

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

⁷ Autonomous indigenous local governance structure.

⁸ "Junta de Acción Comunal," Local non-profit civic organizations that organize social efforts and generate resources to address community problems.

Case 26. Victim: Juan Carlos Guzmán*, single, 24 years-old

Date: July 18, 2005

Location: Simití, Bolívar

Situation: Kidnapping followed by murder.

Alleged Perpetrators: Guerrilla

Case 27. Victim: María Torres*, mother head of household with three children (minors)

Date: August 12, 2005

Location: Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Situation: Assassinated by armed men. The orphans are one, four, and five years-old.

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

Case 28. Victims:

- Patricia Martínez*, 24 years-old, teacher, Afro-descendant, married to
- Alejandro Riaño*, Both are members of the same church.
- Two unidentified victims.

Date: August 19, 2005

Location: Chigorodó, Antioquia

Situation: Patricia* was physically and verbally abused in her home by alleged paramilitaries accompanied by the Attorney General's Investigative Unit, CTI (*Cuerpo Técnico de Investigación*) and investigators from the Anti-Kidnapping Taskforce, GAULA⁹ (*Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal*). Alejandro*, her husband, and the two unnamed victims were taken from the house by the same individuals and later tortured in a rural house near-by, property of the paramilitary. Later they were turned over to the authorities, sentenced to preventive incarceration, and sent to a maximum-security prison.

One of the unnamed victims died of complications of the torture. According to the Coroner's Office, the death was a bi-product of cancer complications accelerated by the injury suffered. Alejandro* and the second unnamed person were charged with extortion and kidnapping (crimes associated with the guerrilla). The matter was broadcast over radio and television, accusing the men of being very dangerous people. Patricia*, eight months pregnant, was displaced to Medellín, Antioquia, accompanied by her mother-in-law, the wife of the unnamed prisoner and her two children.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitary forces from the AUC, CTI and GAULA

Case 29. Victim: Elmer Lloreda*, pastor,

Date: August 24, 2005

Location: Risaralda, Caldas

Situation: Survived attempted murder (9 pm) by armed men. Many of the 70 bullets are still embedded in his body.

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

Case 30. Victims:

- Jacinto Rodríguez Salazar*, church leader,
- Adelaida* his wife, church leader
- Eight members of the Rodríguez* family.

Date: September 12, 2005

Location: Supía, Caldas

Situation: Extortion began on noted date when men who claimed to be members of the 47th Front of the FARC demanded money to support their armed group. The men informed them that the 10 family members would be killed if they did not cooperate.

Alleged Perpetrators: FARC-EP

9 "Unified Action Groups for Personal Freedom," anti-kidnapping task-force composed of representatives from various government entities and the Armed Forces.

Case 31. Victim: Pedro Rodriguez*, church leader, single, street vendor.

Date: December 12, 2005

Location: Orito, Putumayo

Situation: Detained by alleged members of the paramilitary or AUC when on his way to funeral parlor, to visit family at the request of his pastor. Family members intervened to seek his release, but that night he was found beheaded with signs of torture.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries or AUC

Case 32. Victim: Piedad Rosales*, mother head of household with six children.

Date: January 1, 2006

Location: Santa Rosa, Bolívar

Situation: Tied up, beaten and forcibly displaced by alleged members of the AUC in 2005. Earlier, alleged members of the guerrilla killed two of victim's six daughters. The family was forcibly displaced to Simiti, Bolivar where they were taken in by the Christ is Coming Soon Church in Simiti, Bolivar.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries or AUC

Case 33. Victims:

- Milton Mejía, pastor, Presbyterian church
- Mauricio Avilez, human rights defender
- Gilberto Cadena B.

Date: February 10, 2006

Location: Barranquilla, Atlántico

Situation: Threats on their lives due to their human rights work forced them into exile. The threats originated with an alleged GAULA informant of the Army's Second Brigade, who also pressured Gilberto Cadena Bohórquez (for information) to the point that he and his family were also forcibly displaced.

Alleged Perpetrators: GAULA

Case 34. Victim: Jose Torres*

Date: March 1, 2006

Location: San Pablo, Bolívar

Situation: Assassinated in the church building by armed men belonging to the group that controls the area.

Alleged Perpetrators: FARC-EP

Ase 35. Victims:

- Oscar Muñoz Perea, father of five children, pastor of a Christian and Missionary Alliance church.
- More than 35 members of the Muñoz-Ruiz family

Date: March 2, 2006

Location: Buenaventura, Valle

Situation: Oscar Muñoz Perea was leaving his home when, at 2:10 pm, he was shot five times in the head. He died immediately. During the final months of 2005 alleged AUC members or paramilitary increased their presence and level of involvement in the everyday life of the Pacific Coast city of Buenaventura. Oscar Muñoz Perea lived and served as pastor to a congregation of 550 members of the Colombian Christian and Missionary Alliance church in the Buenaventura neighborhood Pascual de Andagoya (Paloseco). Pastor Muñoz was also an active social leader and community organizer. The AUC have had an active presence in the area. The illegal armed group demanded community support, placing its members, including pastor Muñoz and his family, in grave danger. Witnesses to the assassination, both children and adults, identified the assassins as members of the AUC. The following Sunday the family received a phone call informing them that members of the immediate and extended family were on a list of people sentenced to death. To protect their lives, a total of 35 members of the extended families with surnames Muñoz and Ruiz, left the city.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries or AUC

Case 36. Victims:

- Edilberto Romero*, 33 years-old, artist, music director, social worker and farmer.
- Juan Carlos Lozano*, 37 years-old, businessman, worship team member at his church,
- Unidentified person

Date: March 6, 2006

Location: San Pablo, Bolívar

Situation: Edilberto* received death threats, an order to leave his job and notification that he was a military target. He had already been threatened in the state of Arauca in 1996 and 1998 for preaching the gospel. Juan Carlos* was threatened on the same day. The threat was delivered shortly after one of his friends was killed inside a church.

Alleged Perpetrators: FARC-EP

Case 37. Victims:

- Milton Martínez, pastor
- his sister
- his mother

Date: April 1, 2006

Location: Medellín, Antioquia

Situation: Repeated death-threats against him and his nuclear family, sister and mother began in the first days of April, 2006 when a man approached him in the door of his church and threatened him. These threats continued until the family fled to live elsewhere.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries or AUC

Case 38. Victims: Church members of the Esmirna Church, Alto Colón, Córdoba.

Date: April 1, 2006

Location: Alto Colón, Córdoba

Situation: At 8 am national police arrived to Esmirna Church, firing shots into the air. They verbally threatened those present and ordered that the church be burned, saying it was a coca processing site and storage point for chemicals used for processing coca (into

cocaine). The church members contested this assertion. Around noon approximately 60 demobilized members of the AUC or paramilitaries, whose current occupation is manual eradication of coca, once again tried to set fire to the church. But the church members continued to resist and prevented them from doing so, reiterating that “this was where the community gathered and a place of worship.”

Alleged Perpetrators: Police, paramilitaries or AUC

Case 39. Victim: Alejandro Gonzalez*, 28 years-old.

Date: April 5, 2006

Location: Tierralta, Córdoba

Situation: Forced at 9am into interrogation, totally undressed, tied and physically abused by members of the National Police, who accused him of being a guerrilla. Church members intervened and he was freed the same afternoon.

Alleged Perpetrators: Members of the National Police

Case 40. Victims:

- Esperanza Fuentes* and Jesús Vera*, pastoral couple, leaders of a Sanctuary of Peace Church, internationally recognized for their social work.
- Their children (minors and adults).

Date: April 26, 2006

Location: Zambrano, Bolívar

Situation: Extortion and threats through phone calls at 8 pm at night. They refused to pay the sum demanded by the alleged members of the FARC.

Alleged Perpetrators: FARC-EP

Case 41. Victims:

- Gilberto Romero* and his wife Gloria Bustos*, active members in their church ASVIDAS program.

- Their two children

Date: May 11, 2006

Location: Tierralta, Córdoba

Situation: Six armed men showed up at the family's home at 7 pm and falsely accused Gilberto* of being an army informant. They proceeded to threaten the whole family with death.

Alleged Perpetrators: FARC-EP

Case 42. Victim: Marta Correa Restrepo, church leader and Sunday school teacher.

Date: June 2, 2006

Location: Montería, Córdoba

Situation: Extortion under threat at 2 am on June 2nd and on June 3rd, 2006 by a man who identified himself as a member of the urban AUC of Montería. The victim refused to pay.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries or AUC

Case 43. Victim: Orlando Combita,* 30 years-old, member of the Neighborhood Action Committee, businessman.

Date: June 7, 2006

Location: Tierralta, Córdoba

Situation: Extortion by men who played themselves off as the FARC. This group organized in late 2005 in the area. Later, Orlando* was threatened with death when the perpetrators learned he had reported the case to the Attorney General's office. As a result, he was forcibly displaced to the state of Bolívar. There are 10 other known cases like the one described here.

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

Case 44. Victim: Jaime González*, pastor, married with children, motorcycle taxi driver

Date: June 25, 2006

Location: Tierralta, Córdoba

Situation: Extortion through telephone calls demanding 500,000 pesos (about USD 225) on June 25th.

The caller identified himself as a representative of the AUC of Tierralta. On Julio 2 the pastor received another phone call reiterating the demand for extortion money and threatening him, his wife and daughters with death if they did not comply. The caller used vulgar language to say that the Christians collected a lot of money yet did not cooperate with anything and so they were going to be "screwed." The pastoral couple filed a complaint before the Human Rights Ombudsman who asserted that the threat came from "Los Traquetos," a criminal gang composed of demobilized members of the AUC.

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitaries o AUC

Case 45. Victim: Ricardo Suárez*, Coordinator of the CRVP in Cali, wife and children (adults)

Date: July 1, 2006

Location: Cali, Valle

Situation: Death threats forced the family into exile.

Alleged Perpetrators: Unknown

Case 46. Victim: Juan Jose Lopez*, pastor, married with children (minors), leader of the Sanctuaries of Peace Christ the King Church, social leader.

Date: July 20, 2006

Location: Tierralta, Córdoba

Situation: The pastor received extortion threats through phone calls from a member of the "Traquetos," presumably demobilized members of the paramilitary or AUC. In spite of the churches explicit commitments and transparent actions, independent of any armed group or political party, the extortionists demanded (3,000,000 de pesos) in support of the above-named organization, "now that they are in a process of re-arming and need it their process" (in the words of the pastor).

Alleged Perpetrators: Paramilitary or AUC

Case 47. Victim: Ramiro Cortés*, pastor.

Date: July 24, 2006

Location: Puerto Asís, Putumayo

Situation: Threats received demanding that named pastor “pay” for the death of Pedro Rodriguez*, a lay leader assassinated December 13, 2005. Following the call a church member was stopped and ordered to convey the same message to the pastor. During the first week of August, the pastor once again received

phone calls by someone who identified himself as a member of the FARC, demanding money in cash and pre-paid cell phone cards. The pastor refused to do so and hung up the phone, but not before being threatened and insulted. Some suggest that it is possible that those responsible for the threats are also the perpetrators of Pedro Rodriguez’s* torture and assassination and seek to hide their identities.

Alleged perpetrators: Information unavailable

* Pseudonym used to protect victims, their families or other communities from reprisal.
For tables displaying the incidents and alleged perpetrators by victim, please contact Justapaz.



IV. A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Sum total of the different types of violent acts. The paramilitary or AUC are allegedly responsible for more violent acts than any other armed group during the period under review (35% of all violations documented in 47 cases). This coincides precisely with the period of negotiation and demobilization of these groups initiated in 2003 with the prerequisite that all hostilities cease. Of these cases, at least two operations were evidently carried out in conjunction with regular state forces (with the CTI and GAULA, August 19, 2005, and with the Police, April 1, 2006). These cases provide clear evidence of collaboration by government sectors and officials with paramilitary/AUC groups and demobilized paramilitaries. Additionally, Colombian regular state forces appear to be responsible in 39 cases (14%). On the other hand, guerrillas have been identified as presumably responsible for victimization in 22% of the cases. The perpetrator of the crime is unidentified in 29% of the cases. (See Appendix 3 and 4 for additional breakdowns on alleged perpetrators and victims.)

Death threats—most recurrent violent act. The above documentation sheds light on a civilian population living under a cloud of fear and threats. Although the majority of the death threats documented were from irregular armed groups (guerrilla: 31%; paramilitaries/AUC 27%), there were 12 cases where the alleged perpetrators were reported to be members of the regular state forces. Tragically, the threats are not in vain.

Violent deaths. Twenty-nine church people were killed, including pastors, lay leaders and members.

Displacement, arbitrary detentions, disappearance, torture and restriction of mobility.

Eighty-four cases of displacement, 21 cases of civilian casualties in the midst of combat, four arbitrary detentions by the state, and three cases in violation of the freedom of movement were documented.

Attention should also be drawn to the two hostage takings by the guerrilla; two hostage takings or disappearances for which no one has been identified as responsible; one documented disappearance, and seven cases of torture for which members of the regular state forces are presumably responsible. The number of aggressions committed by the state during this period is noteworthy.

It is worrisome that members of the state armed forces are most negatively affecting the churches in a period when the government's political flagship program Democratic Security should result in protection. These facts seem to indicate that the program is really a war plan where the civilian population is of little consequence.

Women and children. At least 21 of the victims were children, including three that were assassinated and eight that were displaced. It is noteworthy that there have been cases of gender violence in that displacement has especially affected women (21 victims), while other forms of violence have been mainly directed at men (e.g. 73% of the assassinations, of which 16 were pastors).

Church denominations most affected. According to this register, the churches with the greatest number of members affected by the political violence were the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Inter-American Church of Colombia. The first church group was especially affected by an indiscriminate shoot-out on September 4, 2004, in Puerto Asís, Putumayo, and by forced displacement on March 2, 2006, in Buenaventura, Valle. Similarly, 10 members of the second church group were forcibly displaced as a result of their strong commitment to social and church work in various regions of the country.

Departments most affected. According to the register, the departments¹⁰ that have most been affected by the political violence are Valle and Antioquia. However, where the greatest number of cases of physical injury and death have been registered is in Putumayo, one of the departments where glyphosate fumigations and the Patriotic Plan are implemented – Colombian government policies that are supported by the United States government.

Trends in violence over time. The development of the conflict during the period under review does not show signs of diminishing as time goes on (See Appendix 5). Concretely, the largest displacement of people registered (36 individuals) occurred on March 2, 2006, in Buenaventura where threats are constant and primarily made by the guerrilla.

¹⁰ Department refers to a politically delimited territory, similar to province or state in other countries.

The number of wounded is particularly concentrated on the date of April 14, 2005, date of the guerrilla offensive on the Toribío indigenous community. This was an indiscriminate attack against the civilian population by the guerrilla with cylinder bombs, followed by bombing by the army as a response to the guerrilla, the destruction of civilian property and houses

of worship, and the use of houses as hideouts by the combatants. All these actions are violations of International Humanitarian Law. This battle took place precisely among indigenous people renowned for their nonviolent resistance and their desire to have peace zones that are “free of all kinds of military operations and subject to international observation”¹¹

11 From Toribío, peace and that another country is possible and necessary are proclaimed. <http://nasaacin.net/noticias.htm?x=261>





V. SEEDS OF HOPE, planted in the crossfire.

Despite its situation, the evangelical Christian population continues to be a seedbed of life and hope in the field of peace. They provide alternatives and proclaim to the Colombian people that God continues to act and that *peace is possible*.

The “Seeds of Peace” we share are ministries, initiatives and actions by local and regional Colombian Christian churches. They include promotion of nonviolence, care for victims, training in nonviolent transformation of conflict and injustice, and other efforts that promote the creation of the conditions necessary for a sustainable peace.

1. Awakening of the churches. “At the beginning of this year we began to awaken to the commitment that we, as churches, have with society. We are located on the border between Córdoba and Antioquia, a zone controlled by the Elmer Cárdenas block of the AUC. We come from seven congregations and are now sharing the journey. , There are many needs; the living conditions and the situation with which we are confronted are difficult. But we see how the Bible, Jesus, show us a social alternative. The training and the tools which we have been given have enabled us to understand the social function which the church should perform is one of nonviolence, of being salt and light on our earth.” -- *Testimony of a representative of the “New Life” church, a Peace Sanctuary Church near the border of Antioquia- Cordoba*

2. Food Security -ASVIDAS. Lacking basic needs for survival in a region of intense conflict, the pastors of the municipality of Arjona in Bolivar (near the Montes de Maria) are joining efforts to promote food security and social projects. Through the Association for Life with Dignity and Solidarity (ASVIDAS) they have been working with the youth and with the needy. (See ASVIDAS definition below.) Their advocacy before local and municipal government has resulted in support from the municipal administration.

This is just one of the examples of an ASVIDAS association, a program that grew in the midst of a sense of abandonment and desperation.

There are 40 to 50 churches that represent 20 denominations in the region that have initiated ASVIDAS associations in their communities. There are about 150 associations grouped into ASVIDAS networks in the Montes de Maria and Atlantic Coast region. Each one has its own independent leadership, goals and priorities. These vibrant associations create an organizational setting for working on food security and education programs; recreation; educational support for children; material assistance and psychological counseling to displaced people; and income generation projects. They support community development, focusing on the stabilization of agricultural production. Thousands of war victims and people who are historically poor benefit from these initiatives.

Small landholders are losing control over their land which makes the work of ASVIDAS all the more critical. The land-use patterns have been changing due to the consolidation of land ownership in the hands of a few. Land concentration is one of the significant results of the armed conflict. In Montes de Maria, African palm oil is cultivated on large tracts of land converted to industrial crop production. This is a cash crop that produces effective harvests without requiring much labor. This single crop production is replacing traditional food sources such as cassava and plantain for the local population. The only beneficiaries of this change are the large landholders, many of whom are involved in illicit activities and have links to the paramilitaries/AUC.¹²

3. The Plan for Return with Dignity. In 2000 some 450 families from the rural community of Macayepo, municipality of El Carmen, Bolivar, in Montes de Maria, were forced to leave the region due to massacres and threats committed by the paramilitary. These families relocated to the municipality of Sincelejo and formed the Haven of Peace Church there. Since then they have been working to be able to return to their land. Their dream has a name: "Return with Dignity." This church has become a point of reference for many displaced people in Sincelejo, specifically in two respects: its advocacy directed toward the local and national authorities, and its implementation of a local family garden program.

4. The evangelical churches and their activities in the midst of the AUC Concentration Zone¹³ The Colombian government, headed by President Álvaro Uribe, implemented a negotiation process with the paramilitaries/AUC. In order to conduct the conversations, an area of 368 Km² was selected in the municipality of Tierralta, Córdoba, which is known as the Concentration Zone with headquarters in the small town of Santa Fe de Ralito. It was there that the conversations were held and agreement was reached on the disarmament and demobilization of the paramilitary. With the aim of having international accompaniment to the process, the government signed an agreement with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Mission of Support to

12 Report of the Ecumenical Delegation to Montes de Maria – Justapaz, Witness for Peace, the United Church of Christ, June 28 to July 9, 2006.

13 This zone was established to facilitate the dialogue between the government and the AUC/paramilitaries, with observation by the OAS.

the Peace Process (MAPP-OEA) was established. MAPP-OEA has been working in this zone and other zones of the country where demobilization has been in effect.

Twenty-two churches exist in the Concentration Zone. With the help of the CRVP, they have organized 10 ASVIDAS associations as a tool for community work in this region.

One of the mandates of the MAPP-OEA is to work with the population affected by the conflict and to train about 53 community leaders as “Community Mediators.” These individuals were to be selected by the community in a democratic and representative fashion. *At the end it was discovered that 80% of the leaders that were trained belong to Protestant churches.* This reflects the high level of trust that the population has in the work of the church as an agent of transformation. These leaders are facilitators in resolving conflicts in their communities.

5. Church provides attention to war victims and alternatives for family income generation (Tierralta, Córdoba). The Christ the King Church, located in the Municipality of Tierralta, has been accompanying the population displaced by the conflict in their relocation efforts through the local ASVIDAS. Up to this point three relocations have been completed and they are working on a fourth with the help of the national government’s Colombian Institute for Rural Development (*Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural-Incoder*), the Government of Córdoba, the Municipality of Tierralta and the Social Action Office of the Presidency of the Republic. A total of 180 families have benefited from these projects.

Additionally, 2,200 agriculture kits have been raised for an equal number of families which have returned or are resisting displacement in the south of the department of Córdoba. A method known as Family Productive Units (PFU) has been developed for working with displaced communities and vulnerable people in the municipality. This is a methodology whereby five to seven families are able to unite and work together to produce food. Currently, 23 Family Productive Units exist that have been working together for the past 18 months. With the little support that they have been given they have been able to increase their income from 30% of the monthly minimum wage to 50% of the monthly minimum wage.

6. Conscientious objection (CO) to forced recruitment – The Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace, Justapaz lawyers and a Missionary Union pastoral couple scrambled to secure the right to conscientious objection for two male church members forcibly recruited by the army. The teenage friends from Colombia’s coffee-growing region were on their way to worship team rehearsal the evening of May 11, 2005, when soldiers belonging to the Colombian military forced them into their trucks and took them to the battalion. The military detained ‘Rene’ for 15 days, during which time, “I maintained my position against using weapons, even when they gave them to me”. ‘Danny’ was released the following day and told to report for duty 13 days later.

The Justapaz and CRVP conscientious objection program promotes Christ-centered nonviolence, resistance to weapons, and alternatives to military solutions. Workshops and materials for use in local churches raise awareness of the legal rights of

Conscientious Objectors and procedures for exercising these rights¹⁴. Many young people, like those named, embrace nonviolent alternatives to the military solutions dominant in Colombian society.

Members of an armed group killed Rene's father and brother several years ago. Yet he explains that due to his Christian principles, "I have always rejected carrying a gun, and that's why I reject participation in the armed forces even though it's obligatory (in Colombia)."

7. War orphan embraced by "Arms of Mercy," day care refuge (Putumayo)

Church members from the Church of God in Puerto Asis, Putumayo have been teachers, therapists and protective care-givers to the more than 80 needy children belonging to their free "Arms of Mercy" Day Care Center since its origin in June of 2003. Thirty-five of the 53 children currently at the center are orphans of the armed conflict. Most others are directly affected by the violence as well. "*With so many deaths we started to ask ourselves, what about the children,*" explains the pastoral couple. Like their adopted son, Matthew, who was orphaned when his mother was killed by a member of an armed group, there are many children left alone and traumatized in the wake of Putumayo's violence. The outreach ministry has become a true community project. Church members go door-to-door selling tamales and collecting weekly contributions—bread from the local baker, soup bones from the butcher. They travel by motorcycle to pick up and drop off children daily. Volunteer teachers and helpers, most

without a stable household income, are studying and in the process of becoming accredited in their work.

8. The Peace and Justice Law: documents and positions. Colombian churches held roundtable discussions for political and theological analysis and reflection on the then Peace and Justice Bill, now Law, as a legal framework for peace process, including demobilization, of the government with the AUC/paramilitary. They established a position regarding truth, justice and reconciliation, which they communicated to congress people considering the bill. A document called "Truth, Justice and Reparation" was developed, subsequently published, and now being used as an educational tool in other church settings.

9. The first Peace Summit of the Christian Evangelical Colombian Churches

was held on San Andrés Island, in the Caribbean, February 14-17, 2006. Around 100 theologians, clergy, academics, community and denominational leaders pledged to redouble their efforts to help bring an end to the country's long running and brutal conflict, and they have appealed to all Colombians to "devote ourselves to serving our neighbor, even if that neighbor is an enemy." The summit recognized that evangelical churches had been quietly 'sowing the seeds of peace' for many years, but that they can do much more to confront the decades-long conflict.

An eight-page statement gathers the deliberations of the leaders and includes a call on militia groups and the Colombian Government to "heed society's cry for

¹⁴ Colombian law does not recognize conscientious objection to military recruitment. However, legal alternatives are pursued to make it possible for young men, subject to conscription, to exercise their choice not to bear arms.

an end to the armed struggle, so that we may work together to build a lasting peace that will put an end to the social violence endured by our impoverished and long-suffering people.” The evangelical leaders appealed to the international community to ensure that their policies “do not foment the armed conflict in Colombia, but instead promote actions that help us to build peace.” And they called for a thorough international examination of the impact of free trade agreements, Plan Colombia, and arms and drugs trafficking, in order to “seek social and economic justice and the general good of our country.” (Footnotes 10 and 11 of this report reference the summit statement.)

10. Being “Salt and Light.” As part of a united vision to be “Salt and Light” to their communities and governments, various local congregations in Colombia and the United States have joined efforts, prayers and strategies to promote public policies for peace in Colombia, as to promote peace in their own communities, in the US and in Colombia. They have developed advocacy strategies for the transformation of U.S. policy towards Colombia based on these experiences.

Peace Sanctuary Churches along the northern Colombian coast and various churches in the United States have systematized their local experiences in peacebuilding, converting them into written documents to serve as input for public policies of the U.S. and Colombian governments for peaceful resolution to the armed conflict (this has been a joint project of Justapaz and Lutheran World Relief).

11. Bread and Peace. More than 300 Peace Sanctuary Churches from different denominations in 52 cities and towns around the country are organizing

public events for September 21, the United Nations International Day of Peace and Nonviolence. The Colombian Mennonite church has been galvanizing support among Colombian faith communities since 2002 to highlight the relationship between social justice and a lasting peace. On this day churches hold marches, public vigils, rallies, community dinners, fasts and church services under the banner of “Bread and Peace” (*Pan y Paz*).

In a new development this year (2006), local governments are offering their support in nearly half of the peace initiatives. For example, in Supia, Caldas, the regional government declared “Bread and Peace” an annual municipal celebration. In Cali, Valle, the movement against the mistreatment of children, thousands of indigenous Guambianos and members of the Nasa indigenous group from the neighboring Department of Cauca, joined the churches of Cali in a march through the streets. The Governor of Valle also publicly declared his enthusiasm for the event.

12. Peace Week. The theme for this year’s Peace Week (*Semana por la Paz*) was “*For Peace: Social Justice and Reconciliation.*” The three ecumenical celebrations in Bogotá centered around the government’s Peace and Justice Law, Biblical perspectives on truth, mercy, justice and peace, and the prerequisites for reconciliation. One of the greatest contributions of these events is the opportunity to build relationships among Protestant and Catholics active within the peace movement and invite other churches to participate as well.

13. Participation in the Colombian peace process. Evangelical churches continue to offer their houses of worship as venues for creative conflict transformation. Many churches have no choice but to

be in humanitarian dialogue with the different armed groups active in their area. They also hold a seat on the **National Peace Council** and offer support to the government in all initiatives that work towards a negotiated solution to the armed conflict.

There has also been participation the **House of Peace**, with its headquarters in Medellin, to foster the dialogue between the National Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN), with active civil society participation, for a negotiated peace agreement. Similarly, contact and dialogue with demobilized groups from the Auto Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) or paramilitaries have been maintained in an effort to offer alternatives for reconciliation and reintegration into society, and to make a positive contribution in this difficult process. As well, there has been support for, and participation in the creation of, the Regional Commissions for Reparation and Reconciliation which are being created within the framework of the Peace and Justice Law which regulates the demobilization process.

14. Ecumenical Collaboration. The Mennonite church and the Catholic bishops of Sincelejo, Magangué and Cartagena have created an ecumenical alliance in the northern coast region known as Montes de Maria, located between the departments of Bolivar and Sucre. Their purpose: the creation of *the Foundation for a Peace and Development Network for Montes de Maria*. This organization operates as a social tool to advance peace and development processes in the

region. As the third Peace Laboratory of the European Union, the Foundation contributes to the implementation of the national government's Development and Peace program. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and other international organizations also support this ecumenical endeavor.

15. Various **international delegations** from the USA, Canada and Europe have visited and provided accompaniment and strength to the churches in Colombia.

16. During the month of May **the International Day of Action and Prayer for Colombia** was held. Thousands of churches and people of faith in the USA, Canada and Colombia remembered the 3,000 innocent victims created annually by the armed conflict. Recognition was also given of the local peace initiatives as a symbol of hope for the Colombian people and as a concrete message that peace is possible in Colombia. Various Colombian churches sent letters to the United States Congress requesting that in US aid to Colombia:

...the military budget, which represents 80% of total aid to Colombia, be reduced; and that the social and economic budget, which traditionally represents 20%, be increased; they demand that the Colombian government comply with the human rights conditions that the United States has imposed; and provide follow-up to the aid that the United States sends to Colombia to fund the demobilization process.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Overall national and international policy areas

In light of these experiences, we present the following recommendations:

1. Armed groups and the Colombian government must respect the life, dignity and assets of the civilian population and cease all violent acts and military actions against them. We urge respect for churches and all community work carried out for the good of all sectors of the civilian population.

2. The Colombian government should respect the pastoral and humanitarian mission of the churches involved in proclaiming peace to the armed groups through dialogue with them. The government's decisions should not impede the churches from acting for the well-being of the whole population. In particular, there should be no armed presence (such as police stations or army bases) near churches in order to minimize risk to them.

3. The United States government should change its public policy of financing the war to a policy that promotes a political solution within the parameters of international law and the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. We ask that the U.S. State Department continue to monitor the social and political violence experienced by the evangelical churches.

4. European and American governments should cooperate with the Colombia government in ensuring follow-up to the recommendations made by the High Commission for Human Rights, paying special attention to the recommendations in the 2005 report. See <http://www.hchr.org.co/documentoseinformes/informes/altocomisionado/informes.php3?cod=9&cat=11>

B. Internal focus: paramilitary demobilization

Conclusions: As has been shown in this report, the demobilization process with the AUC faces great challenges. Among them are the following:

- Some demobilized individuals continue to carry out armed activities; one case reported collaboration with members of the state armed forces.
- Significant numbers of demobilized individuals are reorganizing themselves into criminal groups or new paramilitary groups that continue to support paramilitary structures along with their strong economic, illicit economic and political interests in the country.

- The highest incidence of violations documented in this report refers to forced displacement caused by the paramilitaries/AUC. However, up to this point no significant amount of land has been handed back by the AUC and the government makes no guarantee that the stolen property will be identified and later handed back to the rightful landholders.

Recommendations: The Colombian government should show political interest in the complete demobilization of combatants, the dismantling of the paramilitary infrastructure and reparation to the victims. We exhort the government to:

- Guarantee truth and justice, including that the paramilitaries admit to having participated in crimes, and that they provide information about the structure of their organization, financial sources, illegal assets, the location of kidnap victims and the bodies of disappeared persons.
- Guarantee the return of property to the original landholders, land which at this moment is in the hands of the AUC and drug trafficking and guerrilla groups. This action will be seen as a component of reparation to the victims.
- Seek a true demobilization of occupied territory, so that demobilized individuals cease to exercise political and social pressure and control in the territory where the demobilization has taken place.
- Provide training as well as work options and opportunities for demobilized individuals so that they and their families can lead a dignified life in accordance with their potential. In addition to material help, demobilized persons should have

access to specialized psychological and social services to enable them to reintegrate productively and constructively into society.

- Consider the proposals of the Colombian churches to contribute in the areas of truth, justice, reparation, forgiveness, reconciliation and rehabilitation of both victims and perpetrators.¹⁵

The United States government, as a funder of the demobilization process, should monitor to help ensure a just process and a complete dismantling of the underlying paramilitary infrastructure. Congress should urge the Colombian government to comply with the above-mentioned recommendations. The State Department should strictly apply the conditions for the demobilization and disarmament of irregular combatants, as laid out in U.S. legislation (H.R. 3057).

C. With respect to the Peace Process with the ELN and the FARC

- We urge **the government and the ELN** to continue in their dialogues leading to the implementation of a negotiated political peace process. We celebrate the relationships that are being built, the agreements that are being made, and the progress that is emerging.
- We also **urge the FARC and the government** to heed the call of the civilian population for humanitarian accords and a cessation of the armed conflict with the objective of working together towards a lasting peace and an end to the social violence. An essential first step in the agreement is the adoption of a humanitarian accord for the release of kidnap victims and political prisoners.¹⁶

¹⁵ See recommendations from the First National Peace Summit of the Evangelical Churches of Colombia. San Andrés February 13-17, 2006.

¹⁶ *ibid*

VII. CLASSIFICATION OF DOCUMENTED SOCIOPOLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE NUMBERS COUNT

The violent acts described above are violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. The classification system used in this program considers a grassroots readership while also needing to meet international framework standards and be consistent with the protocol of other national organizations. As a result, it was decided for this report to:

- Use the information system SIVEL mentioned in number 3 of the REFERENCES {see 3 below} with the theoretical framework of the organization CINEP¹⁷ {see 1 below} and the criteria for arbitrary detentions from {see 2 below}.
- Group diverse categories of the framework under descriptive headings that facilitate understanding, as in some of the consolidated tables of Noche y Niebla, CINEP {see 4 below}.

The headings that were used and the respective categories in {1} are grouped together as such:

1. Death: A10(*), A20, A30, B40, B50, D87, D97, D701, D703
2. Attacks: A16, A26, A37, B46, B57
3. Threat: A15(*), A18(*), A25, A28, A35, A38, B45, B49, B55, B59, D73, D706
4. Torture: A12(*), A22, A36, B47, B56, D72
5. Wounded: A13(*), A23, A33, B43, B53, D88, D98, D702, D704
6. Sexual Violence: A19(*), A29, A39, D77
7. Disappearance: A11, A21, A302, B48, B58
8. Arbitrary Detention: A14, A24, A301

9. Freedom of Movement (violation of): A101, B41, D74
10. Displacement: A102(*), B401, B501, D902, D903
11. Recruitment of minors: D75
12. (Human) Shield: D78, D904
13. Civilian Objects: D80, D85, D86
14. Pillage: D95
15. Other Human Rights Violations through the use of Illicit Objects, Means or Methods: D84, D90, D91, D92, D93, D707, D708, D709, D801

(*) The Human Rights categories marked with asterisks are duplicated in International Human Rights and are therefore not taken into account in the calculations.

This classification described above was applied without difficulty to the cases presented in this report, although we had to classify some extortion and road block cases as threats.

REFERENCES:

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- {2} Libertad: rehén de la "seguridad democrática". Observatorio de derechos humanos y derecho humanitario. Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados-Unidos. http://www.dhcolombia.info/article.php3?id_article=283. We highlight the generosity of the CCEEU in granting permission for the reproduction of this text.
- {3} SIVEL. Sistema de Violencia Política en Línea. <http://sivel.sf.net>
- {4} Noche y Niebla. <http://www.nocheyniebla.org>



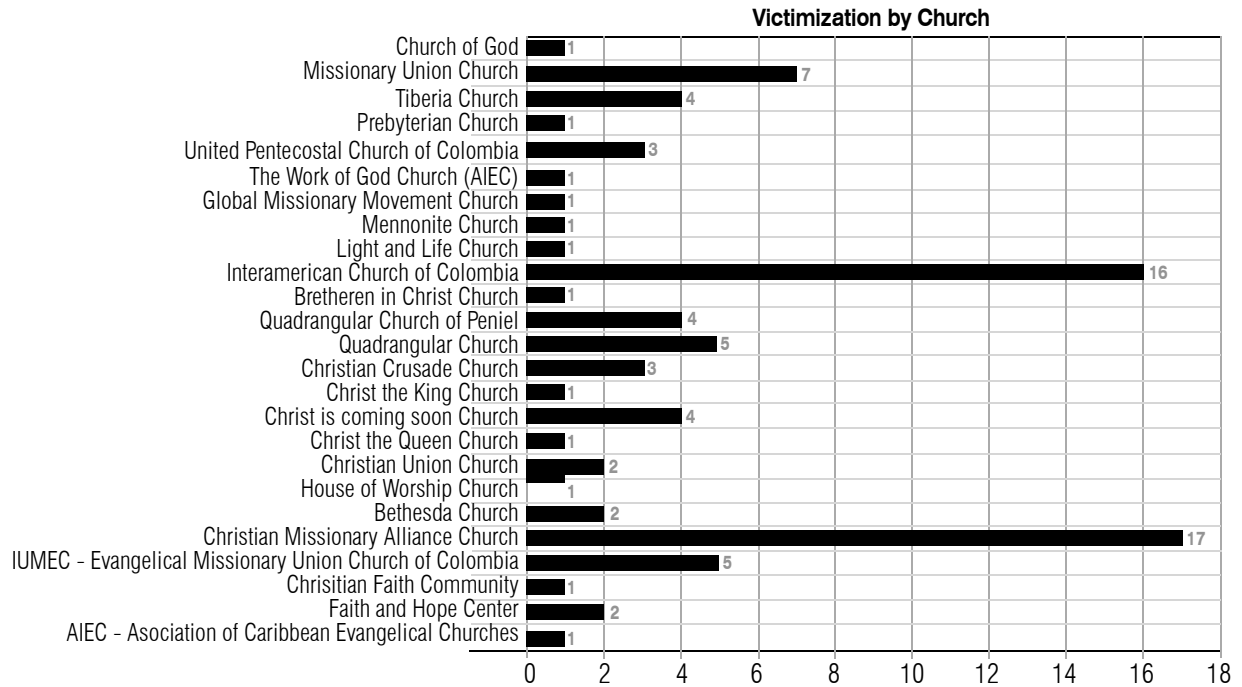
Appendix



Appendix 1 - Map of Colombia

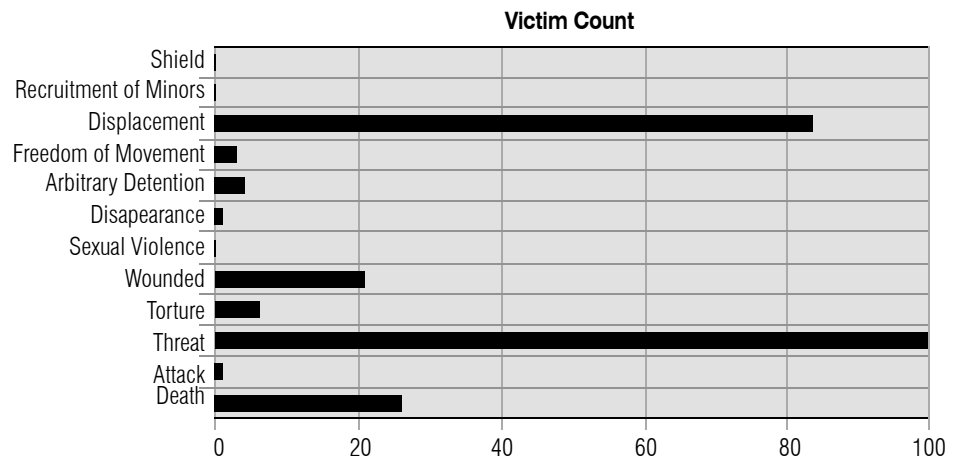


Appendix 2 – Violent Act by Church



Appendix 3 – Count of Victims per Violent Act.

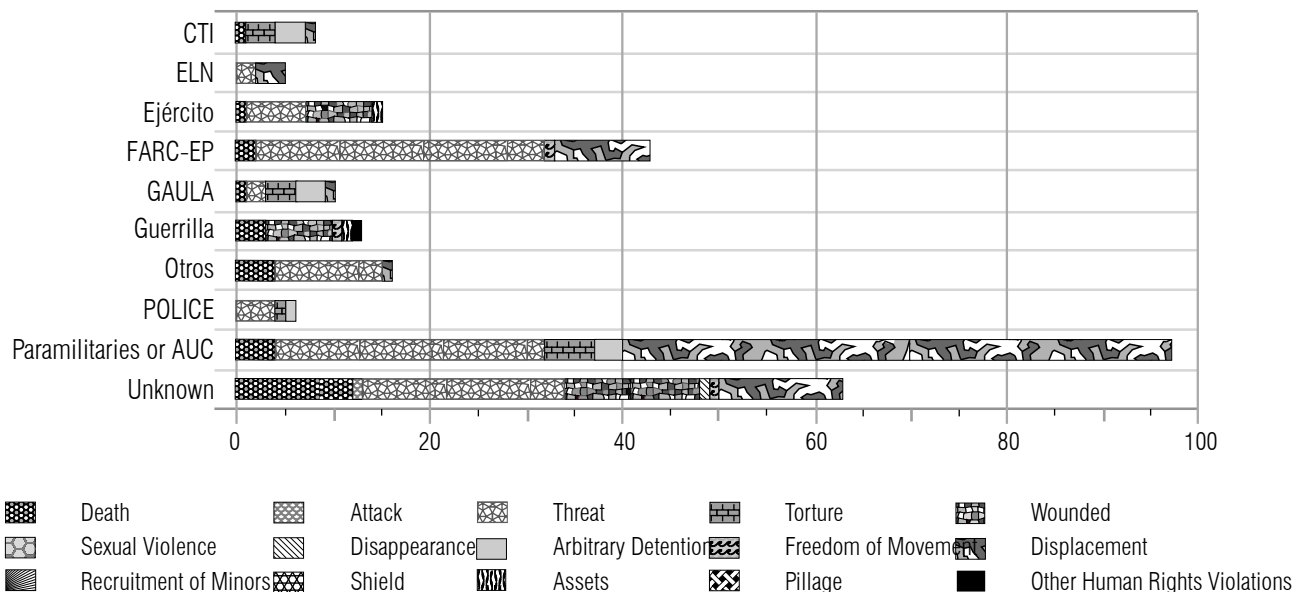
Death	26
Attack	1
Threat	100
Torture	6
Wounded	21
Sexual Violence	0
Disappearance	1
Arbitrary Detention	4
Freedom of Movement	3
Displacement	84
Recruitment of Minors	0
Shield	0
Assets	1
Pillage	0
Other Human Rights Violations	1



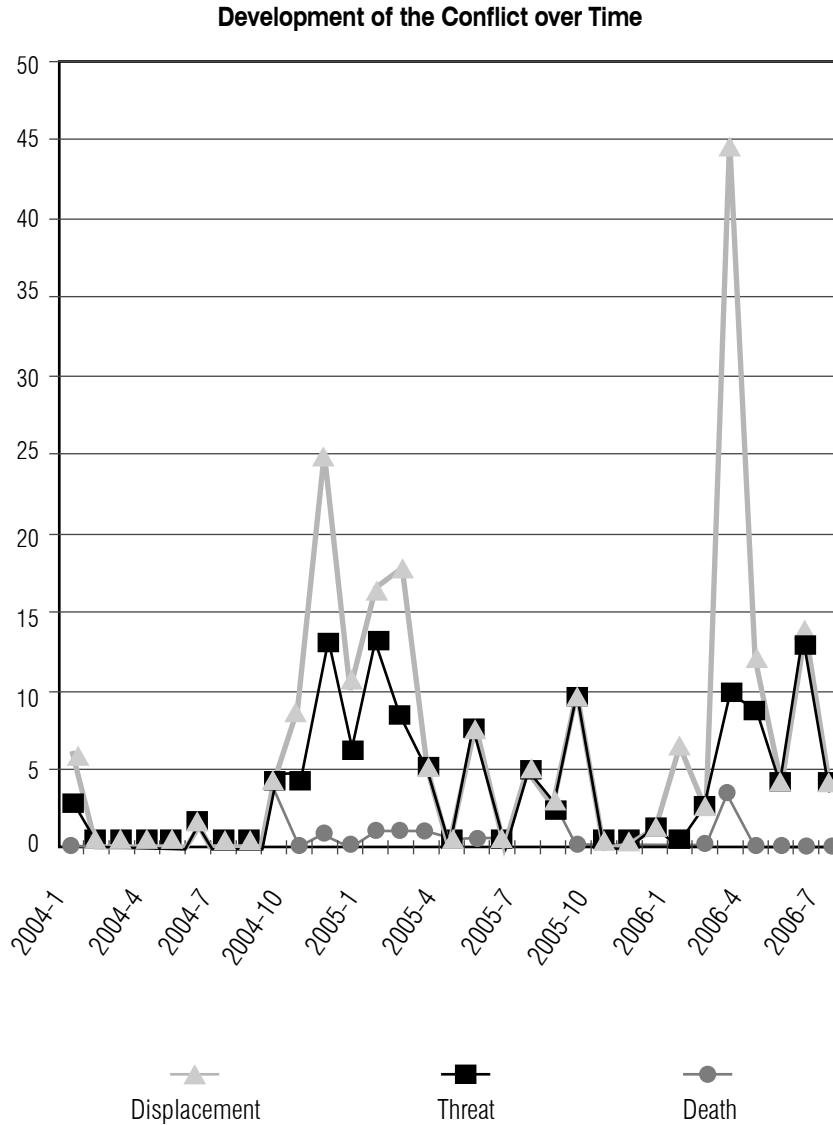
Appendix 4 – Alleged perpetrators and crimes committed

P. Responsible	Death	Attack	Threat	Torture	Wounded	Sexual Violence	Disappearance	Arbitrary Detention	Freedom of Movement	Displacement	Recruitment of Minors	Shield	Assets	Pillage	Other Human Rights Violations	
CTI	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
ELN	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
Ejército	1	0	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	15
FARC-EP	2	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	43
GAULA	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
Guerrilla	3	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	13
Otros	4	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	16
POLICE	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Paramilitaries or AUC	4	0	28	5	0	0	0	3	0	57	0	0	0	0	0	97
Unknown	12	1	21	0	14	0	1	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	63
	28	1	104	12	28	0	1	10	3	86	0	0	2	0	1	

Count of alleged perpetrators



Appendix 5 – Trends of sociopolitical violence over time



GLOSSARY

AUC: The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, a paramilitary umbrella group.

ELN: National Liberation Army, second largest guerrilla group in the country.

FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the oldest leftist guerrilla group with Marxist roots.

PARAMILITARIES: Armed groups that act in the shadow of the military and perform illegal operations.

CTI: Technical Investigation Body of the Attorney General.

GAULA: Unified Action Groups for Personal Liberty, anti-kidnapping task force composed of personnel from various government entities and the armed forces.

DEMOBILIZATION: Action taken by illegally armed groups or persons to hand over their weapons, withdraw from their group and submit to Colombian justice.

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