Sexual Violence Against Women in Colombia

Joint Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review 2013

October 2012, Berlin / Bogotá - On 1 October six Women's Rights Groups submitted a report on conflict-related sexual violence against women in Colombia to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). In the report, MADRE, the International Women's Human Rights Clinic a the City University of New York School of Law, CORPORACIÓN HUMANAS DE COLOMBIA, Taller de Vida, Women's Link Worldwide, and ECCHR highlight the lack of access to justice by women in Colombia who have been survivors of sexual violence by military, paramilitary and/or guerilla forces during Colombia's internal armed conflict. During the 16th session of the Working Group of the Human Rights Council, the human rights situation in Colombia will be reviewed.

Despite recent legislative measures designed to combat sexual violence and to incorporate a gender perspective into government policy, impunity remains rampant. A social-judicial analysis of the conflict in Colombia provides evidence that sexual violence remains systematic and constitutes a general pattern. The joint submission highlights 1) sexual violence against internally displaced women; 2) forced recruitment and sexual slavery during the internal armed conflict by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – FARC) and by members of the now demobilized paramilitary organizations; and 3) the State's failure to investigate, punish and prevent reported cases of sexual violence and enforce the recent legislative measures.

Worldwide women survivors often do not have access to truth, justice and reparations and therefore are denied their fundamental human rights. The pervasiveness of sexual violence impedes or deprives women and girls from the ability to exercise their human rights such as civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights.

Therefore we request the Human Rights Council to urge the Colombian government to guarantee the enforcement of the new legislative measures. Colombia must comply with its obligations under international human rights law and international criminal law to hold guerilla, paramilitary and military actors accountable for their role in conflict-related sexual violence.