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Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Colombia: Amnesty International urges government to fully implement all UN recommendations

In a statement immediately before the Human Right Council's adoption of the UPR outcome of Colombia, Amnesty International urged the government to accept all of the UN's recommendations to protect human rights in Colombia. Many of the interventions made during the review of Colombia in the Council's Working Group reflected the concerns repeatedly expressed by Colombian and international human rights organizations, as well by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Of particular note was a widely shared acknowledgement that the human rights and humanitarian situation in Colombia remains serious, that the country continues to be in the midst of an armed conflict, and that paramilitary groups continue to operate despite stated efforts by the government to demobilise such groups. The Colombian government has repeatedly rejected these assertions.

Amnesty International welcomed the government's acceptance of most of the recommendations made during the review. Amnesty International regretted, however, the government's rejection of several key recommendations, such as to accept the jurisdiction of the Committee established by the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, to withdraw the declaration regarding Article 124 of the Rome Statute, and to end the controversial programme "soldiers for a day", which threatens to drag civilians further into the conflict.¹ Amnesty International asked the government to reconsider its position on these recommendations.

Many of the recommendations presented in the UPR review mirror those repeatedly made on an annual basis by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and those of other international bodies, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Amnesty International welcomed the government's stated support for the key recommendation of urgently implementing in full the recommendations of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.² Amnesty International noted, however, that their repeated commitments to do so, successive Colombian governments have consistently failed to comply with these recommendations. The outcome of the review of Colombia must be translated into concrete and effective action. Amnesty International, therefore, recommended that the Council adopt measures to ensure effective monitoring of progress in this regard, in cooperation with civil society.

Background

The 10th session of the UN Human Rights Council on Friday 20 March 2009 adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Colombia. Prior to the adoption Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Public Document

¹ A/HRC/10/82, paragraphs 19 (d), 22 (c), 23 (d), 35(c) and 40 (e).

² Ibid, paragraph 87 (3).

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