

Ultimatum to the National Government Regarding a Humanitarian Crisis and the Lack of Inclusion of Afrodescendants in the Peace Accords

Bogota, 19 May 2017

The National Afrocolombian Peace Council (CONPA) sends a greeting to the Colombian people, and in particular, a greeting of life, happiness, freedom to our sisters and brothers in resistance in the port city of Buenaventura and in the Choco region.

We thank the media present here for responding to our call, on the eve of the celebration of the Day of AfroColombianity, May 21.

The Black, Afrocolombian, Raizal and Palequero in Colombia are living through a historical and systematic situation of exclusion and racism, which, during these days, has developed into a humanitarian crisis and threatens our very existence. In April of this year, according to our communities, there have been new occurrences of mass displacement, as well as forced confinements, which affect thousands of our families; new assassinations, disappearances, kidnappings and denunciations related to the reappearance of armed groups in the lower San Juan, upper Baudo and Rio Sucio, Carmen del Darien in the department of Choco, in Southern Bolivar, in rural and urban zones of Tumaco and in Northern Cauca, areas where this is a concentration of the FARC.

In the territories, we continue to find mutilated and tortured bodies, we continue to live through combat and armed harassment, threats, arbitrary detention, we suffer attacks and killings of community leaders, forced urban recruitment and recently we have been receiving threats against our sons and daughters, with the message that if they are found outside of the house after 6 in the evening, they will be raped and killed.

In face of this situation of secular neglect and incomppliance of State obligations, lack of recognition for, as well as protection and advancement of our rights, and in the face of economic policies and megaprojects that are being imposed in our territories which continue being factors of plundering and impoverishment of our people, the civic strikes have been organized in the department of Choco and in the port of Buenaventura. These will continue into other areas in order to continue to call for the attention of the State.

The celebration of the Day of Afrocolombianity reminds us of the actions taken for enforcement of our rights, initiated by our ancestors, and which we continue to advance with strong will for the construction of peace.

Mister President Juan Manuel Santos, and representatives of Congress, as a way of advancing our rights, CONPA proposes:

- To work with a Normative Framework that covers all issues and topics necessary for the implementation of the 29 agreements contained in the Ethnic Chapter, together with the peoples represented through the High Level Body created by the Ethnic Chapter of the Peace Accords

- A guarantee for the establishment of a special fund for the implementation of the accords in Black territories and communities
- A guarantee that the fundamental right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent will not be regulated via the fasttrack process.
- Implementation of a route for participation, as agreed upon with the government within framework of the National, Campesina, Ethnic and Popular Minga and the strike in Choco, and which guarantees compliance with the agreements that are reached with the government with the Civic Strike of Buenaventura also related to the expedition, this coming 27 of August of 2017, the regulated decrees for Law 70 of 1993.
- Formulation, in collaboration with the people, their authorities and organizations, of a specific and differentiated policy for the eradication and substitution of illicit crops that covers collective and ancestral territories of Ethnic Peoples.
- Inclusion of San Basilio de Palenque in the Territory Focussed Development Plans (PDETs)
- A guarantee of the conditions for the updating of the Integral and Long Term Development Plan for Black, Afrocolombian, Raizal and Palequero people, in a participatory way, and based on consultation, and that this is converted into the Plan for the Afrodescendent Decade, guaranteeing the resources assigned yet not implemented in the 2014-2017 plan are reintegrated and added to this current Plan.
- A guarantee that in the High Level Body for Gender of the Peace Process, there is full participation of Indigenous and Afrodescendent women, to guarantee a ethnic-racial gender perspective
- That necessary measures are taken to ensure that the established institutional mechanisms, or those yet to be established, for the implementation of the peace accords, are based on consultation, guaranteeing the participation of ethnoterritorial Indigenous and Afrodescendent authorities, towards the compliance of its functions and protocols.

We would like to take this opportunity to make public the invitation, this 25 of May, Day for the Dignity of Victims of Sexual Violence, to participate in a symbolic act, where Afrodescendent women will make public 1000 cases of sexual violence against Afrodescendent women in the framework of the armed internal conflict, and to recognize the T-622 Court Decision of November 10, 2016, that recognizes the Atrato River as a subject of rights.

As Afrodescendent people, we are living a humanitarian crisis that threatens our very existence as peoples. The Civic Strikes in Choco and Buenaventura, and those that are to come, are a response to State neglect. If, within 30 days, there are no significant advances, we will seek out the international community and agencies that are following what is happening regarding peace in this country, peace which has become a reference point for the world.

Afrocolombian National Peace Council - CONPA

Press conference – video (in Spanish) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WJP3e3_pUA&feature=youtu.be

Hashtag. #VamosPuebloCarajo