

PRESS RELEASE

Two years after the Peace Accord only 4% of the gender-based agreements have been fully implemented in Colombia

To address the main challenges and progress with the peace agreement's implementation, ABColumbia is hosting an event focused on women's rights in London, bringing victims, researchers and activists together to debate the issue.

London – 25 February 2019: Colombia has a unique opportunity, in the implementation of the Final Peace Accord (FPA), to renegotiate women's political power, advance gender equality and promote structural change. However, a report produced by ABColumbia finds that whilst women are participating in the implementation of the FPA, this tends to be at the lower and medium levels of decision-making. Women are still in the minority outside of discussions on gender, and they continue being excluded from high-level decision-making committees.

Whereas the FPA offers important possibilities for concrete changes for women, so far, only 4% of these agreements have been fully implemented and, for 51% of the agreements, implementation has not even been initiated. This highlights the importance of the recently sworn in president, Ivan Duque, to allocate greater resources to the implementation of the gendered agreements and taking action to guarantee that women are represented, at all levels and on all decision-making committees for the implementation of the FPA.

To address the main challenges on the upcoming phases of the peace accord implementation, ABColumbia is hosting a public event on 27th February at the UCL, bringing experts in the field and victims of the conflict together. One of the speakers invited is the Colombian activist Elizabeth Santander, who left the country after her husband disappeared in January 1987. Alongside with other 30 relatives of disappeared persons, Santander founded the *Grupo de Familiares de Desaparecidos de Europa* (European Group of Relatives of Disappeared Persons). They met for the first time last December, to call for justice.

"I have been searching for the truth for over 30 years due to the disappearance of my husband, Marino Escobar Aroca. Today, I am part of the group and we have the task of publicising this work. It is the commitment that we owe to our missing relatives, to society and to ourselves: to seek the truth and rescue their memories until we find them.", she said.

The public event will be chaired by the sociologist and former Director of the UCL Institute of the Americas, Maxine Molyneux. Myriam Ojeda, a Colombian artist and activist from the Initiatives for Peace Collective and member of Diaspora Women; Rosa Emilia Salamanca, Colombian peace activist and Executive Director of the Corporation for Research, Social and Economic Action (CIASE) and the Programme and Advocacy Manager of ABColumbia, Louise Winstanley, are among the panellists invited to present an overview perspective of women's rights in Colombia.

"This event will link analysis with other forms of storytelling that Colombian women have used to create memory of the armed conflict, including film and poetry. It is very concerning to see that certain political sectors in Colombia are trying to obstruct the implementation of the Peace Accord, and armed violence across the country continues to put communities at risk. Violence is often targeted specifically against people who are actively committed to peacebuilding on the ground. At least 172 human rights defenders and social leaders were killed in 2018. Having an event like this in London will be a sign of international support for the peace process and peace activists in Colombia," said Winstanley.

Due to the importance of international monitoring of the implementation of the Colombian Peace Accord, ABColumbia and the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group have organised a meeting for Members of Parliament and Peers in the UK Parliament to raise these issues on Wednesday, 27th February.

Event: Sustainable Peace and Human Rights in Colombia

Where: University College London (UCL) – Room D 103, 25 Gordon Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1H 0AY

Date: 27th February 2019

Time: 18:15-20:30

For any press inquiry, please contact Communications Coordinator Irina Muñoz at assistant@abcolombia.org.uk; or office phone: 0207 870 2217.