

HUMAN RIGHTS COMPASS

USAID HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM

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Caucasia's Secretary of Government, Gonzalo Emilio Correa Molina

Commemorating International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women

On November 29, USAID's Human Rights Program commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women by hosting a ceremony for the signing of a grant with the women's network of Tumaco, Asociación de Lideresas del Pacífico Nariñense (ASOLIPNAR) in Tumaco, Nariño. The Human Rights Program's focus on prevention of sexual violence in Tumaco is based on an alarming incidence of rape in that municipality, which has been exacerbated by the armed conflict in the region.

Participants in the ceremony included the women of ASOLIPNAR, the mayor and first lady of Tumaco, officials from Tumaco's Justice House, victims of sexual violence working with ASOLIPNAR, representatives from USAID and the Human Rights Program. The women leaders and victims present expressed their gratitude to USAID for having invested in this marginalized and often-overlooked community. ASOLIPNAR spoke of their motivation and dedication to working on this critical and difficult issue.

HRP also commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Cauca, Antioquia by hosting a Forum for the Prevention of Violence against Women. The Program's gender and vulnerable populations expert explained the law on non-violence against women and gender-based violence prevention strategies to over 100 participants, including the secretary of government, the first lady of Cauca as well as officials and women's organizations from Cauca and the neighboring municipalities of Taraza and Nechí. •



Signing of the ASOLIPNAR Grant in Tumaco, Nariño

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March in Vila Rica, Cauca, May 2012

to Prominent Indigenous Organizations in Cauca

In early November, the USAID Human Rights Program awarded grants to two prominent indigenous organizations in Cauca to address the evolving human rights situation in the department. These grants were signed following months of dialogue between the indigenous communities and the Colombian government to resolve repeated clashes in the area.

The first of the two grants is with the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (CRIC) which represents over 90 percent of the indigenous population in the department. The grant's objective is to improve the legal and social assistance the organization provides for indigenous victims of human rights violations in nine indigenous zones in Cauca. The Program will be supporting activities such as trainings for indigenous communities in the promotion of human rights, prevention of violations and identification of cases; guidance for communities or individuals involved in human rights violation cases and on the roles of government institutions and mechanisms responsible for attending to their cases; updating of CRIC's database which tracks human rights violations and infractions of international humanitarian law; and analyses of the information from CRIC's Human Rights Observatory.

The second grant was signed with the Asociación de Cabildos del Norte del Cauca (ACIN) to increase visibility and document recurring violations and breaches of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, resulting from the armed conflict. They will also document the effects of these violations on the civilian and indigenous population in the indigenous territories of northern Cauca. The grant also promotes efforts to incorporate and strengthen traditional indigenous prevention and protection strategies supported by government institutions. One of the strategies for prevention includes improving ACIN's communication system by hosting satellite dishes, acquiring internet and other technological tools to address potential violations in a more timely manner. •

Update on Negotiations

- Negotiations began with the President's visit to Cauca on August 15 and concluded on November 9.
- Negotiations consisted of three working groups: Human Rights, Conflict and Peace; Land and Rural Development; Education, Health and Communications.
- CRIC presented proposals on territorial autonomy to be analyzed by the GOC as well as proposals on the guarantee of their social and economic rights.
- The Human Rights working group did not reach any agreements but the GOC did officially recognize the *Guardia Indígena* as a community group seeking to promote peace and agreed to respect their right to protest.
- The Education, Health and Communications working group did not reach any definitive agreements.
- The Land and Rural Development working group reached a compromise to focus on putting an end to illegal mining.
- The results from the negotiation discussions will be presented to the President during his pending trip to Cauca which has yet to be scheduled.



Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca

Prioritizing LGBT Rights

November 1, two representatives from Colombia Diversa and Caribe Afirmativo participated in sessions held by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in Washington, DC. Sessions discussed how to ensure compliance and respect for the rights of LGBT people in Colombia, in particular regarding LGBT homicide cases and impunity. USAID's Human Rights Program sponsored the trips for these representatives to attend with the goal that their testimonies motivate the prioritization of LGBT cases brought before the Inter-American Human Rights System.

Hearings attended included: Impunity for Murders of LGBT People in the Americas; Human Rights, Defense and Security Policy in Colombia; and the Situation of Displaced Victims in Colombia. Unfortunately, due to the absence of Colombian State delegates at the Situation of Defenders of Reproductive Rights of Women and LGBT Population in Colombia hearing, the session was cancelled. However, the organizations pressed to be heard and were able to secure a meeting on Friday, November 2 with the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women and the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights. A meeting with Colombian government delegates has been rescheduled for March 2013.

Colombia Diversa, HRP grantee, is an NGO based in Bogotá that advocates for inclusive policies which respect the rights of the LGBT community in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres in order to contribute to a socially just society.

Caribe Afirmativo, based in Barranquilla, is a well-respected LGBT organization dedicated to research and conducting advocacy to promote the rights of the LGBT population on the Caribbean Coast.

Wilson Castañeda, director of Caribe Afirmativo expressed that "our time at the Commission was a huge leap for us in terms of documenting human rights violations because we were able to share not only the violations but

also the diverse and complex cultural and geographic realities of Colombia's Caribbean coast. The trip gave us the opportunity to forge new allies to help us document human rights violations." •

USAID Grantee Awarded National Peace Prize

On November 26, USAID's HRP program grantee Forjando Futuros was awarded the National Peace Prize in an event at the National Museum. The award recognizes Forjando Futuros' pioneering efforts in Colombia's land restitution process. HRP's grant is providing Forjando Futuros support to document 60 emblematic land restitution cases; draft recommendations to expedite the land restitution process; and conduct information campaigns on Law 1448 in the Bajo Cauca region. Participants at the event include Bruno Moro, UN resident representative, Ana Maria Ibañez, dean of economics at Universidad de los Andes, Alvaro Sierra, editor of *Semana*, Ricardo Alarcón, general manager of Caracol Radio, and Gonzalo Córdoba, president of Caracol TV.





USAID Mission Director, Peter Natiello and Dr. Marc Chernick, from Georgetown

On Friday, October 19, USAID's Human Rights Program participated in the seventh consultation with non-governmental organizations in Washington, DC where the third phase of HRP was presented.

This year Mark Feierstein, assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Peter Natiello, Mission Director of USAID/Colombia and Fernando Calado, director of the Human Rights Program were on hand to represent USAID among the 49 participants representing 19 organizations from different sectors that participated in the consultation.

Discussions focused on four themes based on previous consultations and their prioritization in the Colombian national agenda: the Peace Process and Human Rights; Victims' Law and Vulnerable Populations; Land Restitu-

tion and Rural Development, and Justice Reform and Human Right Prosecution. Each theme emphasized support to indigenous, Afro-Colombians, women and other vulnerable populations.

Conclusions from the consultations include the need to: 1) prioritize activities and support for human rights topics in Colombia, particularly in the context of the peace process; 2) increase assistance and protection for human rights defenders; 3) develop a policy on the impact of extractive industries on human rights; and 4) provide assistance to expedite the implementation of the Reparations and Land Restitution Law. This consultation, combined with the civil society consultations in Colombia in October have helped create a comprehensive landscape of the urgency of the human rights situation in Colombia. •



On December 10, USAID's Human Rights Program will be hosting, with the Ombudsman's office, a Human Rights Day Celebration at the National University's Bogotá Campus. This event will include speeches made by the Dean of the University as well as the Ombudsman and the USAID Mission Director. On the same day the Tenth Annual University Moot Court Competition on Human Rights will begin. The competition between Colombian universities was created by USAID and the Ombudsman's Office to promote education in human rights and international humanitarian law as well as the application of related national and international norms. Moot Courts create an environment where students research and present their arguments before the court, in this case the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. USAID will award the winning student team with a trip to attend a course on human rights at American University in Washington, D.C.