

URGENT ACTION

THE INTER-CHURCH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE MUST BE PROTECTED

On late November, members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace reported serious attacks while engaging in human rights defence activities in Southwest Colombia. Among other events, the reports include unknown people pointing firearms at their vehicle and chasing them. While their protection detail managed to safeguard their integrity, the recurrence of events points at the need for further and stronger protection measures on their behalf.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

National Protection Unit's Director
Augusto Rodríguez Ballesteros
Carrera 44 No. 20-21, Bogotá
Email: correspondencia@unp.gov.co

Dear Mr. Director,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the serious risks to the life, safety, and security of the members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace. On 1 December, the organization reported several security incidents where its members were at risk of losing their lives or being severely injured by the action of unknown people. Their account includes the sighting of an armed unknown man who pointed a firearm against the only member of the organization's protection detail in Southwest Colombia in November 27 and the chase of one of the organization's security vehicles with three human rights defenders on board by a group of heavily armed men, who also pointed their guns at and tried to stop them on the road in November 30.

Both attacks were prevented by the action of members of the security detail assigned to the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace by the institution you lead, the National Protection Unit. Despite that, these events show the heightened risk faced by the organization and the need for further and stronger measures to protect them. The attacks are also evidence of the growing closure of space for defending human rights in several regions of the country, including the Southwest, where human rights defenders continue risking their lives to continue working.

*In recent months the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace has reached out to the National Protection Unit, asking for the strengthening of their security details and further protections measures. **I urge you take immediate action and provide the organization with effective and stronger protection measures that allow them to continue defending human rights. These actions must include, provided their feedback and consent, a further evaluation the risks faced by the organization and its members and the reinforcement of the security details provided to them.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice has defended human rights in Colombia for nearly three decades. Working in several regions of the country, located in the departments of Chocó, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Meta, Putumayo and Antioquia, most of them among those affected the most by armed conflict, inequality, discrimination and other systemic issues, the Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice has supported individuals, families and communities in their calls for the respect and fulfilment of their civil, political, economic, cultural and environmental rights.

Defending human rights in Colombia is a high-risk endeavour. The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice's history is a testament to it. Because of their work, the organization and their members have been subject to threats and attacks both by State and non-State actors. The organization has documented all these events and demanded protection by Colombian authorities and received precautionary measures via the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Despite this and a recent request for the strengthening of the security measures provided by the National Protection Unit, the Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice has reported several failures in the vehicles assigned to them and delays in their maintenance and the general weakening of the protection measures.

The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice work in some of the most marginalized regions in Colombia. Not having guarantees for their safety not only negatively impact on the exercise of their right to defend human rights but also on people and communities who benefit from engaging with them. It is also part of a wider trend of closure of the space to defend human rights in the country that needs to be urgently addressed by a government who vowed to protect human rights defenders.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 March 2026.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME: Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace [they / them]

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: