



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

PRESS RELEASE - COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

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PRESS RELEASE

COLOMBIA: ICJ CONDEMNS REPEATED ATTACKS AGAINST THE COLOMBIAN COMMISSION OF JURISTS

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) strongly condemns the accusations directed against the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ) by Senator Enrique Gómez Hurtado. These statements are the latest example of irresponsible and repeated conduct on the part of some politicians, members of the military forces and other powerful individuals connected with the Government who aim to discredit the integrity of the CCJ, its members and other human rights defenders.

"The latest accusations against the CCJ and its members constitute an attack against all lawyers and human rights defenders working for the protection of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms," said Louise Doswald-Beck, the Secretary-General of the ICJ. "Not only are these pronouncements absolutely unfounded, they put human rights defenders at serious risk " she added.

On February 27, during a televised debate, Senator Gómez Hurtado referred to the CCJ as the "legal arm of the FARC". On March 25, during the plenary session in the Senate, Senator Gómez Hurtado accused the CCJ of systematically holding anti-Government positions and supporting the FARC. The Senator also criticised the CCJ for opposing the Colombian government's reservations to the Statute of the International Criminal Court when it ratified this treaty.

The CCJ has been striving, for more than a decade, to promote and protect human rights - many times under unfavourable and adverse circumstances. The ICJ reiterates its condemnation of all attacks which impugn the objectivity and impartiality of this organisation.

The ICJ reminds the Colombian Government of its obligations under the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 and urges the authorities to take all necessary measures to protect lawyers and human rights defenders in the discharge of their professional duties.

For more information, please contact Mr. Federico Andreu on 41 22 979 3819 or Ms. Linda Besharaty-Movaed on 41 22 979 3809.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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