

**United Nations Human Rights Council
24th Regular Session, 9 – 27 September 2013
Agenda Item 6**

**ICJ Oral Statement in the Interactive Dialogue on the adoption of the UPR
Outcome Document on Colombia**

**COLOMBIA: ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS**

19 September 2013

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Mr President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) welcomes Colombia's commitment to implement, in an effective manner, the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (UPR recommendations 115.1 to 115.3). We regret however the caveats that Colombia has attached to that commitment.

The ICJ also welcomes Colombia's acceptance that reforms of its Constitution and other laws must reduce rather than contribute to impunity, must guarantee the rights of victims, and must ensure that cases of alleged human rights violations will be tried only in civilian, not military, courts (UPR recommendations 115.5 and 115.6).

The ICJ further welcomes Colombia's commitment to reinforce protection for human rights defenders, and to increase investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators of threats and attacks against trade unionists, community leaders, and journalists, especially in rural areas (UPR recommendations 116.73 to 116.85).

The ICJ notes as a positive step the acceptance by Colombia of recommendations for the better protection of indigenous peoples' rights, including though prior consultation and participation in the determination of public policies that affect them, and the rigorous protection of land rights (UPR recommendations 116.105 and ff).

The ICJ recognizes that Colombia has accepted the need to take measures to combat impunity by strengthening the judicial system and increasing accountability for human rights violations (UPR recommendations 116.72 and 116.118). It is regretted, however, that Colombia has not agreed to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, or the Optional Protocols for the hearing of individual communications under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UPR recommendations 118.2 to 118.12.) Ratification of these instruments would provide important mechanisms for accountability and access to justice at the national and international levels.

I thank you.

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