



Justice for Colombia in the European Parliament



Introducing Justice for Colombia in the European Parliament

For nearly twenty years, the international NGO Justice for Colombia (JFC), has campaigned for human rights, peace and social justice in Colombia.

Many of JFC's campaigns have received significant support from Members of the European Parliament, the political groups and partner organisations based in Brussels.

JFC is seeking to continue to build on that work with the ninth term of the European

Parliament to support efforts in Brussels and Strasbourg, to seek MEPs' support for our campaigns – and ultimately to maximise European support for all those risking their lives in Colombia in defence of peace.

Members of the European Parliament, parliamentary staff and all our friends in Brussels are warmly invited to join Justice for Colombia's efforts to support peace in Colombia and to let us know how we can join in partnership and collaboration with you.

Building peace in Colombia

Over fifty years of civil war in Colombia left more than 200,000 people dead, with many more thousands disappeared and over 6 million people displaced from their homes.

The civil war was used as a platform for the murder of trade unionists, human rights defenders and community activists who were targeted for speaking out in defence of peace and human rights.

The 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC guerrillas provided a historic moment of hope with measures to address the decades of violence and the historic social and political inequality which formed the roots of the armed conflict.

But, since the signing of the deal, progress on the ground remains slow and uncertain.

Only a small fraction of former guerrillas are benefiting from small scale economic projects promised as part of the peace agreement. Rural reforms have not yet materialised.

Close to 200 former FARC combatants who were engaging in the peace process have been murdered.

There has been a re-intensification of violence against community leaders, with over 800 murdered since the peace agreement was signed according to some reports.

In addition, it has not yet been possible to find a peace agreement with Colombia's second guerrilla group, the ELN.

Europe cannot afford to turn away from the challenges of building peace in Colombia.

EU role in supporting peace in Colombia

Today, Europe continues to play a key role in maintaining support for peace in Colombia. Through the Colombia Trust Fund and the EU Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, the EU High Representative has committed to not simply providing political and diplomatic support to the peace process, but also to supporting human rights defenders and investing in rural reform, the reincorporation of former combatants, crime prevention and justice.

The European Parliament has an important role in supporting and scrutinising the EU's efforts to support peace.



Justice for Colombia supporting peace

Peace agreements have ended civil wars in more than 40 countries since 1990, but 50 per cent breakdown within five years. In Cambodia, El Salvador, Angola and Bosnia, a key to lasting peace has been in international scrutiny and engagement.

In January 2018, Justice for Colombia launched the JFC Peace Monitor, with the objective of facilitating permanent international accompaniment to the implementation of the Colombian Peace Agreement.

It provides a platform to monitor and show solidarity with the peace process. Through 2018 and 2020 it took four delegations to Colombia.

JFC invites MEPs to participate in future peace monitoring delegations.

Bringing the lessons of the Irish peace process to Colombia

Justice for Colombia works from Dublin and London and has played a special role in bringing the lessons of the Northern Irish peace process to support peace efforts in Colombia.

During the peace talks which took place in Havana, Cuba, Justice for Colombia organised delegations to observe and support the negotiations while the JFC Director was granted official advisory status to the talks.

Through delegations, events and dialogue, representatives of all parties from Britain and Ireland across the divides, were invited by Justice for Colombia to contribute their experience with the Colombian negotiators.

The European Union recognised this opportunity, in appointing former Irish Minister Eamon Gilmore as the EU's own Special Envoy for the Colombian Peace Process. Mr Gilmore took part in a number of meetings and activities with JFC.

Justice for Colombia pays credit to Eamon Gilmore and to MEPs and their national colleagues from all parties involved in Northern Ireland, for the contribution they have made to peace in Colombia.

International solidarity

Justice for Colombia's roots lie in support from British and Irish trade unions for international solidarity with their Colombian counterparts.

Many analysts agree that the peace process will both contribute to and be supported by combatting the high levels of social inequality which continue to exist in Colombia.

Justice for Colombia is committed to continuing to work with the ETUC and major European trade union federations, in our future work with the European Parliament.



A quick history of JFC's work with the European Parliament

- 2002 onwards** • Justice for Colombia works in collaboration with other Colombian solidarity organisations to bring community leaders and victims' representatives to meetings in the European Parliament. Lobbying efforts in successive years take place to maintain the mandate of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogota, with support from Spain, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland.
- 2004** • Justice for Colombia works with MEPs to use an official visit of the former Colombian President to take the unusual step for a Head of State of taking questions in the Foreign Affairs Committee.
- 2007** • Justice for Colombia organises a visit to the European Parliament of the late peace activist, Carlos Lozano, to promote a humanitarian prisoner exchange in Colombia.
- 2010** • Justice for Colombia organises a special delegation of MEPs from Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom, to undertake a fact-finding visit to Colombia.
- 2009-2012** • Justice for Colombia undertakes a series of activities with MEPs in order to seek to leverage negotiations on the EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement in support of peace and human rights. This included hearings in the European Parliament with Colombian human rights defenders, politicians and trade unionists and helped create support for Article 2 of the agreement and to a Road Map, committing Colombia to reaching international standards on human rights, good governance and democracy.
- 2014** • Justice for Colombia coordinates a joint letter from 245 parliamentarians from Europe and the United States to both the Government of Colombia and to the FARC, to express support for the peace process.
- 2015** • British and Irish trade unions nominate political prisoner Huber Ballesteros for the Solidar Silver Rose Award, as part of the successful campaign for his freedom.
- 2016** • Justice for Colombia collaborates with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and EU Peace Envoy Eamon Gilmore, to hold a public hearing in which peace negotiators from the Colombian Government and the FARC appear together by video link for the first time, building public support for the peace talks.
- 2017 onwards** • Justice for Colombia collaborates with EU Peace Envoy Eamon Gilmore and European representatives to support implementation of the peace agreement.

How you can get involved with Justice for Colombia

- **Become a 'Justice for Colombia Supporter' in the European Parliament**
– you will receive personal invitations to meet Colombian visitors and take part in events within the Parliament.
- **Express interest in taking part in a JFC delegation visiting Colombia**
– JFC takes regular political delegations to monitor the peace process and the human rights situation and you can use your parliamentary roles and political networks to help foster action in response.
- **Use Justice for Colombia resources** – Visit the website or get in touch for preparation of questions, speeches and other parliamentary activities on peace and human rights in Colombia.



Contact us at:

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www.justiceforcolombia.org

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