

Militarism in Colombia

Its Devastating Economic and Humanitarian Consequences

Witness for Peace Delegation to Colombia

August 13 - 23, 2011

U.S. - COLOMBIAN CONTEXT

The rich and powerful consistently target Colombia's rich biodiversity by seizing the small farmer's land to plant monocrops for quick profit. **These practices particularly impact the Afro-Colombians**, who make up 80%-95% of the Colombian Pacific Coast population, **and the local indigenous communities**; they are forced from their land and subjected to violence and murder by armed forces that include the guerrillas, paramilitary death squads, and the national army.

Should both the U.S. and Colombian governments sign the proposed bilateral free trade agreement and it becomes law, these native communities would be threatened with even more human rights' violations. The U.S. and Colombia negotiated Plan Colombia in 2000, and **the U.S. government has given Colombia over \$5 billion, mostly in military aid**, to fight the "War on Drugs" and the "War on Terror." **The questions arise** - What is the link between U.S. military aid under Plan Colombia and human rights abuses? What would be the impact of the proposed free trade agreement upon the local population?

The Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, who have inhabited the area for over 400 years, **are organizing** to demand respect for their basic human rights. These local communities **are asking U.S. citizens** to familiarize themselves about the situation and, as citizens of the world, to join them in advocating for basic human rights.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE DELEGATION

Traveling with other concerned people and led by two leaders who have thoroughly prepared the trip, you will

- Learn about impact of US military assistance upon human rights.
- Learn about the Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities' struggle to preserve their territory, culture, and environment.
- Meet with communities in the Cauca and Valle de Cauca departments who are collectively resisting the current military and free trade policies.
- Meet with a wide range of Colombians: community leaders, displaced persons, and human rights defenders.
- Learn how to educate and advocate to policy makers and U.S. citizens.

COST

The total cost is \$1450 and includes all set-up, preparation, meals, lodging, interpreters, and transportation within Colombia. The fee also covers extensive reading and activist tools both before and after the delegation. Airfare to and from Colombia is not included.

IMPORTANT DATES

- June 13, 2011 - Applications and \$150 nonrefundable deposit are due.
- July 13, 2011 - The total fee is due.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about this delegation, please contact the delegation coordinator:

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Colombian indigenous Guambianos march against the free trade agreement. Indigenous groups in Cauca have been very vocal in their opposition to it and because of their anti free trade agreement organizing, the state police forces have attacked and killed community members.



 **Witness for Peace** is a politically independent grassroots organization of people committed to nonviolence and led by faith and conscience. Our mission is to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing U.S. policies and corporate practices that contributes to poverty and oppression.

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