Name of MP

Houses of Commons

House of Parliament Westminster

DATE:

Dear (name),

**Subject: Request for you to sign EDM 4 tabled on 12 May 2021 Protests in Colombia**

I do hope that you are keeping well in this pandemic.

I am writing to you as my MP to ask you to sign EDM 4 on the “Protests in Colombia” <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58434>

Social protests started in Colombia on 28 April and, as of 13 May they were still ongoing. These protests were happening across Colombia and were met with violent repression by the Colombian police. It wasn’t until Monday 11 May that the government met with the protest organisers to hear their grievances. The protests were triggered by a Tax Reform Bill; however, the protests are not only about this Bill. The management of the pandemic in Colombia had a dreadful impact on the poorest and the middle class with poverty rising from approximately 35% of the population to over 42% of the population. These tax changes would have exacerbated this situation. Colombians have also been concerned about the rising levels of violence in the rural areas, with communities terrified as they are caught in the middle of skirmishes by armed groups for the control of territory and illicit economies, over 11,000 people were forcibly displaced in just the first two months of this year. Those defending the rights of communities are also being killed in ever greater numbers, 182 human rights defenders were killed in 2020 according to the Ombudsman, and the rising number of former combatants being killed. The slow implementation of the Peace Accord is exacerbating this situation. There is also a general resistance, and failure on the part of the government to engage with Civil Society Organisations, making peacebuilding very difficult, increasing a lack of confidence in the government and further polarising the population.

**Below I have cut and pasted the text of EDM 04, I do hope that you feel able to sign this:**

**Motion text**

That this House expresses profound concern on reports of excessive use of force by the Colombian police, against overwhelmingly peaceful social protests as confirmed by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights across Colombia from 28 April 2021, as part of a national strike; believes the right to peaceful protest and freedom of assembly are essential tenets of democracy; condemns serious human rights violations allegedly carried out by the police, including the use of live ammunition resulting in the deaths of over 30 protesters, numerous cases of sexual violence and serious injuries, over 100 people reported disappeared, over 800 arbitrary arrests, and targeted attacks on civil society organisations and human rights defenders, some of whom were trying to monitor the police; also condemns the small minority who infiltrated the peaceful protests and perpetrated violence; notes with alarm the Colombian Government’s order to militarise the cities and urges them instead to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the protest organisers to address their legitimate grievances; calls on the Government to review its training of the Colombian Police, suspend the sale of riot control materials and review all other arms exports to Colombia in light of the current situation; and further calls on the Government as pen holders for the Colombian peace process at the UN Security Council to promote substantive reform of the Colombian security services and full implementation of the Peace Accord.

Yours sincerely,

(Name)

(Address)

Postcode