



**CREATING
SAFER SPACE**
STRENGTHENING CIVILIAN PROTECTION
AMIDST VIOLENT CONFLICT

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Unarmed Civilian Protection and Community Self-Protection in Colombia

A Literature Review

Laura Jiménez Ospina (University of Antioquia)

Beatriz Elena Arias López (University of Antioquia)

Creating Safer Space

Creating Safer Space is an international research and impact collaboration, which aims to understand and support unarmed civilian protection (UCP) and self-protection in the midst of violent conflict. It supports research that explores how violence against civilians can be deterred or prevented by civilians without the use or threat of force.

The Network brings together conflict-affected communities, protection practitioners, academics, policymakers, and artists to jointly work on the vision of enhancing unarmed protection practices, which create safer space for communities and individuals amidst violent conflict, raise their levels of resilience and help prevent displacement.

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For further information on the work of the Network, please visit our website:
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Department of International Politics
Aberystwyth University
Penglais
Aberystwyth
SY23 3FE
creating-safer-space@aber.ac.uk



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About the authors

Laura Jiménez Ospina is a historian at the National University of Colombia, Medellín, and a student of the Master's degree in History at the same institution. Since 2020 she has been working as a research assistant for the Creating Safer Space Network at the University of Antioquia.

Beatriz Elena Arias López, PhD, is a professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Antioquia, Colombia. She researches issues of collective mental health, armed and social conflict and peace building, especially in rural Colombia, through creative methodologies such as textile practices. As co-investigator of Creating Safer Space, she coordinates the activities of the Network in Colombia and Latin America.

Supplementary map

Conflicts over natural resources in Colombia, unarmed civilian protection mechanisms and self-protection: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=17uTFKMi3u0WHzBoMmPhbZtDSjJOcAViA&ll=6.64277914440632%2C-76.04244550000001&z=6>

This map was produced as supplementary material for this Creating Safer Space Working Paper.



List of acronyms

- ACA: Asociación Campesina de Antioquia (Peasant Association of Antioquia)
- ACIN: Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca (Indigenous Councils' Association of Northern Cauca)
- ACONC: Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca (Community Councils' Association of Northern Cauca)
- ACVC: Asociación Campesina del Valle del río Cimitarra (Peasant Association of the Cimitarra River Valley)
- AHERAMIGUA: Asociación de Hermandades Agroecológicas y Mineras de Guamocó (Association of the Agro-ecological and Mining Brotherhoods of Guamocó)
- APP: Acción Permanente por la Paz (Permanent Action for Peace)
- ASCAMCAT: Asociación Campesina del Catatumbo (Peasant Association of Catatumbo)
- ASCOBA: Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Bajo Atrato (Community Councils' Association of Bajo Atrato)
- ASODEPO: Asociación de Desplazados de la Provincia de Ocaña (Displaced People's Association of the Ocaña Province)
- ASOMIWA: Asociación de Mineros de Mina Walter (Walter Mine Miners Association)
- ASORVIMM: Asociación de Víctimas de Crímenes del Estado-Magdalena Medio (Association of Victims of State Crimes-Magdalena Medio)
- ATCC: Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carare (Peasant Workers' Association of Carare)
- AVRE: Fundación Social Cedavida AVRE (Cedavida Social Foundation AVRE)
- CAHUCOPANA: Corporación Acción Humanitaria por la Convivencia y la Paz del Nordeste Antioqueño (Humanitarian Action Corporation for Coexistence and Peace in Northeastern Antioquia)
- CAJAR: Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective)
- CAVIDA: Comunidades de Autodeterminación, Vida y Dignidad del Cacarica (Communities of Self-Determination, Life, and Dignity of the Cacarica River)

- CCALCP: Corporación Colectivo de Abogados Luis Carlos Pérez (Luis Carlos Pérez Lawyers' Collective)
- CCJ: Comisión Colombiana de Juristas (Colombian Commission of Jurists)
- CERAC: Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (Conflict Analysis Resource Center)
- CIJP: Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz (Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace)
- CIMA: Comité de Integración del Macizo Colombiano (Committee for the Integration of the Colombian Massif)
- CINEP: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Popular Education and Research Center)
- CISCA: Comité de Integración del Catatumbo (Catatumbo Integration Committee)
- CIT: Confederación Indígena Tayrona (Tayrona Indigenous Confederation)
- CIVIPAZ: Zona Humanitaria de la Comunidad de Vida y Paz (Humanitarian Zone of the Community of Life and Peace)
- CJL: Corporación Jurídica Libertad (Corporation for Judicial Freedom)
- CNA: Coordinador Nacional Agrario (National Agricultural Coordinator)
- COCOCAUCA: Coordinación de Consejos Comunitarios y Organizaciones de Base del Pueblo Negro de la Costa Pacífica del Cauca (Coordination of Community Councils and Grassroots Organizations of the Black People of Cauca's Pacific Coast)
- COCOMACIA: Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Asociación Campesina Integral del Atrato (Major Community Council of the Atrato's Integral Peasant Association)
- COCOMOPOCA: Consejo Comunitario Mayor de la Organización Popular Campesina del Alto Atrato (Major Community Council of the Alto Atrato Popular Peasant Organization)
- COSPACC: Corporación Social para la Asesoría y Capacitación Humana (Social Corporation for Community Advice and Training Services)
- CPT: Christian Peacemaker Teams¹

¹ At the beginning of 2022, the organization changed its name to *Community Peacemaker Teams*, in Spanish *Equipos y Comunidades de Acción por la Paz (ECAP)*. However, in this report, the old name will be used for practical reasons.

- CREDHOS: Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights)
- CRIC: Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca (Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca)
- CSPP: Comité de Solidaridad por los Presos Políticos (Political Prisoners' Solidarity Committee)
- DHOLOMBIA: Defensores y Defensoras de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Defenders)
- ESMAD: Escuadrones Móviles Antidisturbios (Mobile Riot Squads)
- ETCR: Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación (Territorial Training and Reincorporation Spaces)
- FEDAGROMISBOL: Federación Agrominera del Sur de Bolívar (Agro-mining Federation of Southern Bolívar)
- FENSUAGRO: Federación Nacional Sindical Agropecuaria (National Federation of Agricultural Trade Unions)
- FLIP: Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (Foundation for Press Freedom)
- FNEB: Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista (Nydia Erika Bautista Foundation for Human Rights)
- GTTC: Grupo de Tierra y Territorio de Córdoba (Córdoba Land and Territory Group)
- IAP: International Action for Peace
- INCODER: Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural (Colombian Institute for Rural Development)
- INCORA: Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria (Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform)
- JEP: Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz (Special Jurisdiction for Peace)
- MFOPD: Mesa de Fortalecimiento de Organizaciones de Población Desplazada del Norte de Santander (Roundtable for the Strengthening of Displaced Population Organizations in Norte de Santander)
- MOVICE: Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes del Estado (National Movement of Victims of State Crimes)
- NOMADESC: Asociación para la Investigación y la Acción Social (Association for Social Research and Action)

- OIA: Organización Indígena de Antioquia (Indigenous Organization of Antioquia)
- OIK: Organización Indígena Kankuama (Kankuamo Indigenous Organization)
- ONIC: Organización Nacional Indígena (National Indigenous Organization)
- ORDEURCA: Organización para el Desarrollo Urbano y Campesino (Organization for Urban and Peasant Development)
- PBI: Peace Brigades International
- PI: Protection International
- PPT: Permanent Peoples' Tribunal
- PSG: Proceso Social de Garantías (Social Process of Guarantees)
- PWS: Peace Watch Switzerland
- RDLK: Red de Defensa Local Kankuama (Kankuamo Local Defence Network)
- REDHER: Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia (Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia)
- SweFOR: Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation



Introduction

The production of literature and other types of materials on unarmed civilian protection (UCP) and community self-protection in Colombia and Latin America is quite extensive. This is demonstrated by the 617 records that have been collected so far for this overview of the state of the art. However, from the beginning of the bibliographic search, a conceptual limitation was that the terms ‘unarmed civilian protection’ and ‘self-protection’ are rarely used in the Spanish-language literature. It was therefore first necessary to establish what these terms meant in the international context in order to find new search strategies.

On the one hand, Furnari, Julian, and Schweitzer define UCP as “the work of trained civilians who use nonviolent, unarmed approaches to protect other civilians from violence and the threat of violence and support local efforts to build peace”. Civilians who are part of unarmed civilian protection teams are often individuals invited by NGOs to work with local or civil society organisations (Furnari, Julian and Schweitzer, 2016: 5-8). On the other hand, self-protection is part of a new paradigm that allows us to understand protected civilians as subjects who have their own capacity for agency. Civilians are no longer seen as empty containers, onto which foreign organizations can impose new ways of understanding the world. Rather, mutual understanding is sought to strengthen the decisions that people make to guarantee their safety amid conflict (Bonwick, 2006: 271-277; Hancock, 2017: 256-269).

Once the conceptual clarity of these terms had been established, it was possible to find different materials through terms linked to UCP and self-protection: peacebuilding, defence of human rights, accompaniment of human right defenders, international cooperation, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international NGOs, etc. Bit by bit, a coherent body of literature emerged, which made it possible to trace: the self-protection mechanisms that exist in Colombia and the communities that have used them; national and international NGOs that support human rights defenders and communities that live in contexts of violence; and other important discussions around UCP and self-protection.



For this report, more than 600 records were collected, which can be found in the [References](#) section. They correspond to academic literature, reports from civil society organizations, audiovisual materials produced by different actors, and interviews with people who have extensive experience working on issues related to UCP and community self-protection in Colombia. This literature shows that in the face of a seven-decade conflict,² civilians and communities that inhabit the country have been forced to develop all kinds of unarmed methods and practices that have allowed them to survive amid violent contexts.

The history of this conflict is not only a story of the past, but also one of the present. Despite the multiple agreements that have been made since the 1980s with different armed groups, the conflict continues because its structural causes - political exclusion, an extractive development model, land issues, institutionalized violence, violence perpetrated by different armed actors, economic and social inequalities, and negligence of the state in the fulfillment of its functions – remain unresolved. Consequently, and as many of our interviewees noted, as long as the country postpones structural solutions to the aforementioned problems, self-protection and UCP measures will remain insufficient.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the self-protection mechanisms used in Colombia during the last three decades and gives examples of the roles played by them. The second section discusses the international organizations that currently accompany different human rights defenders and human rights organizations in the country. In addition, we highlight the role that Colombian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played in cross-cutting issues that touch upon different aspects of the armed conflict. The third section is an exploratory analysis of the unarmed protection mechanisms used by civil society in the framework of the 2021 National Strike. To conclude, we point out some gaps and questions that have not been answered within the collected materials as well as some discussions that are important to keep in mind when dealing with these issues in Colombia.

² The murder of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 is usually taken as the milestone that marks the start of the social, political, and armed conflict in Colombia. Gaitán (1902-1948) was one of Colombia's most influential liberal politicians during the first half of the 20th century. He held positions as a member of the House of Representatives, mayor of Bogotá, minister of education, minister of labor, and president of the House of Representatives. In 1929, he reported the Banana Massacre before the House of Representatives, perpetrated by the Colombian Army. He also reported the political violence that the country was experiencing due to bipartisanship. On 9 April 1948, he was assassinated in Bogotá, which unleashed a wave of looting and murder that would later be known as *El Bogotazo* and spread to different regions of Colombia. Some historians have taken his assassination as the beginning of a political period known as *La Violencia*, marked by bloody clashes between liberals and conservatives, especially in rural areas (Braun, 2008; Archila Neira and Torres Cendales, 2009).

Self-Protection

Self-protection in Colombia is an umbrella term that covers aspects such as the survival of communities in violent environments and/or immersed in armed conflict, food sovereignty, the defence of human rights, the conservation of indigenous cosmologies, the vindication of self-determination, the defence of the territory, and the defence of how the country's different peoples live their lives. On the international scene, Colombia is one of the countries that has made most progress in the development of self-protection mechanisms for/by communities living in violent contexts.

The self-protection mechanisms tracked for this report were classified into three groups: territorial and spatial delimitations (humanitarian zones, biodiversity zones, humanitarian refuges,

humanitarian spaces, ETCRs, peasant agri-food territories, and peasant reserve zones); key actors (pastoral and civil guards); and other types of mechanisms (strategic litigation, civil resistance, investigation and reporting of human rights violations, self-protection and peacebuilding, training schools, peace laboratories, constituent assemblies, and humanitarian caravans). **Table 1** contains a brief explanation of each mechanism, the aspects it works on or with, some organizations that have used it, and the period in which it was used. **Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6** then describe some of the organizations which have used these different self-protection mechanisms in the country.



Table 1. Self-protection mechanisms in Colombia

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Territorial and spatial delimitations				
Humanitarian zones	<p>These are delineated places, made visible with landmarks and inhabited by collectives who seek to defend and preserve their rights through the expulsion of armed actors, the rejection of militarization, and the prohibition of armed confrontation. In some of these areas, the inhabitants enjoy collective ownership of the territory/land and share common life projects.</p>	<p>Social cohesion; comprehensive defence of human rights; nonviolence; rejection of militarization; prohibition on the entry of armed actors; collective land titling; reparations; peacebuilding; justice; collective redress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAVIDA • Humanitarian Zone Andalucía, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Camelias, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Caño Manso, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Caracolí, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Costa Azul, Collective Territory de Curbaradó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Nueva Esperanza, Collective Territory of Jiguamiandó, Chocó • Humanitarian Zone Pueblo Nuevo, Collective Territory of Jiguamiandó, Chocó • CIVIPAZ, Ariari, Meta • La Balsita Life and Work Community, Dabeiba, Antioquia • Peace Community of San José de Apartadó • ATCC 	2001 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Territorial and spatial delimitations				
Biodiversity zones	These are areas for the protection and recovery of ecosystems in collective territories that have been destroyed or are in danger of being destroyed by infrastructure projects, the exploitation of natural resources and the presence of agribusiness. One of the most important characteristics of these models is the defence of food sovereignty.	Food sovereignty; collective territories; environmental defence; environmental recovery; peacebuilding; nonviolence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Zone La Yulina, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone El Retorno, Collective Territory of Curbaradó Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone La Esperanza, Collective Territory of Curbaradó Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone Mary Hernández, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone Mi Tierra, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó Colectivo de Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone Andalucía, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone La Caracolí, Collective Territory of Curbaradó, Chocó • Biodiversity Zone Colectiva El Hobo, Collective Territory of Jiguamiandó, Chocó • Collective Biodiversity Zone La Madre Unión, Collective Territory of Jiguamiandó, Chocó 	
Humanitarian shelters	Some national organizations have resorted to creating humanitarian centres and shelters to care for victims of displacement and violence. Their purpose is to protect communities against armed incursions and combat.	Attention to humanitarian emergencies; protection of displaced populations; food security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diocese of Quibdó (Catholic Church) • ASCAMCAT 	Currently active

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Territorial and spatial delimitations				
Humanitarian spaces	The only place of this kind in Colombia is the Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space in Buenaventura, created in 2014 as a community response to urban violence in the port. With the accompaniment of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, the leaders of Puente Nayero managed to expel illegal armed groups from their neighbourhood during a mass held during Holy Week. Unlike the peace communities or humanitarian zones, state armed actors such as the army and the police can enter this area. They currently have precautionary measures issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.	Peacebuilding; nonviolence; conflict resolution; special protection measures of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; documentation and reporting of abuse; visits by the international community; expulsion of illegal armed actors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space, Buenaventura (Cauca) 	2014 – Present
ETCRs	After the signing of the Peace Agreement with the guerrilla group FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in 2016, the Transitory Zones for Normalization (ZVTN) and the Transitory Points for Normalization (PTN) were created to guarantee the definitive ceasefire and the laying down of arms by the former combatants. It would be in these places where a process of preparation for reincorporation into civilian life would take place. In 2017, the ZVTNs were transformed into ETCRs, intended for former	Preparation for reincorporation into civilian life; training of ex-combatants; laying down of arms; definitive ceasefire.	There are 24 ETCRS throughout the country; following this link you can see their locations: http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/Paginas/AETCRs.aspx	2017 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Territorial and spatial delimitations				
Agri-food peasant territories	<p>The CNA has defined these territories as: “[...] territories inhabited by peasants, dedicated (not exclusively) to small-scale agricultural and livestock production, fishing and silvo-pastoral systems, as well as small-scale mining combined with agriculture, in which the products generated serve to satisfy the needs of the peasantry, as well as those of the population that does not live in rural areas [...]” (CNA, 2015: 15). These territories thus do not only seek to guarantee the food sovereignty of peasants, but also that of other Colombians.</p> <p>This politico-administrative model seeks to recognize territories that have historically been linked to the peasantry. It also seeks to guarantee the territorial rights of this population, their governance, and the promotion of the common good.</p>	Recognition of peasants as subjects of special protection; recognition of the multi-dimensional link between peasants and land; peasant economy; food production; environmental protection; protection of traditions; right to land; gender equity; recognition of diverse forms of peasant territoriality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colombian Massif, Northern Nariño and Southern Cauca (2016). • Cordillera Suroccidente – Micay region (2017) • Vida y Soberanía Popular (Life and Popular Sovereignty), Saravena, Arauca (2017) • Piedemonte Araucano, Fortul, Arauca (2017) • Laguna del Lipa, Soberanía y Resistencia Popular (Sovereignty and Popular Resistance), Arauquita, Arauca (2018) • Galeras, Nariño (2018) • Defensores de la Vida y la Agricultura (Defenders of Life and Agriculture), Tame, Arauca (2019) 	2016 – Present
Peasant Reserve Zones	<p>Peasant reserve zones are a model recognized within the Colombian territorial ordering. Their objective is to promote and stabilize the peasant economy, overcome the causes of social conflicts over land, and create conditions for peacebuilding. These zones are delimited by INCODER and are handed over to peasant communities for collective management. Colombia currently has 64 Peasant Reserve Zones: six established, seven under construction, twelve planned with demarcation, and 39 planned without demarcation.</p>	Redistribution of resources; promoting the peasant economy; solving land issues; controlling the expansion of the agrarian frontier; peacebuilding; social cohesion; strengthening the internal organization of peasant communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the following link, you can download a map that contains the constituted Peasant reserve Zones, those in process of being constituted, and others projected: http://reporte.humboldt.org.co/biodiversidad/2017/cap4/404/ 	1998 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Key actors				
Social pastoral care	<p>Through the social ministries of the dioceses and archdioceses, the Catholic Church has played a central role as a peacebuilder, mediator and point of support for communities affected by the armed conflict.</p> <p>Through workshops, food security projects, attention to humanitarian emergencies and alliances with different civil society organisations, the social ministries have been responsible for rebuilding the Colombian social fabric.</p>	<p>Food security; human rights training; alliances with national and international organisations; attention to humanitarian emergencies; strengthening of internal organization processes of communities; mediation and dialogue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diocese of Barrancabermeja (Catholic Church) • Diocese of Apartadó (Catholic Church) • Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro (Catholic Church). In the 1990s and 2000s, Eastern Antioquia went through one of the most challenging moments of the armed conflict due to the escalation of clashes between paramilitaries, guerrillas, and the Army. As a result, the Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro became one of the most important mediation actors, fostering dialogue between the armed actors, the mayors, and the community. 	Currently active
Civil guards	<p>Since the 1960s, communities mobilizing through the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (National Association of Peasant Users) have created civil guards. Inspired by these past experiences, indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant populations have created their own unarmed civil guards over the last three decades. The Indigenous Guard has the most significant presence in the national territory and has a long history. The guards have focused on the defence of ancestral and collective territories, the protection of human rights, and the defence of protesters in social mobilizations and emergency care.</p>	<p>Comprehensive defence of human rights; protection of demonstrators in social mobilizations; defence of ancestral and collective territories; unarmed protection; nonviolence; emergency response; accompaniment of indigenous authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Guard • Maroon Guard • Peasant Guard • Raizal Guard 	2001 – Present. The Indigenous Guard was formalized in 2001; however, its activities had been carried out since the 1990s.

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Other types of mechanisms				
Strategic litigation	Strategic litigation has been one of the tools most widely used by different social organisations to support victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders. It is “strategic” in that it allows for the promotion of cases in which there have been serious human rights violations and seeks not only internal justice or reparation, but also systemic changes that provide tools for protection and self-protection.	Documentation and reporting of human rights violations; protection of human rights defenders; protection of communities living in violent contexts; legal tools to live amid violence; reparation; internal justice; precautionary principle; social outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVC • Peace Community of San José de Apartadó • CRIC • Nasa indigenous people • CIT • OIK • ONIC • MOVICE • Committee for the Defence of Water and the Páramo of Santurbán • Charalá Environmental Monitoring Committee • COSPACC • FNEB 	Currently active

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Other types of mechanisms				
Civil resistance	<p>Civil resistance has become a tool through which different communities have remained in their territories and developed their life projects. When people decide not to obey or not to cooperate with armed actors, they must develop mechanisms that allow them to maintain their position. Some declare themselves neutral. Others create models such as humanitarian zones, defend human rights, and report and document human rights violations that occur in the areas where they live. While these mechanisms do not always save people from violent situations, they do offer them options that the armed conflict usually takes away: the development of a life project, the development of community projects, self-education, autonomy, self-determination, space to exercise their own justice system in the case of indigenous communities, and social cohesion.</p>	<p>Comprehensive defence of human rights; declaration of neutrality; humanitarian zones; peace communities; self-determination; autonomy; denunciation of human rights violations; development of productive projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace communities • Humanitarian zones • ATCC • Peasant, Afro-descendant and Indigenous associations 	Currently active

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Other types of mechanisms				
Investigation and reporting of human rights violations	Communities living in violent contexts have resorted to documenting and reporting human rights violations in their areas. There are two clear examples of those who have used this strategy: The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, through reports on their website, have reported how the paramilitaries and the Army have committed all kinds of abuses. RDLK have resorted to reports to make the Kankuamo issue visible internationally. Through a boomerang effect (e.g. third parties such as international NGOs and governments influencing the Colombian state), they managed to put pressure on the State to open channels for dialogue and solution.	Documentation of human rights violations; reporting of human rights violations; information flow; communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDLK • Peace Community of San José de Apartadó 	Currently active
Self-protection and peacebuilding	Various peacebuilding initiatives have also served as self-protection platforms for different communities. The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, ATCC, as well as humanitarian and biodiversity zones are among these cases.	Peacebuilding; food sovereignty; safe spaces; weapons-free spaces; spaces free of armed actors; self-protection of communities vulnerable to armed conflict; autonomy; self-determination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace Community of San José de Apartadó • Humanitarian zones of the Curbaradó and Jiguamiandó rivers • ATCC • CIVIPAZ, Ariari, Meta • La Balsita Life and Work Community, Dabeiba, Antioquia 	1998-Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Other types of mechanisms				
Training schools	Various national and international organizations have opted to create training schools in human rights and International Humanitarian Law to train civilians in these areas. The objective of these trainings schools is for communities to have solid foundations for exercising protection mechanisms. This element is categorized as self-protection (rather than UCP) because in different cases it has been the populations themselves who have managed their own training.	Training of civilians in human rights and International Humanitarian Law; comprehensive human rights advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASCAMCAT • RDLK • Indigenous Guard • Maroon Guard • Peasant Guard 	Currently active
Peace laboratories	The Peace Laboratories were peacebuilding programmes carried out through bilateral cooperation agreements between the European Union and the Colombian government. They were active about between 2002 and 2010 and were present in several regions of the country that were particularly vulnerable to the armed conflict. They have been considered one of the most effective peacebuilding tools to channel international cooperation funds.	Peacebuilding; dialogue and mediation; human rights training; reconstruction of the social fabric; strengthening of civil society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LP I (Magdalena Medio) • LP II (Norte de Santander, Oriente Antioqueño, Macizo Colombiano) • LP III (Meta, Montes de María) 	2002 – 2010

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Other types of mechanisms				
Constituent assemblies	Constituent assemblies are spaces for participation and deliberation in which civil society can influence the decision-making of the executive bodies. The objectives of these assemblies are linked to the strengthening of democratic participation, the political participation of civil society, the search for political solutions to the armed conflict, and the implementation of governance models that guarantee the protection of civilians.	Peacebuilding; political participation; participatory democracy; dialogue and mediation; strengthening civil society; political solutions to the armed conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Constituent Assembly of Mogotes (Santander), 1999 • Municipal Constituent Assembly of Tarso (Antioquia), 2001 • Provincial Constituent Assembly of Eastern Antioquia, 2002-2008 	1999 – 2008
Humanitarian caravans	<p>Humanitarian caravans are usually composed of groups, activists, and accompanying entities that follow a previously agreed route in different vehicles through a specific geographical area with two objectives: to accompany the population living in the area along the route, and to raise awareness of certain problems affecting this local population.</p> <p>In 2020, a Humanitarian Caravan was organized “for life and the defence of the territory in the Micay Canyon”, and in 2021, the communities of the San Juan River organized another “for life and permanence.”</p>	Accompaniment to vulnerable populations; visibility of local problems; promoting permanence in conflict areas; defending the territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRIC; CNA; Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos (Colombia Europe United States Coordination); NOMADESC; CIJP; Congreso de los Pueblos (People's Congress); Proceso de Comunidades Negras (Black Communities Process); Corporación Ensayos (Essay Corporation); etc. 	Currently active

Unarmed Civilian Protection

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Colombia currently has five active armed conflicts whose activity area is distributed throughout almost the entire country (Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja, 2018). This war context explains the proliferation of human rights organizations but also that these organisations face a major problem, namely the persecution of human rights defenders, with 310 such social leaders assassinated in 2020 only (Indepaz, 2021). In response to this persecution, since the 1990s international actors have turned to unarmed civilian protection to accompany human rights defenders and threatened communities. According to the Selkirk College UCP database, Colombia has the second highest number of UCP organizations globally, numbering fourteen in total. Among them are PBI, CPT, PI, Operazione Colomba, FOR, APP (Witness for Peace), IAP, Paso International, PWS, the Presbyterian Church, Colombia Accompaniment and Solidarity Project, REDHER, and FOR-PP, among others (Janzen, 2020).

The UCP mechanisms that have been tracked were classified into eight categories: Physical accompaniment; Strategic litigation; Accompaniment of human rights defenders; Human rights investigation and reporting; Training schools; Psychosocial accompaniment; Peace and human rights observatories; and Alternative international tribunals.

Table 2 provides a brief description of each mechanism, the aspects it works on/with, organizations that have used it, and the period in which it was used.



Table 2. UCP mechanisms in Colombia

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Physical accompaniment	The physical presence of international observers often deters armed actors from engaging in violence. This is because perpetrators are less likely to commit crimes in front of witnesses and try to avoid drawing international attention to their activities. Physical accompaniers are usually civilian volunteers from different countries trained by international NGOs to accompany human rights defenders.	Protection of human rights defenders; defence of human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PBI ● CPT ● REDHER ● FOR-PP ● SweFOR ● Operazione Colombia ● PI ● Presbyterian Church of Colombia 	1994 – Present
Strategic litigation	Strategic litigation has been one of the tools most widely used by NGOs to support victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders. It is “strategic” in that it allows for promoting cases in which serious human rights violations have occurred and seeks not only justice or reparation, but also systemic changes that provide protection and self-protection tools.	Protection of human rights defenders; defence of human rights; documentation and reporting of human rights violations; justice, truth and reparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCJ ● CCALCP ● CAJAR ● CJL ● dhColombia 	1978 – Present
Accompanying human rights defenders	Accompaniment includes not only direct physical protection, but also a series of tools that various national and international organisations provide to human rights defenders to facilitate their work. These include: psychosocial accompaniment, training in human rights and International Humanitarian Law, legal advice, litigation, and peacebuilding mechanisms.	Psychosocial accompaniment; training in human rights and International Humanitarian Law; peacebuilding; strategic litigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presbyterian Church of Colombia ● Diocese of Barrancabermeja (Catholic Church) ● Diocese of Quibdó (Catholic Church) ● Diocese of Apartadó (Catholic Church) ● CIJP ● PSG ● CCJ ● CCALCP ● CAJAR ● CJL ● CINEP 	1978 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Investigation and reporting of human rights violations	Just as the communities have created strategies to document and denounce human rights violations, the organisations that accompany them not only train the communities to carry out this work themselves, but have also taken on the task of documenting, analyzing and disseminating the abuses to which the communities and human rights defenders they accompany are subjected. One of the most important objectives of this mechanism is to put pressure on the Colombian government through the international community to guarantee human rights.	Documentation and reporting of human rights violations; human rights advocacy; protection of human rights defenders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCJ ● CCALCP ● CAJAR ● CJL ● Pensamiento y Acción Social (Social Thought and Action) ● CINEP ● Diocese of Barrancabermeja ● Diocese of Quibdó ● Diocese of Apartadó ● CIJP ● PBI ● CPT ● REDHER ● FOR-PP ● SweFOR ● Operation Colombia ● IP ● Presbyterian Church of Colombia 	1978 – Present
Training schools	Various national and international organizations have created training schools in human rights and International Humanitarian Law to train civilians in this subject. Their aim is to provide communities with a solid basis for exercising protection mechanisms.	Training of civilians in human rights and International Humanitarian Law; comprehensive defence of human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pensamiento y Acción Social (Thought and Social Action) ● CINEP ● Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello (Claretian Corporation Norman Pérez Bello) ● COSPACC ● NOMADESC 	1972 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Psychosocial accompaniment	UCP has primarily focused on protecting human rights defenders and communities living in violent contexts from physical harm. As a result, the emotional dimension has been neglected, and the impact that sociopolitical violence has had on the emotional aspect of the accompanied people is often not considered. In this research, we therefore identify this element and highlights the name of some organizations that have sought to serve defenders, leaders, and communities comprehensively.	Pedagogical strategies; playful strategies; psycho-legal strategies; clinical strategies; reconstruction of historical memory; human rights protection; treatment of trauma caused by the armed conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporación Claretiana ● Norman Pérez Bello (Claretian Corporation Norman Pérez Bello) ● COSPACC ● CIJP ● AVRE (inactive) ● Taller de Vida (Workshop of Life) ● Centro de Atención Psicosocial (Psychosocial Care Center) ● Fundación Dos Mundos (Two World Foundation) ● Corporación Libre Ignacio Martín Baró ● Corporación Libre Ignacio Martín Baró (Ignacio Martín Baró Free Corporation) ● Corporación Vínculos (Linkages Corporation) 	1988 – Present

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Peace and human rights observatories	<p>Peace and human rights observatories, some independent and others linked to public and private institutions, have become think tanks on the armed, political and social conflicts in Colombia. They have also developed functions such as: denouncing human rights violations, accompanying organisations that work with human rights defenders, and providing inputs for decision-making and the development of public policies. As there are a large number of observatories, only a selection have been highlighted here.</p>	<p>Accompaniment to organizations that work with human rights defenders; reporting of human rights violations; consultancy for public and private entities; research on the conflicts in Colombia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Obserpaz ● Human Rights and Conflicts Observatory of Indepaz ● CERAC ● Human Rights Observatory of the Diocese of Tumaco ● Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Observatory of Fundepaz ● Magdalena Medio Comprehensive Peace Observatory ● Peacebuilding Observatory, Jorge Tadeo Lozano University ● Orpaz ● Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Observatory, Sergio Arboleda University ● Latin American Observatory of Human Rights and Companies, Externado University of Colombia ● Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Observatory of the Colombia Europe United States Coordination 	Currently active

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations	Activity period
Alternative international tribunals	<p>The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) was born in Bologna in 1979 as a direct continuation of the Russell Tribunals on Vietnam (1966-1967) and on the dictatorships of the Latin-American Southern Cone (1973-1976). The central objective of the Tribunal is to become a permanent institution capable of giving visibility to those peoples who are victims of violations of the fundamental rights of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples, proclaimed in Algiers in 1976. The PPT has sat and delivered judgments on 48 occasions. In 2021 it reviewed the Colombian case to judge political genocide, impunity and crimes against peace. Unlike an ordinary tribunal, the PPT not only seeks popular justice for the involvement of states in all kinds of crimes, but also issues recommendations to ensure that these events are not repeated.</p>	<p>State crimes; popular justice; peoples' rights; court of opinion; recommendations; reporting; investigation and documentation of violations of fundamental rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT 	1979 – Present

UCP is not limited solely to accompaniment by international organizations. In Colombia, various national NGOs have been accompanying many communities since the 1970s, even before PBI and PI arrived. Among the names that stand out in this group of organizations are CINEP, CAJAR, CIJP, CJL, CCJ, CPDH, CCALCP, the Colombian Platform for Human Rights, Thought and Social Action, the Colombia Europe United States Coordination, the Claretian Corporation Norman Pérez Bello, COSPACC, NOMADESC, and many others.

As demonstrated in the literature review here, some of the key priorities of these organizations' work are: land grabbing issues; the formalization of land titles; displacement by armed groups; mining-energy projects that have a direct impact on peasant, Afro, and Indigenous communities; hydroelectric projects that have flooded ancestral territories and lands central to the memory of conflict victims; implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform; the vindication of the right to territory; the assassination of leaders defending their lands; collective land titling; socio-environmental problems related to all

kinds of phenomena that degrade the areas where different communities live; water grabbing; the assassination of human rights defenders and social leaders; the promotion of a public policy that guarantees the "right to defend defenders"; strategic litigation in Colombian high courts and international tribunals; training of civilians in human rights and International Humanitarian Law; the promotion of projects for the development of communities; and spiritual and psychosocial accompaniment of human rights defenders and victims of the armed conflict. Tables [6](#), [8](#) and [9](#) provide an overview of the national civil and religious organizations that provide accompaniment in Colombia.

Organizations

Table 3. Peasant organizations

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Cauca, Northern Cauca, Catatumbo region	Peasant Guard	The peasant guards of Cauca take as their closest reference the civic guards that the ANUC created in the 1960s. Given the force that the Indigenous and Maroon guards were gradually gaining, peasant organizations such as ORDEURCA and FENSUAGRO decided to create their own peasant guards to defend their territories against threats from external armed actors.	Defence of peasant territories; defence of peasant communities; comprehensive defence of human rights; emergency care.	2014 – Present
Convención, Teorama, El Tarra, El Carmen, Tibú (Norte de Santander)	ASCAMCAT	In 2006, a meeting of the Catatumbo peasant movement was held in the village of San Pablo, municipality of Teorama. In that meeting, ASCAMCAT was founded amid a new cycle of violence that included forced recruitment, extrajudicial executions, illegal detentions and forced disappearances. The Association was born as a peace initiative that sought to defend the human rights of the peasants of Catatumbo.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; training of civilians in human rights; documentation and reporting of human rights violations; Peasant Guard; permanence in the territory; humanitarian shelters; struggle for a Peasant Reserve Zone of Catatumbo.	2006 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Yondó and Remedios (Antioquia); Cantagallo and San Pablo (Bolívar); Barrancabermeja (Santander)	ACVC	The ACVC is an organization whose activity is limited to the Magdalena Medio region. It is made up of 120 Community Action Boards, some fishing committees, cooperatives, and other peasant groups. Its central purpose is the comprehensive defence of human rights and the struggle for land.	Attention to internal peasant displacement; comprehensive defence of human rights; implementation of productive projects that provide food sovereignty; local and regional development planning; substitution of illicit crops; promotion and training of peasant organizational processes.	1996 – Present
Colombian Massif	CIMA	The Comité de Integración del Macizo Colombiano (Colombian Massif Integration Committee) was born in 1993, following a process of organization of the peasantry of the Colombian Mazico region that had begun in the 1970s. Its work has focused on teaching agroecology and promoting productive projects in this area, and the defence of food sovereignty, territory and human rights. Over the last decade, its members have also sought the recognition of peasants as subjects of rights.	Food sovereignty; comprehensive defence of human rights; peasant organization; defence of the territory; agroecology education; strengthening of productive projects.	1993 – Present
La India, Landázuri (Santander)	ATCC	The ATCC was founded in the village of La India (Landázuri), in the Carare river basin close to the Magdalena valley. It was created by a group of 7,000 peasants who had endured the violence unleashed by military, paramilitaries, and guerrilla groups for more than fifteen years. Faced with the escalation of the armed conflict, the community decided to establish itself as a neutral territory in which it would not collaborate with any of the warring parties.	Nonviolence; peasant organization; food sovereignty; self-determination; civil resistance; declaration of neutrality; collective reparation.	1987 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Apartadó (Antioquia), Tierralta (Córdoba)	Peace Community of San José de Apartadó	<p>The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó has become one of the country's most studied and recognized civilian self-protection organizations. It was founded in 1997 in the village of San José de Apartadó amid a context of conflict and paramilitary violence. The Peace Community members reached an agreement to remain neutral in the face of the conflict and peacefully resist the armed groups that tried to enter their territories. They have been victims of persecution not only by the paramilitaries, but also by the army and the State.</p>	Food sovereignty; self-determination; prohibition to carry weapons; prohibition of the presence of armed groups; social cohesion; income redistribution; fair trade; agroecological productive projects; historical memory; comprehensive defence of human rights; documentation and reporting of human rights violations.	1997 – Present
Countrywide	FENSUAGRO	<p>This trade union organization is comprised of peasants, workers, Indigenous people, and Afro-descendants who live or work in the Colombian rural sector. Its main objectives are the promotion of a comprehensive agrarian reform, the implementation of "Buen Vivir" ("Good Living"), and the defence of the human rights of Colombian peasants. The Federation has also promoted the creation of peasant guards.</p>	Food sovereignty; comprehensive agrarian reform; peasant economy; defence of human rights.	1984 – Present
Tierralta, Ayapel, Montería, Montelíbano, Puerto Libertador, San José de Uré, La Apartada, San Andrés de Sotavento, Lorica (Córdoba)	GTTC	<p>The GTTC is composed of thirteen organizations of the department of Córdoba that came together with the common objective of demanding that the government solve the land problems in the department. They have supported the processes of land recovery for the displaced population and have coordinated the processes that led to the constitution of the Zenú Reservation of Alto San Jorge.</p>	Food sovereignty; struggle for land; land reclamation; agroecological productive projects; struggle for the right to water; access to communications infrastructure; access to health services.	2010 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Popayán, Antomoreno, Timbío, La Sierra, Argelia, Sotará (Cauca)	ORDEURCA	<p>A non-profit organization that carries out social activities in several municipalities of the department of Cauca. Currently, it is linked to the CNA and the People's Congress. It is committed to the defence of human rights and to improving the quality of life of the people in the areas where it works. It also carries out training and education workshops and supports actions that promote development and social transformation.</p>	Comprehensive defence of human rights; defence of peasants' rights; comprehensive development; strengthening of the internal organization of communities; consolidation of peasant guards.	2009 – Present
Segovia and Remedios (Antioquia)	CAHUCOPANA	<p>The organization emerged in 2004 in the context of a humanitarian crisis suffered by the inhabitants of Northeast Antioquia. The crisis was provoked by attacks of the paramilitaries and the Army.</p>	Comprehensive defence of human rights; coexistence, permanence and dignified life in the territories of the peasant and mining communities of Northeast Antioquia; reporting of extrajudicial executions; implementation of the Peace Agreement with the FARC; memory; collective reparations.	2004 – Present
El Castillo (Meta)	CIVIPAZ	<p>The inhabitants of Puerto Esperanza (El Castillo) suffered violence exerted by the Centauros Bloc of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia - AUC). In 2003, 60 families were displaced, and the area was left empty. However, in mid-2005, inspired by other experiences in the country, the residents decided to return to create the Humanitarian Zone.</p>	Comprehensive defence of human rights; nonviolence; community life project; prohibition of carrying weapons; prohibition of the presence of armed actors; truth; justice; reparations.	2006 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Dabeiba (Antioquia)	La Balsita Life and Work Community	The community was formed in 1997, after 38 families had been displaced.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; socio-environmental justice; reparations; truth; nonviolence.	1997 – Present
Santa Rosa del Sur (Bolívar)	FEDAGROMISBOL	The Federation is composed of fishers, peasants, and small miners from the south of Bolívar. They accompany the 57 associations affiliated.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; defence of the inhabitants of southern Bolívar; struggle for land.	1989 – Present
Catatumbo, Teorama, El Carmen, Convención, El Tarra, Tibú, San Calixto, Hacarí, Ocaña, La Playa, Sardinata (Norte de Santander)	CISCA	This organization brings together different rural and indigenous social organizations of Catatumbo. During its first years as an organization, they worked for their return to the lands that were taken away from them by the armed conflict. They have fought to remain in the territory for more than fifteen years.	Remaining in the territory; return; comprehensive defence of human rights; restructuring of the social fabric; social integration of communities; food sovereignty; self-determination.	2004 – Present
Countrywide	CNA	After the coffee strikes that took place in 1995 as a result of the crisis in the coffee sector, the Colombian peasantry understood the importance of creating proposals that would unite them politically and socially. Consequently, in 1997, during the 1st National Agrarian Forum, the CNA was constituted as a platform that brings together different grassroots peasant organizations. Among others, the platform seeks to promote agrarian reform, collective consultations, the protection of peasant economies and the strengthening of processes and initiatives that reflect the popular interests of the peasantry.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; environmental recovery; promotion of the peasant economy; support for the agrarian movement; promotion of agrarian reform.	1997 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Antioquia	ACA	<p>The Association was legally established in 1994. However, its work had already begun after the collapse of the international coffee pact in 1989 and the beginning of the crisis in Colombian agriculture due to the liberalization policies of the country's economy. Until 1995, the most robust base of the ACA was in the southwest of Antioquia. Its work concentrated on technical training for agricultural projects, political education, and the recovery of land and farms. With the escalation of the armed conflict and the onslaught of paramilitarism in the mid-1990s, some of the Association's leaders were assassinated and many of its members became victims of forced displacement. As a result, from 1995 to 2006 the ACA concentrated on supporting peasant communities living as displaced persons in Medellín and other parts of the Aburrá Valley. In 2006, the ACA decided to resume its work in the countryside, and intense work began in Eastern Antioquia, especially in the municipality of San Francisco. Currently, the ACA is present in different municipalities in the Oriente region of Antioquia: San Francisco, Argelia, Nariño, El Santuario and Cocorná. Its work focuses on the promotion and defence of human rights, the organizational strengthening of peasant communities, education/training and promotion of an economy of solidarity and resistance.</p>	<p>Technical training for agricultural projects; political education; recovery of land and farms; promotion of permanence in the territories; comprehensive defence of human rights; strengthening of peasant organizations; promotion of the peasant solidarity economy.</p>	1994 – Present

Table 4. Organizations of Afro-descendants

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Bajo Atrato, Urabá Chocoano	ASCOBA	ASCOBA was founded in 2003 as a return strategy for the communities that were displaced from Bajo Atrato during the Genesis and Cacarica operations. By 2011, the Association had the affiliation of 57 community councils belonging to the areas of the rivers Larga Tumaradó, Curbaradó, Salaquí, Domingodó, Pedeguita Mancilla, and Atrato. The organization became a defence mechanism for the territory and the people who inhabit it.	Representation of the Chocoan and Chilapa communities (mestizos and/or Sinuano descendants) of the Bajo Atrato; defence of the territory; protection of the the Bajo Atrato communities; strengthening of organizational capacity; protection of humanitarian and biodiversity zones.	2003 – Present
Riosucio (Chocó)	CAVIDA	In 1997, the Army and the United Self-Defence Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (Autodefensas Unidas de Córdoba y Urabá) jointly launched operations Cacarica and Genesis. These incursions caused the displacement of more than 3,500 people who lived in the Bajo Atrato and who were only able to return to their homes in 2000, when CAVIDA was established. The Nueva Esperanza and Pueblo Nuevo humanitarian zones are within this territory.	Prohibition of carrying weapons; truth; justice; reparation; non-repetition; prohibition of the presence of armed actors; collective territories; collective titling.	2001 – Present
Northern Cauca, San Basilio de Palenque (Bolívar)	Cimarron Guard (or Maroon Guard)	The Cimarron Guard Kekelo Ri Tielo Prieto was founded at the First Congress of Black Communities, inspired by the experiences of the indigenous guards of northern Cauca. This organization is part of a process to strengthen the justice system of Afro-descendant communities. Its main tasks are related to the defence of collective territories and the resolution of conflicts within the communities. Currently, San Basilio de Palenque also has its own guard.	Defence of collective territories; own justice system; Afro-descendant identity; defence of Afro-descendant communities; defence of human rights; defence of mobilization processes.	2013 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Providencia and Santa Catalina Islands	Raizal Guard	<p>After Hurricane Iota devastated the islands of Providencia and Santa Catalina, the Colombian Navy installed a floating dock and a coastguard station on the site of the Fish and Farm fishermen's cooperative dock, without reaching a prior agreement with the community. The national government's intentions to establish an operating point for the Navy date back several years, but thanks to a consultation that took place in 2015, the Raizales had managed to stop its construction. This situation represents territorial dispossession for the locals and violates their rights as an ethnic community.</p> <p>In response, the Raizal fishermen set up the Camp for Dignity, which is not only the physical materialization of the community's rejection of the Coast Guard, but has also become a meeting point where collective solutions to the islands' problems are proposed. The Raizal Guard was also established. Their primary task is to ensure the rights of the Raizal people which, while already violated in the past, have been seriously compromised since the passage of Hurricane Iota. The reconstruction of the islands has barely advanced. Essential facilities such as the hospital and schools have not been given the necessary urgency, and many of the islanders continue to live in tents and shacks.</p>	Comprehensive defence of human rights; organization of social mobilizations; ensuring the reconstruction of the islands of Providencia and Santa Catalina; protection of the territory; coordination of different sectors for the restoration of the island's economy.	2021 – Present
Northern Cauca	ACONC	An ethnic organization that brings together 41 community councils of Afro-descendant groups from northern Cauca and ethnic organizations located in ten municipalities in the region. It has created Cimarron (Maroon) guards in several municipalities where it is present.	Accompaniment of Afro-descendant communities; strengthening of organizational processes of Afro-descendant organisations; defence and promotion of human rights; defence of ancestral territory.	Currently active

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Chocó, Medio Atrato	COCOMACIA	An ethnic organization composed of 124 Community Councils of the Medio Atrato. In 1997, they were collectively transferred title to a territory of 695.245 hectares in Medio Atrato.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; representation of the Afro-descendant communities of the Medio Atrato collective land title; defence of the territory.	Currently active
Alto Atrato, Bagadó, Cértegui, Lloró, El Atrato (Chocó)	COCOMOPOCA	An ethnic organization composed of 43 Community Councils of the Alto Atrato. In 1999, it began a collective land titling process of the territory under its jurisdiction before the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCORA). In 2011 it was awarded two portions of land totalling 73,317 hectares.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; representation of the Afro-descendant communities of the Alto Atrato; collective land titling; defence of the territory.	Currently active
Guapi, Timbiquí, López de Micay (Cauca)	COCONAUCA	COCONAUCA is a space of coordination and confluence of eight community councils and nine grassroots organizations. They are currently located in three Cauca municipalities: Guapi, Timbiquí, and López de Micay.	Political education; reporting of human rights violations; raising the profile of the Afro-descendant community; comprehensive protection of human rights.	1993-Present

Table 5. Indigenous organizations

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Northern Cauca	ACIN	The Association emerged in 1994 as a response by the indigenous communities of northern Cauca to threats from landowners backed by paramilitary groups. It is currently made up of 19 indigenous cabildos. The Indigenous Guard is one of the self-protection strategies promoted by the ACIN.	Defence of ancestral territories; social mobilization; civil resistance; defence of indigenous communities; formulation of proposals for the national government; strengthening of indigenous organization at local and regional level.	1994 – Present
Cauca	CRIC	CRIC is an association to which most indigenous authorities in Cauca belong. It was founded in 1971 with seven councils (cabildos) and the same number of indigenous reservations (resguardos). Over the years, more reservations and councils have joined the CRIC. Currently, they reach the concentration of almost all the indigenous representatives of Cauca. The Indigenous Guard is one of the self-protection measures promoted by the CRIC.	Recovery of indigenous reservations; defence of ancestral territory; expansion of reservations; strengthening of councils (cabildos); internal justice; defence of indigenous identity; training of indigenous teachers; strengthening of internal processes; defence of the family.	1971-Present
Norte del Cauca, Cauca, Alto San Jorge resguardo (reservation) of the Zenú indigenous people (in the municipalities of Montelíbano and Puerto Libertador, Córdoba)	Indigenous Guard (Kiwe Thegnas)	The Indigenous Guard is an ancestral mechanism that was conceived as an instrument of resistance, unity, and autonomy. Its main priorities are the defence of the territories and of the life plan of indigenous communities. It is an unarmed civil authority that exercises protection and civil resistance functions. There are currently indigenous guards associated with different peoples in various areas of the country; an official number is unknown, but it is estimated that there could be as many as 60,000 guards.	Defence of ancestral territories; defence of indigenous communities; protection of demonstrators in social mobilizations; attention to emergency situations; accompaniment of councils (cabildos); accompaniment of human rights defenders; civil resistance; territorial control; indigenous legislation; defence of human rights.	2001 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Puerto Caicedo and Orito (Putumayo)	Indigenous Nasa People	<p>The indigenous Nasa people are represented by the Kiwe Ukwé, Yu' Cxijme, Yu'kh Zxicxkwe, Nasa Kwuma, Te'wesx, and Kwe's Kiwe cabildos (councils) and the resguardas (reservations) of Santa Rosa de Juanambú, Campo Alegre, Alpes Orientales and Floresta Alto Coqueto (Puerto Caicedo and Orito). They have been affected by fumigations with glyphosate carried out by the Colombian government in their territories. This action violated their rights to health, food, and the environment. Furthermore, this activity was carried out without recognizing the right to free, prior and informed consultation. Together with the CIJP, the Nasa people brought their case before the Constitutional Court of Colombia.</p>	Right to health; fumigation with glyphosate; right to the environment; right to food; right to prior consultation; self-determination; autonomy; strategic litigation.	Currently active
Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta	CIT	<p>The Confederation was founded in 1978 by the Kankuamo, Arhuaco, and Kogi indigenous peoples as an alliance to defend their interests in the Sierra Nevada. They have worked on the acquisition of territories within the Black Line, the defence of indigenous peoples' human rights, strategic litigation before national and international courts, the conservation of the mountain territory, and the creation of productive projects.</p>	Food sovereignty; sacred space; Línea Negra (Black Line); strategic litigation; comprehensive defence of human rights; conservation of indigenous reserves.	1978 – Present
Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta	RDLK	<p>The Network was established under the umbrella of the Kankuamo Indigenous Organization to document and report the violation of human rights of the indigenous groups of the Sierra Nevada, especially those belonging to the Kankuamo people.</p>	Comprehensive defence of human rights; strategic litigation; partnership with national and international organizations; documentation and reporting of human rights violations.	Currently active

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta	OIK	The OIK is the organization in charge of representing the Kankuamo indigenous people. Together with the ONIC and CAJAR, it has denounced human rights violations against the Kankuamo people and others living in the Sierra before national and international bodies. One of its most important mechanisms has been the RDLK.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; strategic litigation; partnership with national and international organizations; documentation and report human rights violations; self-government; self-determination; autonomy; internal justice.	Currently active
Countrywide	ONIC	The ONIC is a national body that brings together the cabildos (councils) of Colombian indigenous peoples. The ONIC has been responsible for strengthening and supporting the self-government of the Colombian indigenous people, ensuring the protection of the human rights of ancestral communities, defending the indigenous reserves, and representing the interests of the indigenous peoples.	Comprehensive protection of human rights; protection of indigenous reserves; protection of indigenous communities; internal justice; self-government; self-determination; autonomy; denunciation and documentation of human rights violations; social mobilization.	1982 – Present
Chocó	Orewa Association	The Association is recognized as a traditional authority in the department of Chocó. It is a public entity that represents 195 indigenous communities from 19 municipalities belonging to the Embera Dóbida, Katío, Chamí, and Tule indigenous peoples.	Defence of indigenous people's human rights; indigenous political representation; internal justice; defence of indigenous reserves; accompaniment to indigenous councils.	2004 – Present
Antioquia	OIA	The OIA is a grassroots organization that politically represents the indigenous peoples of the department of Antioquia: Embera Eyávida, Embera Dóbida, Embera Chamí, Guna Dule, and Zenú.	Indigenous political representation; defence of indigenous reserves; comprehensive defence of indigenous human rights; internal justice.	1985 -Present

Table 6. Other types of organizations

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Cantagallo, San Pablo, Simití and Santa Rosa (Bolívar); Remedios, Segovia, Yondó, Puerto Nare, Maceo, Cisneros and Puerto Berrio (Antioquia); Puerto Wilches, Piedecuesta, San Vicente de Chucurí, Sabana de Torres and Barrancabermeja (Santander); San Alberto, San Martín, Gamarra, Pelaya and La Paz (Cesar); La Esperanza and Cúcuta (Norte de Santander)	ASORVIMM	ASORVIMM emerged in 2004 as a preparatory space for the National Assembly of State Victims. Its constitutive assembly was attended by 1,100 delegates living in Magdalena Medio. It arose in response to the need to connect the victims and to seek solutions to the violation of human rights.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; coordination of the victims of the armed conflict; denunciation of human rights violations.	2004 – Present
Yondó (Antioquia); Sabana de Torres, Puente Sogamoso and Puerto Wilches (Santander); San Pablo (Bolívar)	CREDHOS	The Corporation was founded in 1987 in the city of Barrancabermeja amid the resurgence of the armed conflict in Magdalena Medio. It emerged as a civil organization that sought to defend human rights, democracy, and International Humanitarian Law.	Training of civilians in human rights and international humanitarian law; documentation and reporting of human rights violations; legal assistance to victims; Enfoque Humanitario magazine; radio and television broadcasting programmes.	1987-Present
Guamocó, Santa Rosa del Sur (Bolívar)	AHERAMIGUA	AHERAMIGUA was formed in 2007 as an initiative of the artisanal miners, peasants and Christian communities of Guamocó (Santa Rosa del Sur, Bolívar). It sought to struggle for human rights, permanence in the territory and a dignified life for the inhabitants of Guamocó.	Comprehensive defence of human rights.	2007 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Alto Caribona, Montecristo (Bolívar)	ASOMIWA	The Association was created in 2008 as a response by the community of traditional miners of the former Mina Walter village to a possible displacement. Its main purpose is to defend the rights of Afro-descendant miners and victims of the armed conflict who live in Alto Caribona.	Solidarity economy; defence of traditional mining; equitable redistribution of exploration and exploitation rights; sustainable mining.	2008 – Present
Cúcuta (Norte de Santander)	MFOP	By 2018, the Mesa was made up of 33 organisations, representing 5,200 families and almost 45,000 victims of the armed conflict in Norte de Santander.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; coordination of the victims of the armed conflict.	Foundation date unknown; currently active
Ocaña (Santander)	ASODEPO	Not much information was found. This organization is accompanied by the CCALCP.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; coordination of the victims of the armed conflict.	Currently active
Norte de Santander, Atlántico, Bolívar, Sucre, Antioquia, Santander, Boyacá, Casanare, Meta, Caldas, Tolima, Bogotá, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and Nariño.	MOVICE	MOVICE is an organizational process established in 2005. It brings together more than 200 organizations of victims of forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and selective assassinations, as well as displaced persons. It also involves accompanying organizations and human rights defenders. It has a presence in fifteen departments of the country.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; defence of victims of state crimes; documentation and denunciation of human rights violations; recognition of the state's responsibility towards its victims.	2005 – Present
Bucaramanga (Santander)	Comité para la Defensa del Agua y el Páramo de Santurbán (Committee for the Defence of Water and the Páramo of Santurbán)	A civic platform made up of different actors and organizations that defend the Santurbán water basin from mining exploitation.	Environmental defence; right to water.	2010 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Charalá (Santander)	Charalá Environmental Oversight Committee	In 2003, the agro-company AVIFONCE bought a 600-hectare plot of land for poultry production in the micro-basin of the Sanguina and La Potrera streams in the municipality of Charalá. As soon as the engineering works began to prepare the area for its productive purpose, the effects of environmental damage became visible. A group of twenty people formed the Committee to ensure the protection of the site and to demonstrate the violation of Charalá's land-use planning scheme.	Social mobilization; environmental defence; legal actions against companies causing environmental damage; legal advice; environmental education.	2003 – Unknown
San Andrés (Santander)	Peasant defenders of the Laguna de Ortices	In 2012, seismic exploration began for the Seismic Line 4B 2D/09 project. The community living around Laguna de Ortiz (Ortiz lagoon) started to see the movement of different officials accompanied by the Army and soon understood that they were carrying out exploration activities. They decided to organize themselves and started a mobilization that sought to defend the preservation of the lagoon.	Environmental defence.	2012 – Present
Barrancabermeja (Santander)	Proyecto Ciudadela Educativa y Desarrollo Integral de la Comuna 7 (Educational Citadel Project and Comprehensive Development of Commune 7)	In 1997, professionals from the Westing House arrived in Barrancabermeja's Commune 7, where they would oversee the assembly of an electric power generation plant. In a context of urban violence in which the guerrilla group ELN had control over different neighbourhoods in the area, however, the Americans demanded the construction of military posts to guarantee the security of their employees. Faced with this situation, the communities decided to establish a dialogue table. One of the agreements reached was developing the Ciudadela Educativa y Desarrollo Integral Comuna 7 project, which sought to meet the educational and employment needs of the area's inhabitants. The Ciudadela was founded in 2005 and is still active.	Development for peace; access to education; job opportunities.	2005 -Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Bogotá	Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello (Claretian Corporation Norman Pérez Bello)	With the escalation of paramilitary activity throughout the country during the 1990s, the CIJP coordinated with Claretian missionaries to establish a presence in some of the most affected areas. Amid their work with the victims, a group of volunteers decided to unite to form the Norman Pérez Bello Human Rights Committee, which in 2002 was renamed the "Norman Pérez Bello Claretian Corporation." The organization worked on consolidating CIVIPAZ and other initiatives such as the Mending Our History Workshop School, psychosocial support for victims, accompanying various vulnerable communities in the country, holding popular education workshops, and providing shelter for social leaders and human rights defenders who are at risk.	Comprehensive defence of human rights; psychosocial support; accompaniment to victims; peacebuilding; training and popular education workshops; research on human rights and peacebuilding.	2002 -Present
Casanare, Tolima, Boyacá, Bogotá.	COSPACC	The Corporation is dedicated to the care, organization, and accompaniment of victims who have suffered severe human rights violations. Its principal places of activity are the departments of Tolima, Boyacá, Casanare, and the city of Bogotá. The organization emerged in 2002 at the initiative of some of the survivors of the murder of members of the Departmental Association of Peasant Users of Casanare (Asociación Departamental de Usuarios Campesinos de Carare).	Reconstruction of the social fabric; accompaniment to victims; comprehensive defence of human rights; legal advice; documentation and reporting of human rights violations.	Currently active

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Barranquilla (Atlántico), Bogotá, Ibagué (Tolima), Medellín (Antioquia), Arauca (Arauca), Bucaramanga (Santander), Popayán (Cauca), Cali (Valle del Cauca).	CSPP	The Committee is an organization with a presence in six regions of the country (Antioquia, Atlántico, Cundinamarca, Santander, Tolima, and Valle del Cauca). It is recognized for being the oldest human rights organization in Colombia, concentrating four decades of work on the promotion and defence of the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty. It defends the right to social protest, the work of environmental leaders and human rights defenders. It has also collaborated with the JEP (Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace).	Defence and promotion of the human rights of persons deprived of liberty; defence of the right to social protest; promotion of truth, justice and reparation; dialogue with state entities; prevention of human rights violations; promotion of international humanitarian law.	1973-Present
Bogotá	FNEB	The Foundation was founded in exile after the Bautista family had to leave the country due to threats in 1997. For years, the Bautista family had been engaged in a long struggle against enforced disappearances in Colombia, focusing in particular on the case of Nydia Erika Bautista, a former M-19 militant who was disappeared by the army in 1987.	Search for missing persons; justice; truth; reparations; fight against enforced disappearance; peacebuilding.	Currently active
Cali (Cauca)	NOMADESC	The Association is a national human rights organization. It was founded after years of work with communities affected by the armed conflict and debate on the defence of human rights in Colombia. Its professionals belong to different disciplines and work from a pedagogical-investigative and socio-legal perspective. They support social, trade union, women's, indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant organizations. Their president, Berenice Celeita, was a victim of Operation Dragon, through which members of the Army's Brigade III spied on, threatened, and persecuted union leaders, political opponents, and human rights defenders.	Accompaniment of communities affected by the armed conflict; comprehensive defence of human rights; participatory action research; environmental impacts of the armed conflict; documentation and denunciation of human rights violations; training of civilians in human rights.	1999-Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Bogotá	dhColombia	<p>The Association was founded in 2014 by a group of legal professionals and professionals from other related disciplines to work with victims of human rights violations, socio-political violence, and crimes against humanity. Through strategic litigation, they have taken cases to different national and international courts seeking justice and reparation for the victims.</p>	<p>Strategic litigation; protection of human rights; peace building; comprehensive defence of victims of human rights violations.</p>	2014 – Present
Medellín	<p>Corporación Cultural para el Desarrollo Arlequín y los Juglares (Harlequin and the Jugglers Cultural Corporation for Development)</p>	<p>Within the existing literature on UCP and self-protection in Colombia, little is said about the role of artistic-cultural organizations or strategies. Harlequin and the Jugglers (Arlequín y los Juglares) is an example of art as a self-protection strategy. It was founded in 1972 by artists who wanted to bring a message of hope and life to the country's population hit by political, social, and armed conflicts.</p> <p>Through theatre, its active participation in defence of human rights, and its articulation with the social movement, Arlequín y Los Juglares has worked to strengthen the self-protection capacities of different communities through the following elements: creativity as a tool that allows transforming reality and generating solutions to protect oneself in violent contexts, the recognition of individual and collective capacities to promote community care, psychosocial support, the promotion of specific strategies to better address catharsis processes, the teaching of denunciation tools through art, pedagogy around the protection of human rights, and the empowerment of women who lead different neighborhoods in Medellín.</p>	<p>Theater as a tool in defence of human rights; artistic pedagogy proposals; psychosocial support; art as a vehicle of hope; peacebuilding.</p>	1972 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Antioquia	PSG	<p>PSG emerged as a platform that brings together more than sixty organizations from the department of Antioquia to guarantee the work of human rights defenders. Its work has focused on three areas: prevention and protest, protection, and investigation. In the first area, the platforms seeks to promote public policies that protect human rights defenders against threats that may put their lives at risk. They also seek to design and consolidate measures and actions in favor of social protest. Here it is important to note that the PSG defends the idea that protest is an exercise in defence of rights. In the protection area, PSG activates the most immediate actions to protect defenders at imminent risk. Finally, in the investigation area it seeks to influence the judicial field with regard to the violations suffered by defenders. The objective is to clarify specific facts in criminal contexts.</p>	<p>Protection of human rights defenders; prevention of risks for human rights defenders; investigation; guarantees for the work of human rights defenders.</p>	2012 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Countrywide	Programa Somos Defensores (We Are Defenders Programme)	<p>After the assassination of human rights defenders Mario Calderón and Elsa Alvarado in 1997, in 1998 the organizations Benposta Nación de Muchachos, CCJ, CINEP and Asociación MINGA joined forces to create the Non-Governmental Programme for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (Programa No Gubernamental de Protección a Defensores de Derechos Humanos). In 2006, CCJ, Benposta and MINGA continued the initiative and adopted the name Somos Defensores (We Are Defenders) Programme. It is a space that seeks to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders in Colombia through a comprehensive programme based on five lines of action: direct protection, which provides support and accompaniment; pedagogy, which seeks to promote self-protection and protection through workshops and advice to social organizations; strategic communication, which aims to create a public opinion favorable to the defence of human rights; an Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Persons, which documents and investigates attacks against defenders; and advocacy, which is responsible for lobbying the government, state entities, embassies, and the international community to promote public policies that protect defenders and communities.</p>	Protection of human rights defenders; protection of communities affected by violence; comprehensive protection; direct protection; training on self-protection and protection; accompaniment of human rights defenders; national and international advocacy; documentation and investigation of attacks on human rights defenders; strategic communication on the defence of human rights; lobbying with national and international organizations.	1998 – Present

Table 7. International NGOs

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Barrancabermeja (Santander), Magdalena Medio	CPT	CPT arrived in Colombia in 2001 at the formal invitation of the Colombian Mennonite Church to accompany communities living amid an escalation armed conflict in Magdalena Medio. Its headquarters are located in Barrancabermeja. CPT have eight permanent members as well as reservists who come to the country for short periods.	Accompaniment; spiritual accompaniment; nonviolent resistance; accompaniment to community processes and grassroots organizations; alliances with human rights organizations.	2001 – Present
Santa Rosa del Sur (Bolívar); Teorama, El Carmen, Convención, El Tarra, Tibú, San Calixto, Hacarí, Ocaña, La Playa and Sardinata (Norte de Santander)	REDHER	The Network has been operating since 1994; however, in 1999 it began to accompany different Colombian organizations, including FEDEAGROMISBOL, CISCA, the CNA, and the FCSPP. They also work in the struggle against impunity and repression and for the defence of natural resources. They have also supported initiatives such as the Permanent Peoples' Tribunals and the Peoples' Congress.	Physical accompaniment; fight against impunity; defence of natural resources; protection of human rights defenders.	1999 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Apartadó (Antioquia); Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca)	FOR-PP	<p>FOR began accompaniment in Colombia in 2002 after visiting the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó on several occasions. In 2011, FOR USA underwent several changes that led it to cut its financial support to its programme in Colombia. However, the team members in the country realized that there was still a need for accompaniment and decided to form an independent organization called FOR-PP. The organization withdrew for several months from San José de Apartadó due to a lack of financial resources, but returned in July 2021. Although they do not currently carry out permanent accompaniment in Apartadó, they do carry out political accompaniment and periodically go to carry out physical accompaniment, too.</p> <p>The organization also accompanies the Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space in Buenaventura. They began their work there in 2014 when the community established itself as a Humanitarian Space; in 2021 they returned due to a growing wave of violence in the port.</p>	Political accompaniment; physical accompaniment; protection of human rights defenders.	2002 – Present
Quibdó (Chocó), Bogotá	SweFOR	<p>SweFOR arrived in Colombia in 2004 and started with a labor office in Bogotá and later expanded to Quibdó. Currently, they accompany the Claretian Corporation Norman Pérez Bello, Gladys Macías, COCOMACIA, Orewa Association, and COCOMOPOCA.</p>	Physical accompaniment; protection of human rights defenders; preventive presence; strategic communication; non-interference in the work of those accompanied.	2004-Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Apartadó (Antioquia)	Operazione Colomba (Operation Dove)	The organization arrived in Colombia in 2009. Its volunteers live in the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó with the primary objective of providing international accompaniment. They have also worked with the CIJP in the accompaniment of human rights defenders in the departments of Meta, Chocó, and Valle del Cauca.	International accompaniment; peacebuilding; accompaniment of displaced persons to their villages of origin; protection of human rights defenders; accompaniment of humanitarian zones; denunciation of human rights violations.	2009-Present
Apartadó, Yondó, Segovia and Remedios (Antioquia); Tierralta (Córdoba), Buenaventura and Cali (Cauca); Cantagallo and San Pablo (Bolívar); Bucaramanga and Barrancabermeja (Santander); Bogotá	PBI	PBI is an international NGO responsible for protecting human rights defenders who are threatened or at risk because of their work. Currently, they provide direct accompaniment to: the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, ACVC, CAHUCOPANA, CCALCP, CJL, Claudia Julieta Duque, COSPACC, CREDHOS, David Ravelo Crespo, CSPP, FNEB, NOMADESC, and dhColombia.	International accompaniment; protection of human rights defenders; denunciation of human rights violations; nonviolence; peacebuilding; physical accompaniment.	1994 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Puerto Wilches (Santander); San Pablo and Simití (Bolívar); Guapi, Timbiquí and López de Micay (Cauca); Ayapel, Montería, San José de Uré, Tierralta, Montelíbano, Puerto Libertador, La Apartada, San Andrés de Sotavento and Lorica (Córdoba); La Primavera (Vichada) and El Paso (Cesar)	PI	PI has been in Colombia since 2009, working with grassroots organizations and communities defending their rights. The organization has a presence in Magdalena Medio in five peasant communities (El Guayabo, Bella Unión, Las Pava, Nueva Esperanza, and El Garzal); in Cauca with the organization COCOCAUCA and with ACIN; in the department of Córdoba with Las Catas and Quindío peasant communities, the indigenous reservation of the Embera people of Dochama and the Córdoba Land and Territory Group; in the department of Cesar with the community of El Hatillo; and in the department of Vichada with the indigenous reservations of La Llanura and La Pascua.	International accompaniment; protection of human rights defenders; denunciation of human rights violations; nonviolence; peacebuilding; physical accompaniment; promotion of public policies to defend human rights defenders.	2009 – Present
Countrywide	APP (Witness for Peace)	APP was founded in 1983, but it came to Colombia to establish itself permanently in 2000 in the wake of US support for Plan Colombia. The organization's work has mainly focused on denouncing the effects of US policies on the country and their influence on the political, social, and armed conflict. In particular, APP work by sending delegations around the country to talk to organizations and communities about the effects of issues such as the war on drugs and glyphosate fumigation. The members of these delegations then prepare reports on the complaints they receive and seek to influence the policies of the US Congress through lobbying. At present, their main interest is in monitoring compliance with the Peace Accords with the FARC.	Denouncing the effects of US policies in Colombia; lobbying the US Congress; denouncing and investigating human rights violations; international presence on Colombian territory.	2000 – Present

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Countrywide	IAP	<p>IAP was founded in 2011 in response to situations of vulnerability experienced by organizational processes of peasant focused on working for peace and social justice in Colombia. IAP's work is based on three pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International accompaniment: With a physical presence in high-risk environments, political advocacy and disseminating information, IAP seeks to protect people, organizations, and human rights defenders, especially peasants who are at risk of sociopolitical violence. 2. Development cooperation: Through different cooperation projects and programmes, IAP seeks to strengthen the protection and self-protection mechanisms of communities, based on the principle of non-interference. 3. Education for development: IAP seeks to raise awareness among the European and Colombian publics about the work carried out by human rights defenders in Colombia. 	Physical accompaniment; protection of human rights defenders; strengthening self-protection mechanisms in communities; working with peasant communities; raising awareness of the work of human rights defenders; political advocacy; denouncing human rights violations.	2011 – Present
Countrywide	PASO International	Paso is an international trade union solidarity organization that seeks to build bigger, stronger, and more democratic unions in Colombia. They do their work by strengthening trade unions, investigating the working conditions of different trade unions in the country, physically accompanying threatened trade unionists, and organizing communication and political advocacy campaigns.	Protection of trade unionists; advocacy; international accompaniment of trade unions; improvement of working conditions; investigation of working conditions; physical accompaniment.	Currently active

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Magdalena Medio	PWS	<p>PWS is a Swiss organization that seeks to support local human rights organizations, churches, and civilian populations through international physical accompaniment. PWS has volunteered in countries such as Guatemala, Mexico, Palestine, and Colombia. In Colombia, the PWS programme is organized by Pensamiento y Acción Social. It accompanies three peasant communities in Magdalena Medio: the Buenos Aires Peasant Association (ASOCAB), the Simití Alternative Producers Association (ASPROAS), and the Agricultural and Fisheries Association of Guayabo (AGROPEGU).</p>	Physical accompaniment of peasant communities; protection of peasant communities.	Currently active
Countrywide	Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie	<p>The collective was born in Canada during the mobilizations against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. Since 2003, it has been providing physical accompaniment to Colombian organizations and communities as well as raising international visibility of the damage caused by Canadian interests in the context of Colombia's armed, social, and political conflict. Their volunteers often work with the communities accompanied by CIJP, REDHER, and the CSPP.</p>	Physical accompaniment; protection of communities; international accompaniment; denouncing of human rights violations.	2003 – Present

Table 8. National NGOs and platforms

Organiza- tion's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
CCJ	The CCJ began its work in 1988 after the Andean Commission of Jurists sent a mission to Colombia to prepare a report on the human rights situation in the country. Based on this experience, it was seen as appropriate to create a group that would document the human rights situation and carry out activities to defend human rights. Also, through strategic litigation, the CCJ has taken various cases of human rights violations to national and international courts.	Defence of human rights; denunciation of human rights violations; strategic litigation; international visibility; promotion of international humanitarian law.		1988 – Present
Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos (Coordination Colombia Europe United States)	It defines itself as: "a platform of human and social rights organizations, whose mandate recognizes it as a collective actor of international and national advocacy, which through a political work agenda seeks to contribute to the promotion, dissemination, and defence of human rights with an emphasis on civil and political rights, the fight against impunity, the enforcement of the social rule of law, peacebuilding and the search for a negotiated political solution to the armed conflict" (Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos, 2021). It is currently made up of 281 organisations.	National advocacy; international advocacy; strengthening of national organizations; defence of human rights; denunciation of human rights violations; research and dissemination.		1990s – Present

Organiza- tion's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights)	The organization was created in 1979 to defend human rights violated within the framework of the government policy of President Julio César Turbay Ayala. They document and analyze information on human rights violations, facilitate the intervention of the international community to promote human rights, and coordinate the participation of civil society in the defence of rights. They have collaborated with different national and international organizations.	Promotion of international humanitarian law; facilitation of the international community's intervention; human rights advocacy; documentation, analysis, and dissemination of human rights violations; strengthening of civil society.		1979 – Present
CIJP	CIJP's roots lie in the (Inter-Congregational) Commission for Justice and Peace, created in 1988. It acquired its current name in 2002. The Commission is an organization that promotes the defence of the economic, social, cultural, environmental, civil, and political rights of different communities vis-à-vis the state and private entities.	Education in organizational processes; legal advice; spiritual support; gender focus; psychosocial accompaniment; defence of land and territory; accompaniment of peasant, Afro and Indigenous communities.	Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space, Buenaventura; Biodiversity and Humanitarian Zones of Cacarica, Curbaradó, Jiguamiandó, Pedeguita and Mancilla, La Larga Turmaradó and Dabeiba; Nasa indigenous people; Peasant Reserve Zone La Perla Amazónica; Wounaan Nonam indigenous people; Sikuani indigenous people; Jiw indigenous people	1988 – Present

Organiza- tion's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
Pensamiento y Acción Social (Social Thought and Action)	<p>The organization has worked in the accompaniment and advice of different communities and organizations. It seeks to strengthen the organizational processes of civil society for political advocacy, the creation of networks and alliances, risk analysis, self-management of security, and social research. They work from the grassroots based on collective and participatory construction, have a differential approach, and seek a peaceful process.</p>	<p>Peacebuilding; accompaniment and advice for communities and civil society organisations; strengthening of civil society organizational processes; research on human rights, peacebuilding and security and protection; strengthening of the social rule of law; grassroots construction; differential approach; human rights training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afro-Guajira community of Tacabo • Tamaquito II indigenous community • Afro-Guajira community of Roche • Peasant community of El Hatillo • Indigenous Organization of Antioquia • GTTC 	2005 -Present
CCALCP	<p>This corporation was founded in 2001 in the city of Bucaramanga to accompany popular and trade union organizations, and the displaced and vulnerable population of the Santander region.</p>	<p>Strategic litigation; defence of the territory; strengthening the organizational capacity of communities; comprehensive defence of human rights; training of human rights leaders; investigation and reporting of human rights violations.</p>	<p>They accompany ASORVIMM, CREDHOS, AHERAMIGUA, ASOMIWA, MFOPD, ASCAMCAT, ASODEPO, MOVICE (Santander) and the peasant defenders of the Laguna de Ortíces.</p>	2001 – Present
CINEP	<p>CINEP was founded in 1972 as a non-profit foundation that sought to understand Colombian reality from a critical and alternative perspective. Its work is based on the systematic production of information, reflection with reflexive rigour, popular education to strengthen communities and organizations, and an intentional public advocacy. They often work with vulnerable, victimized, and excluded communities. In 2006, CINEP merged with the Programme for Peace (Programa por la Paz) and the Data Bank on Human Rights and Political Violence (Banco de Datos e Derechos Humanos y Violencia Política).</p>	<p>Strengthening community organization; popular education; social research; peacebuilding; denouncing human rights violations.</p>		1972 – Present

Organiza- tion's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
CAJAR	<p>The organization was founded in 1978 at the initiative of a group of lawyers who decided to support different people in cases of political persecution and human rights violations. They have worked with victims of arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, massacres, and torture. They are a member of the International Federation for Human Rights and the World Organization Against Torture. CAJAR have a collective status before the United Nations Organization and the Organization of American States.</p>	<p>Strategic litigation; implementation of the Peace Agreement; comprehensive defence of human rights; defence of the right to political participation; peacebuilding; environmental justice.</p>	<p>It is part of MOVICE, participates in the Colombia Europe United States Coordination and is part of the Colombian Human Rights Platform.</p>	<p>1978 – Present</p>

Organiza- tion's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
CJL	<p>The Corporation was founded in 1993 by several lawyers who saw that the city of Medellín needed an organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights through strategic litigation. Their current work accompanies rural and urban victims of state crimes and human rights violations in Antioquia and Chocó.</p>	<p>Comprehensive defence of human rights; strategic litigation; accompaniment of social organizations; representation of victims before national and international bodies; denunciation of human rights violations; dialogue with public and private entities; comprehensive reparation for victims.</p>	<p>MOVICE; Coordinación Colombia Europa Estados Unidos (Colombia Europe United States Coordination); Asociación Nacional de Defensores de Derechos Humanos (National Association of Human Rights Defenders); Mesa Nacional de Garantías a Defensores (National Board of Guarantees for Defenders); Diocese of Quibdó; Mesa Interbarrial de Vivienda y Servicios Públicos de Medellín (Inter-neighbourhood Board of Housing and Public Services of Medellín); Mesa de Derechos Humanos del Oriente Antioqueño (Human Rights Board of Eastern Antioquia); victims of Hidroituango; victims' relatives of forced disappearance in 1996 from La Esperanza (El Carmen del Viboral); representation of the relatives of victims of Operation Orión; accompaniment of the victims' relatives of La Escombrera (Medellín); representation of the relatives of victims of extrajudicial executions in Eastern Antioquia.</p>	<p>1993 – Present</p>

Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Accompanying/ accompanied organizations	Activity period
Colombian Platform for Human Rights, Democracy and Development	<p>The Platform has been conceived as a plural, convergent, and autonomous network of more than 100 Colombian social and community organizations and NGOs. Its main objective is to promote agreements between its member organisations to coordinate actions that promote a development model that respects democracy and guarantees the full exercise of human rights. The Platform has joined different national and international movements seeking to create a more equitable and peaceful world order. Similarly, it has promoted the strengthening and institutional positioning of its member organisations to guarantee the Colombian State's compliance with its human rights obligations and commitments.</p>	<p>Defence of human rights; promotion of public policies that guarantee the exercise of human rights in a comprehensive manner; promotion of agreements between the Platform's member organizations; promotion of a development model that respects democracy and the exercise of human rights; positioning and institutional strengthening of the Platform's member organizations; support for social mobilization; social monitoring of the State's human rights work; national advocacy; international advocacy; denunciation of human rights violations; research and dissemination.</p>		1993 – Present
The Alliance of Social and Related Organizations for Cooperation for Peace and Democracy in Colombia	<p>The Alliance is a platform of 150 organizations founded in 2003 at the London Conference. Its member organisations belong to the following social sectors: trade unions, Afro-Colombians, peasants, indigenous peoples, and women. In addition, groups that promote development, environmental protection, the Community Action Boards movement, peacebuilding initiatives, and the human rights defence are also part of the Alliance.</p>	<p>Defence of human rights; national advocacy; international advocacy; denunciation of human rights violations; research and dissemination; strengthening of national organizations; coordination of the actions carried out by the Alliance's member organizations.</p>		2003 – Present

Table 9. Religious organizations

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Bajo Atrato, Urabá Chocoano, Urabá Antioqueño, San Juan de Urabá; Arboletes, San Pedro de Urabá, Turbo, Apartadó, Carepa, Mutatá and Chigorodó (Antioquia); El Carmen del Darién, Acandí, Unguía and Riosucio (Chocó)	Diocese of Apartadó (Catholic Church)	In 1997, the Diocese of Apartadó responded to the humanitarian emergency that occurred in Turbo after the massive displacement of the inhabitants of Bajo Atrato. It was one of the organisations responsible for setting off national and international alarms to request the presence of organizations to attend to the needs of the displaced. It has also been instrumental in the internal organization of peace communities and humanitarian zones.	Emergency response; humanitarian aid; food security; peacebuilding; return of displaced communities; spiritual accompaniment.	Currently active
Magdalena Medio; Puerto Wilches, Sabana de Torres, Yondó, Barrancabermeja, Betulia, San Vicente de Chucurí, El Carmen de Chuchurí, Simacota, Puerto Parra, Cimitarra and Bolívar (Santander); Puerto Berrío and Puerto Nare (Antioquia)	Diocese of Barrancabermeja (Catholic Church)	Between 1971, when the Social Pastoral Secretariat was created, and 2005, the Diocese of Barrancabermeja played a crucial role in managing and promoting the social movement. It was also vital to the generation of initiatives of peaceful resistance that first opposed the guerrilla groups and later the paramilitaries. It has accompanied the processes of CREDHOS.	Strengthening of internal organizational processes; support for the social movement; peacebuilding; support for peaceful resistance initiatives; accompaniment of regional and local organisations; spiritual accompaniment.	1971 – Present
Murindó and Vigía del Fuerte (Antioquia); Bojayá, Medio Atrato, Quibdó, El Carmen de Atrato, Lloró, Bagadó, El Atrato and Río Quito (Chocó).	Diocese of Quibdó (Catholic Church)	The social ministry of the Diocese of Quibdó carries out workshops with the communities of its jurisdiction to understand the realities they face in the territory. With the information gathered in these workshops, it designs personal and community self-protection strategies. With the Afro-descendant communities, they saw the need to strengthen their organizational capacities to claim rights and denounce violence.	Accompaniment of Afro-descendant communities; food security through the Noah's Ark project; promotion of communities' organizational capacities; spiritual accompaniment.	Currently active

Places	Organization's name	Description	Aspects worked on	Activity period
Guarne, San Vicente, El Peñol, Guatapé, San Rafael, San Carlos, San Luis, Granada, El Santuario, Marinilla, Rionegro, El Retiro, La Ceja, El Santuario, El Carmen de Víboral, La Unión, Abejorral, San Francisco, Cocorná, Sonsón, Argelia, Nariño (Antioquia)	Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro (Catholic Church)	In the 1990s and 2000s, Eastern Antioquia experienced some of the most challenging moments of the armed conflict due to an escalation in the confrontations between paramilitaries, guerrillas, and the Army. The Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro became one of the most important mediation actors, facilitating dialogue between the armed actors, the mayors, and the community. It was also instrumental in the creation of the Eastern Peace Laboratory.	Dialogue and mediation; creation of the Life, Justice and Peace Commission; support to internal processes of community organization; peacebuilding; support to social mobilizations for peace; spiritual accompaniment.	No known start date, but very active between 1994 and 2008
Barranquilla (Atlántico)	Presbyterian Church of Colombia	Due to the threats social organizations were subjected to, and of which the Presbytery of the Coast was a direct victim, Rick Ufford Chase, moderator of the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, visited Colombia, toured the country, and implemented the Presbyterian Accompaniment for Peace Program. The programme has focused on the pastoral accompaniment of organizations and churches members of the Ecumenical Network of Colombia. It also accompanies human rights defenders who have been threatened.	Pastoral accompaniment; physical accompaniment; human rights defence; protection of human rights defenders; accompaniment of victims of the armed conflict; accompaniment of members of the Presbyterian Church; spiritual accompaniment.	2004 – Present

Conclusions

Whilst this working paper provides an extensive bibliography of reference materials, further in-depth research is still required on some aspects. First, only one text deals with the subject of withdrawal and emergency exits that international accompaniment organizations can employ. It is essential to develop this topic further to understand the effects of such actions on the accompanied communities in the long term. Second, whilst PI has addressed the issue of creating effective public policies to protect human rights defenders, this problem continues to claim the lives of many leaders in Colombia. Other organizations such as PBI or CPT must reflect on the political influence they can have in this respect. Third, it is also essential to think about which strategies can be used to avoid creating dependency relationships between accompanied organizations and accompanying organizations, how to provide tools to international accompaniers to deal with violence that does not necessarily involve physical contact or harm, and psychosocial accompaniment to volunteers. Fourth, an aim of future research should be to measure both qualitatively and quantitatively which self-protection mechanisms are the most effective and how national and international NGOs can become involved in strengthening and promoting them. There also remain unanswered questions such as what sources of financing can be found by some self-protection organizations such as the civil guards, how to influence

public opinion to achieve civil society support for different self-protection mechanisms, which is the importance of training in communication so that self-protection organizations can use various media and strategies in their favour, and how to create public policies that encourage and support self-protection mechanisms.

To conclude, three observations are central to our ability to understand the functioning of self-protection mechanisms and unarmed civil protection in Colombia. First, many of the peace initiatives that have been built in different areas have served as strategies that allow communities to live amid violent conflicts, such as the peace communities or the positions of neutrality assumed by the indigenous people. Second, the defence of human rights has been linked to social mobilization because those who do activism in this regard have understood that protest is one of the most effective nonviolent pressure strategies that exist. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has led to social mobilizers and human rights defenders being stigmatized, persecuted, criminalized, and often killed. Third, many national NGOs that accompany human rights defenders have been obliged to seek international accompaniment themselves, due to the risk that their work poses to their own lives. For instance, among the groups that PBI works with are CAJAR, Jorge Molano, Claudia Julieta Duque, the FNEB, etc. This is a clear example of how the armed conflict disrupts the lives of the victims and those who seek to reach out to create a better country.

UCP and Self-Protection during the Colombian National Strike in 2021

While this report was being written, Colombia experienced a period of mass social protest that exposed the government's violent actions and its disregard for citizens' right to protest. Therefore, this working paper would be incomplete without taking account of these events and the ways in which civil society responded to police abuses. This is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the mechanisms of UCP and self-protection in the context of the 2021 National Strike, but rather an exploratory report that indicates paths for future research.

The government of Iván Duque, which assumed office on 7 August 2018, was marked by strong social mobilizations of a trade union, local, regional, and national nature. On 21 November 2019, the National Strike Committee called for a day of a nationwide protest against the economic "package" that the government sought to propose. Unfortunately, despite their strength and the fact that a "Great National Conversation" was initiated in early 2020, all dialogue and protest processes were cut short by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March of that same year.

The pandemic paralyzed the national economy and deepened the inequality gaps that existed in the country. Small and medium-sized companies were closed, informal employment and unemployment rates increased, and the costs of goods that the population needed to meet their basic needs rose.

In addition, between August 2020 and April 2021, important urban and peasant mobilizations were already taking place: students demanded zero tuition fees, shopkeepers asked for the immediate opening of their sector, transporters protested against the increase in tolls, the most marginalized populations hung red rags from their houses' windows and went out to ask for measures to meet their needs during the quarantines, and in Bogotá civil society came out to protest against police abuse that had happened in September regarding the murder of Javier Ortiz, etc.

Thus, when a national day of protest was called for 28 April 2021, it was not only because of the tax reform bill proposed by the government, which clearly made a mockery of a population that had suffered the economic and social impact of the pandemic, but also because of a series of claims, struggles, and demands had accumulated on different scales and at different times (Restrepo et al., 2021: 123-125; Misión SOS Colombia, 2021: 9-10).

As had happened in previous situations, days before the mobilizations began, the country's mass media and various social and political sectors began a communication strategy based on defamation and the delegitimization of the population's claims. By 28 April 2021, tensions were already heightened, as the national government had prepared an environment conducive to public opinion attacking the protesters. However, violent responses came not only from the media,

but also from the public forces (Police and Army) and groups of armed civilians. By 28 June, two months since the start of the strike, the NGO Temblores reported 4,687 complaints against police violence, of which 1,617 were victims of physical violence, 35 cases in which the Venom weapon was used, 2,005 arbitrary arrests, 785 violent interventions, 82 victims of eye attacks, 228 cases of shooting with a firearm, 28 victims of sexual violence, 48 cases of respiratory conditions due to tear gas, and 44 homicides perpetrated by agents of the public force (29 were under investigation) (Temblores, 2021).

These numbers demonstrate that the national government's response to the strike was based on a militaristic logic. It paved the way for the militarization of cities like Cali and allowed the National Police, particularly the ESMAD,³ to attack unarmed civilians. In other words, the government responded to the protest's demands with tactics typical of war contexts, giving rise to all kinds of human rights violations. Moreover, the mobilized groups were approached without any expression of a genuine willingness to negotiate and reach agreements that would allow a solution to the problems claimed by different social sectors.

Given the scenario outlined above, civil society, made up of NGOs, students, teachers, social movements, volunteers, peasants, ethnic communities, etc., used different mechanisms of UCP and self-protection presented in [Table 10](#) and [Table 11](#).

³ The Mobile Anti-Riot Squads (ESMAD) are special units of the National Police that: "[...] control disturbances, crowds, blockades, accompanying evictions from public or private spaces, which occur in urban or rural areas of the national territory [...]." In addition, they have 23 mobile units made up of 3,580 agents (Policía Nacional, n.d.). From its creation in 1999 to 2019, there is a record in the CINEP Human Rights and Political Violence Data Bank of 986 arbitrary detentions, 86 cases of torture, 45 forced disappearances, and 43 murders (Liga Contra el Silencio, 2019a; Liga Contra el Silencio, 2019b). On the other hand, the NGO Temblores tracked 34 homicides for 2019 (Temblores, 2019). After complaints made by different national and international organizations in the context of the 2021 National Strike, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights paid a working visit between June 8 and 10. Among its recommendations is the separation of the National Police and ESMAD from the Ministry of Defence to guarantee "[...] a structure that consolidates and preserves security with a citizen and human rights approach and avoids any possibility of military perspectives." They also recommended to create protocols and accountability mechanisms that allow the exercise of the right to protest (Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2021: 43).

Table 10. Self-protection mechanisms during the Colombian National Strike in 2021

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Primera Línea (Front Line)	<p>This self-protection mechanism emerged during the protests in Chile in 2019. It was adapted for Colombia during the 2019 National Strike, but took centre-stage in 2021. The central objective of the groups that have come to be known as “Primera Línea” (Front Line) is to protect protesters from police repression. As its name suggests, the members of the Front Line lead the marches and are protected with rudimentary equipment: construction helmets, safety goggles, rubber gloves, shields made of cans or brass, and hoods that cover their faces to avoid being identified. When the ESMAD starts firing tear gas into the crowd or when the tanks appear, the Front Line is the one that confronts the security forces. Throughout the country, various groups have emerged that make themselves known as “Front Line.” They are not part of a structured organization with visible leaders, however. Each one arises from a different community, social and political processes that see in this model a good mechanism for self-protection. That anonymity is both its virtue and weakness, as they can emerge anywhere in the country, but when it comes to seeking consensus or building spaces for negotiation, not all of them share common objectives.</p>	<p>Protection of the civilian population; protection against police abuse.</p>	

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Community kitchens	<p>Community kitchens have been a common practice among neighbours in different municipalities in Colombia. As meals are prepared around the stove, sociability networks are also woven, which in turn improve coexistence, help organize projects that concern the entire community, and strengthen neighborhood ties. When the nationwide Covid-19 quarantines began, red rags appeared in the homes of many families. It was a symbol of hunger. Seeking a solution to this problem in the country's neighborhoods, some people organized community kitchens. Therefore, when the demonstrations began on 28 April 2021, in some places these pots already had a history. However, in other spaces, later consolidated as enclaves of resistance, community kitchens also appeared to feed those who came to support the marches. They became a practice with a highly political background: they ensured food for many people who in other contexts did not have access to basic goods. They also allowed the exchange of ideas and knowledge, made it possible to build groups and communities around certain agreements, as well as strengthened the ties between people who may not even be neighbours, etc. In addition, the community kitchens have served as spaces of articulation between different social processes that already existed and those that were created in the social mobilizations.</p>	<p>Food sovereignty; building bonds of trust; repairing the social fabric.</p>	<p>Route of Community Kitchens (Usme and Soacha), Community Kitchen of Suba, Kitchen of Dignity (Cali), Fuego de Barrio (Neighborhood Fire) (Bogotá), Somos la Disidencia (We are the Dissidence) (Bogotá), Experimentarte (Bogotá), Coordinadora Antifascista de Bogotá (Antifascist Coordinator of Bogotá), Kwesx La Paz Kitchen (Bogotá), Lxs Nadie (The Nobody) (Bogotá), La Morada (Bogotá), Escuela Popular Re-creo de Sueños (Popular School Re-create Dreams) (Bogotá), La Fiebre Amarilla (Yellow Fever) (Bogotá), Al Calor de la Olla (In the Heat of the Pot) (Portal de las Americas, Bogotá).</p>

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Resistance zones	<p>In some of Colombia's cities, resistance zones have emerged that have become key places for convening mobilizations and bringing together those who participate in them. For example, in Medellín, the Parque de los Deseos (Park of Desires) began to be called "Parque de la Resistencia" (Park of Resistance). It was a meeting place for starting marches and carrying out artistic-cultural interventions. In Cali, Puerto Rellena was renamed "Puerto Resistencia" during the National Strike of 2019. In the National Strike of 2021, it became a focal point of the protests. The community self-managed a point of medical care, set up a public kitchen, and erected a resistance monument. At the beginning of July, during the militarization of Cali, 500 policemen and 250 soldiers arrived to clear Puerto Resistencia, as it was one of the blockade points consolidated in the demonstrations.</p> <p>In Bogotá, the Portal de las Américas was renamed "Portal de la Resistencia" after the first weeks of the strike. It was established as a humanitarian space, so the entry of weapons into an area marked with ribbons was prohibited. As happened in the Parque de la Resistencia in Medellin and Puerto Resistencia in Cali, the Portal in Bogotá became a meeting place, a place of resignification process of the public space. It had its own first aid station and organized all kinds of activities.</p>	Community kitchens; artistic-cultural interventions; civil resistance; right to protest; resignification of public space.	
Investigation and reporting of human rights violations	<p>The only way to access official statistics on the social mobilizations is through petition rights or the media. This situation, and the distrust in a State that has resorted to brutal repression, has led to different civil society organizations keeping their own records. Among them are the PSG, Temblores ONG, and the Defender la Libertad (Defend Liberty) campaign.</p> <p>Additionally, human rights defenders, protesters, and citizens have turned their cell phones and social networks into the most potent tools to leave evidence through videos and audios of many irregularities. Among those irregularities are the abuses committed by the security forces and the participation of armed and unidentified civilians in the attacks on protesters. One of the most innovative tools is Instagram, where users have started live broadcasts and connected with people who have large numbers of followers to show what is happening in the marches in real time.</p>	Documentation and reporting of human rights violations; human rights defence; protection of human rights defenders; protection of civilians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temblores • PSG • Defender la Libertad (Defending Liberty) • Media such as Canal 2 (Channel 2), Liga Contra el Silencio (League against Silence), 070, Baudó Agencia Pública (Baudó Public Agency), La Direkta, etc. • Ordinary citizens

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Human rights defence	The presence of people defending the human rights of protesters is nothing new. For several years, teams of human rights defenders have been attending marches and sit-ins, identifying themselves with vests and different badges so that those who need them can differentiate them amid the crowd. Their work is extensive: they keep records of people who are detained and then search for them, record specific police procedures, prevent the security forces from overstepping their constitutional functions, and act as mediators when there are clashes between the Police and the protesters. They have even contained people who get emotionally overwhelmed.	Containing and preventing police abuse; denouncing state repression; defending civilians; accompanying demonstrators; searching for detained persons; guaranteeing the right to protest; defending human rights.	
Civil guards	As mentioned above, the civil guards are an unarmed self-protection mechanism that performs all kinds of functions to defend the human rights of those who inhabit certain ancestral or peasant territories. In the context of the social mobilizations, the guards, especially the Indigenous guards, have been responsible for physically accompanying the demonstrators, defending human rights, avoiding clashes between the Police and civilians, and especially protecting people of their communities who participate in the protests.	Defence of human rights; protection of demonstrators; guaranteeing the right to protest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indigenous guard ● CRIC ● ACIN
Artistic-cultural interventions	Artistic-cultural interventions became an essential aspect of exercising the right to protest during marches and within resistance zones, despite their low visibility. Plays, batucadas, performances, dances, songs around the bonfire, murals, and other types of activities served to express political and social sentiment. They also enabled catharsis, became a way of making sense of the current crisis, and created spaces for self-recognition.	Guarantee the right to protest; denunciation; psychosocial accompaniment; self-recognition; individual and collective catharsis processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Casa Kolacho ● Arlequín y los Juglares (Harlequin and the Jugglers) ● 4 Elementos Skuela (4 Elements School) ● Museo Urbano de Memoria (Urban Museum of Memory) ● Luneta 50 ● Popular orchestras in different cities

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Puesto de Mando Unificado Popular (PMUP) (Popular Unified Command Post)	<p>From the institutional point of view, the Unified Command Posts (PMU by their Spanish acronym) are basic coordination units between public and sometimes private entities to generate timely responses to specific emergencies. PMUs are usually transitory and are activated when there is the presence of two or more entities that respond to a situation. Within the framework of social mobilizations in Colombia, the PMUs have been used to coordinate the actions of the Police, government agencies, and other State entities. From there, the official statistics of detained, wounded, murdered citizens, wounded police officers, etc. are collated.</p> <p>After the mobilizations began on 28 April, a popular PMU (short: PMUP) was formed in Medellín, backed by the PSG and its member organizations. Its main objective is the defence of human rights within the context of social protest. Consequently, they have dedicated themselves to compiling and systematizing information taken on the ground or collaborating with citizens about police abuses, arbitrary arrests, people killed, etc. The PMUP arose because social organizations were denied access to the official PMU and because of the lack of confidence in state action in the face of human rights violations that occurred during the mobilizations.</p>	Human rights defence; investigation and reporting of human rights violations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSG

Table 11. UCP mechanisms during the Colombian National Strike in 2021

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Physical accompaniment	<p>The physical presence of international observers often deters armed actors from engaging in violence because perpetrators are reluctant to commit crimes in front of witnesses. Those who provide physical accompaniment are usually civilian volunteers from different countries who have been trained by international organizations to provide accompaniment to human rights defenders.</p> <p>In the context of the 2021 National Strike, different organizations such as REDHER, PBI, and PI have accompanied various leaders, defenders, and their organizations in the mobilizations to guarantee their physical integrity.</p>	Protection of human rights defenders; defence of human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REDHER • PBI • PI • SweFOR • FOR-PP • CPT
Legal accompaniment	<p>Arbitrary detentions, irregular police procedures, excessive use of force against protesters, sexual abuse, and other types of situations are the background to state repression and the use of the police as an armed force to coerce those who exercise their right to protest. This repression has led different organisations, collectives, and groups of lawyers to provide legal accompaniment to protesters. They work in many areas, from the resolution of arbitrary detention to handling cases of eye attacks with different artifacts by the ESMAD.</p> <p>One of the most prominent examples in recent years has been the formation of the Legal Front Line (Primera Línea Jurídica), a group of volunteer lawyers who have taken up the concept of the “Front Line” to provide their services to those requiring them.</p>	Defence of human rights; guaranteeing the right to protest; accompaniment of demonstrators and victims of police repression; promotion of Police Reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primera Línea Jurídica (Legal Front Line) • CAJAR • CCALP • CCALCP • CCJ • Dejusticia • Legal surgeries at different universities

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Psychosocial accompaniment	<p>During the Strike, there were grave human rights violations on the civilian population that participated in the demonstrations. This not only left physical traces but also affected the emotional dimension of many people, especially those who were in charge of accompaniment as human rights defenders and those who carried out first aid or pre-hospital care.</p> <p>The personal and collective experiences accumulated during more than a year of the pandemic, high-risk situations, vulnerability to armed state actors, police aggression, cases of sexual abuse, and other conditions led the population to emotional limits. This situation soon alarmed civil society, which through non-governmental organizations, universities, and volunteers began to provide psychosocial accompaniment and training in psychological first aid.</p>	Psychological first aid; collective conversation spaces; emotional processing exercises; psychological first aid training; emotional containment exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporación Sisma Mujer (Sisma Woman Corporation) • Defender la Libertad (Defending Liberty) • CSPP • Civil society
Pre-hospital care (PHC) and first aid	<p>According to the figures presented by the NGO Temblores for 28 June 2021, 4,852 cases of police violence were recorded, of which 1,661 corresponded to victims of physical violence, 37 cases of use of the Venom weapon by the ESMAD, 90 victims of attacks on persons' eyes, 228 cases of firearms shots, 35 victims of sexual violence, 56 cases of respiratory conditions caused by tear gas, and 44 cases of murder (not counting another 28 that were in the verification process) (Temblores, 2021).</p> <p>These numbers, far from being simple statistics, reflect situations profound crisis experienced during the demonstrations. They evidence the security forces' use of military tactics against unarmed civilians. In response to attacks aiming at protesters' eyes, beatings, the launching of stun guns at groups of several people, and all kinds of injuries, groups were organized to provide first aid and pre-hospital care in areas near the places of confrontation. Additionally, various volunteer organizations and professionals gave first aid training so that anyone could be prepared for possible injuries.</p>	Immediate attention to victims of police aggression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloque Popular de Salud (People's Health Block) • Health brigades

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Artistic-cultural accompaniment	During the demonstrations and in the socialization spaces of the resistance zones, artistic-cultural collectives accompanied the demonstrations through theatre plays, batucadas, poetic declamations, harangues, concerts, concerts by popular orchestras, mural painting, photography, dance, etc.	Guaranteeing the right to protest; denouncing human rights violations; denouncing police abuse; accompanying demonstrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Casa Kolacho ● Arlequín y los Juglares (Harlequin and the Jugglers) ● 4 Elementos Skuela (4 Elements School) ● Museo Urbano de Memoria (Urban Museum of Memory) ● Luneta 50 ● Popular orchestras
Human rights defence	The presence of people defending the human rights of protesters is nothing new. For several years, teams of human rights defenders have been attending marches and sit-ins, identifying themselves with vests and different badges so that those who need them can differentiate them amid the crowd. Their work is extensive: they keep records of people who are detained and then search for them, record specific police procedures, prevent the security forces from overstepping their constitutional functions, and act as mediators when there are clashes between the Police and the protesters. They have even contained people who get emotionally overwhelmed.	Containing and preventing police abuse; denouncing state repression; defending civilians; accompanying demonstrators; searching for detained persons; guaranteeing the right to protest; defending human rights.	

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Investigation and reporting of human rights violations	<p>The only way to access official statistics on the social mobilizations is through petition rights or the media. This situation, and the distrust in a State that has resorted to brutal repression, has led to different civil society organizations keeping their own records. Among them are the PSG, Temblores ONG, and the Defender la Libertad (Defend Liberty) campaign.</p> <p>Additionally, human rights defenders, protesters, and citizens have turned their cell phones and social networks into the most potent tools to leave evidence through videos and audios of many irregularities. Among those irregularities are the abuses committed by the security forces and the participation of armed and unidentified civilians in the attacks on protesters. One of the most innovative tools is Instagram, where users have started live broadcasts and connected with people who have large numbers of followers to show what is happening in the marches in real time.</p>	<p>Documentation and reporting of human rights violations; human rights defence; protection of human rights defenders; protection of civilians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Temblores ● PSG ● Defender la Libertad (Defending Liberty) ● Media such as Canal 2 (Channel 2), Liga Contra el Silencio (League against Silence), 070, Baudó Agencia Pública (Baudó Public Agency), La Direkta, etc. ● Ordinary citizens

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Strategic litigation	<p>Strategic litigation has been one of the tools most widely used by different organisations to support victims of human rights violations and human rights defenders. It is “strategic” in that it allows for the promotion of cases in which there have been serious human rights violations and seeks not only justice or reparation, but also systemic changes that provide tools for protection and self-protection.</p> <p>In the context of the November 2019 protests, a group of organizations, defenders, and members of civil society filed a tutela action⁴ requesting the protection of the fundamental rights to protest and freedom of expression and press. In September 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice issued ruling 7641 of 2020. It declared that: “there was — and may continue to be — a repeated and constant, disproportionate aggression by the public force against those who, in a peaceful manner, demonstrated on the dates indicated above [...]” (Corte Suprema de Justicia, 2021). Consequently, different orders were issued to counteract the effects of police aggression and prevent them in the future.</p> <p>After the violent repression of the demonstrations by the Police, the ESMAD, and groups of armed civilians during the 2021 Strike, the organizations that had filed the tutela action in 2019 requested that these actions be declared in contempt of court of the orders issued in sentence 7641 of 2020. They also denounced, along with other civil society groups, the way in which the state apparatus acted to support the excessive use of force and delegitimize the protesters’ claims.</p>	<p>Guaranteeing the right to protest; guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression; denouncing police abuse; documenting and investigating human rights violations by security forces and armed civilian groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CCJ ● Dejusticia ● Humanidad Vigente ● University of Rosario ● University of Los Andes ● CSPP ● FLIP ● CAJAR

⁴ The tutela action is a mechanism of the Colombian legal system. A person can request the immediate protection of their fundamental constitutional rights through it. Its main characteristic is that the response of the judges must be quick. No more than ten days should pass from when the tutela is filed with the judge.

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Verification missions	<p>After various human rights organisations and platforms denounced to the international community the human rights violations that were taking place in the context of the protests, the International Observation Mission for Guarantees for Social Protest and Against Impunity in Colombia (SOS Colombia Mission) was formed. The group was composed of 41 delegates from 12 countries and visited the country between 3 and 12 July 2021. They received more than 70 reports from organisations and 180 direct complaints from victims. On 7 October 2021, the Mission published a final report denouncing the way in which the Colombian security forces used disproportionate procedures to attack civilians. In addition, they identified paramilitary practices, and evidenced that the mass media gave negative coverage to the protesters.</p> <p>Based on this, they issued six recommendations to the Colombian government and the Colombian State, and international bodies: guarantee access to justice for victims of police aggression; create an independent commission to investigate the events; guarantee that the ordinary (civilian) justice system will prosecute cases involving the security forces; provide special attention to Indigenous and Afro-descendant women, support investigations by the national government to make it clear that violence and impunity will not be tolerated; and create a special group within the Attorney General's Office to investigate public officials.</p>	<p>Denunciation of human rights violations; documenting police aggressions; giving international visibility to the protesters' situations of vulnerability in Colombia; issuing recommendations to the Colombian State and the international community; guaranteeing the right to protest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misión SOS Colombia

Mechanism	Description	Aspects worked on	Organizations
Spaces of care, "apechichaditas"	<p>In Colombia, the protection of human rights defenders has focused mainly on guaranteeing their physical safety. Although this component is essential, it is necessary to understand protection from a broader approach that considers other minimum conditions of well-being: the subjective-emotional, the physical-corporeal, the family sphere, and the organizational sphere.</p> <p>Taking the above into account, the Creating Safer Space Network and Arlequín y los Juglares (Harlequin and the Jugglers) developed several care spaces that sought to attend to human rights defenders who participated in the mobilizations.</p> <p>The objective was to create a safe space that would allow people to take a break and receive "pampering". Activities included: welcome and reception; movement, body expression, and relaxation; foot washing and cuddles; conversation, drink, and food.</p> <p>These spaces sought to politicize care and facilitate a joint reflection on the relationships of interdependence that human beings establish, remembering that, just as defenders are caregivers, they can also be subjects of care. In addition, the aim was to address the extreme emotional situations that many people experienced in the context of the demonstrations.</p>	<p>Dealing with the emotional impacts of different situations that occurred during the demonstrations; creating safe spaces for defenders to take a break; creating reflection on the political importance of care and self-care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Safer Space network • Arlequín y los Juglares (Harlequin and the Jugglers) • University of Antioquia

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Supplementary Map References

To create a clearer picture of how the extractive economic model has influenced the social, political, and armed conflict in Colombia and how UCP and self-protection have allowed civil society to live amid violent contexts, an interactive map has been created on Google Maps. It shows self-protection strategies, UCP strategies, and conflicts over natural resources. The map is available at this link: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=17uTFKMi3u0WHzBoMmPhbZtDSjJOcAViA&usp=sharing>. The sources of information used in its creation, in addition to those already cited, are the following:

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