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Statements made by other stakeholders under review at the HRC under item 6 after the adoption of the UPR report

Country: Colombia

Organisation: Colombia Commission of Jurists

Date of the statement: 21 March 2014

Vice President, one year ago, two States made recommendations to Colombia calling upon them to improve the protection measures they were taking for human rights defenders as well as to carry out investigations into attacks against said human rights defenders. These recommendations were all accepted by Colombia at that time, they agreed that they will review them and comply with them or put them under implementation. Despite that, and despite the various resources that Colombia has dedicated to the protection programme, in 2013, individual attacks on human rights defenders increased by 2.5% when compared to 2012 confirming a growing trend we have seen over the last few years. Seventy eight human rights defenders and society leaders and members of community sectors such as rural dwellers, indigenous people, trade unions and those fighting for land restitution were murdered, many of them residents of rural areas. All of these murders, it seems, were committed within the homes, of the majority of them women, of the people who were murdered or near to them and often in the presence of their family members.

This means, every four days in Colombia, on average, a human rights defender is murdered. The prevention measures to tackle these attacks and these murders are somewhat precarious and indeed weak, and there seems to be a more of a reactive than of a proactive approach and trials often result in impunity for those who perpetrated the murder.

For more than six months now, about 15 % of the national territory is affected by social protest movements. Despite the fact that the majority of the social protest

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movements lead to peaceful agreements, high ranking officials often take action against the leaders of these protests and there is often an abuse of force by police authorities reacting to these social protest movements, leading to deaths and hundreds of injuries which makes it clear that there is not effective respect for the right to protest and peaceful assembly in Colombia. There is still more to be done in the context of peace negotiations which are currently taking place. It is vital that there is respect for the right to exercise ones right to fight for ones rights. For which reason we call upon the Council to follow up with close scrutiny what happened to the recommendations that were made as part of the UPR in this Council to Colombia on this matter, thank you very much Mr. Vice President.