

Human Rights Council, 49th Session

16th March 2022

**Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights,
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights**

Oral statement delivered by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Mr. President,

Despite some progress, implementation of the Peace Agreement in Colombia is slower than expected.¹ This has made the human rights situation increasingly dramatic.

IFOR is especially concerned about the safety of the members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó.

The establishment of the Peace Community, 25 years ago this month, is based on principles of International Humanitarian Law that protect civilians from being involved in armed conflicts.

The recent murder of Huber Velásquez, a social leader of San José de Apartadó reveals the freedom of operation of paramilitary groups in the region [that manifests itself in extortions, forced meetings, sanctions, threats and recruitments].²

The Peace Community also reported violations of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In 2018, the Peace Community publicly denounced several human rights violations committed against its members by paramilitaries and the tacit and passive attitude of the army concerning these violations. The 17th Brigade of the Colombian Army denounced the Peace Community for slander and defamation and the Constitutional Court eventually urged the Peace Community to refrain from denouncing such issues.³ This decision raises strong concerns regarding the respect of international obligations, increases the vulnerability of human rights defenders and promotes a climate favorable to the persistence of human rights violations and their impunity.

IFOR calls upon the Member States and the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the violations of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and to support an urgent action by the Colombian government to ensure the safety of the Peace Community and the dismantlement of paramilitary successor groups, [as agreed in point 3 of the Final Peace Agreement].

Thank you.

¹ El Espectador (2021): [Al ritmo actual el acuerdo de paz se implementaría en su totalidad hasta 2047](https://www.espectador.com/actualidad/Al-ritmo-actual-el-acuerdo-de-paz-se-implementaria-en-su-totalidad-hasta-2047)

² <https://cdpsaniose.org/2021/12/20/se-reconfirma-pena-de-muerte-contra-denunciantes/>

³ <https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/Relatoria/autos/2021/A225-21.htm>