



groundWork

Environmental justice action

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**Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Ambassador  
Carlos Andrés Barahona Niño

First Secretary  
Jose Ignacio Juliao Alí  
Pretoria  
South Africa

By email: [esudafrica@cancilleria.gov.co](mailto:esudafrica@cancilleria.gov.co)  
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Dear Ambassador

### **Government violence against the people of Columbia**

Since the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the Colombian people have been mobilising against higher taxes on the country's working class, worsening violence since the signing of the Peace Agreement, and an economic model that has condemned half the population to poverty.

We are monitoring with concern the grave situation of human rights violations caused by the disproportionate use of force by officers of the law. According to the NGO Temblores, in six days of demonstrations, there have been 1181 cases of police violence, including 142 victims of physical violence, 761 arbitrary detentions, 216 violent interventions by security forces, 56 cases of firearms discharged, 9 victims of sexual violence, 17 victims of eye injuries, 56 complaints of disappearances in the context of the demonstrations, and 26 homicides. A government that resorts to military force to quiet the demands of its people is not a democratic one.

We support and applaud the Colombian people in their just struggle to assert their rights, and we support the peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian organisations which, in the regions hardest hit by the violence, are mobilising to reject the aerial spraying of glyphosate, demand an end to the assassination of social movement leaders, and call for the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We support the organisations of students, workers, small businesspeople and others that are mobilizing in the cities.



We call on the Iván Duque administration to uphold its international human rights obligations, put an immediate stop to the assassination of demonstrators, and provide guarantees of the right to protest and mobilise. We demand that the Duque government stop criminalising the popular movement and start implementing an agrarian reform as a structural measure toward the establishment of a durable peace.

We believe it will only be through democratic praxis that people will live well with each other and Mother Earth.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sven' or 'Bobby'.

Sven (Bobby) Peek  
Director

The Groundwork Trust (aka groundWork)  
Friends of the Earth, South Africa  
1998 Goldman Prize Recipient for Africa  
Hon PhD Durban University of Technology