



Ken Neumann
National Director/ Directeur national

Via email:

Presidente Iván Duque Marquéz
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Toronto, May 7, 2021

Mr. President:

The United Steelworkers strongly condemn the brutal repression against the Colombian people who have exercised their right to freedom of expression against the tax reform bill and other policies of your government.

According to information we have received, a vicious military escalation has taken place in which state repressive agencies – the National Police and the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad (ESMAD) – social cleansing groups and plainclothes police officers with the help of the army have intimidated, persecuted, repressed, injured and murdered, not only union and social leaders, but indiscriminately targeting at the general population.

To date, according to reports from different human rights organizations, there have been hundreds of arbitrary detentions, more than 35 protesters killed and 379 demonstrators are still unaccounted for, 25 people have suffered severe ocular mutilation and multiple cases of sexual violations by the ESMAD were reported.

The announcement of the withdrawal of the tax reform bill does not absolve the Government of Colombia from taking responsibility for the violence and holding accountable the perpetrators of the human rights violations. We are calling on your Government to:

- immediately halt the human rights violations taking place against civilians engaging in protest, and to guarantee the safety of all of those in line with internationally recognized human rights standards;

- investigate and bring to justice all members of state security agencies responsible for human rights violations during the national strike;
- refrain from criminalization and stigmatization of peaceful protests;
- urgently engage in a wide-ranging social dialogue and genuinely listen to all sectors of the population to find a solution to the immediate crisis in the country
- effectively implement the 2016 Peace Accords in their entirety.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Neumann
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CC: The Honourable Marc Garneau, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs
Canadian Ambassador to Colombia Marcel Lebleu
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