



Public Correspondence from the Black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal People's Summit

Identity, Peace, Unity, and Territory

On October 21 and 22, 2021, in Santiago de Cali, Valle del Cauca Department ethnic authorities of the Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquero community councils, organizations, leaders, and people, convened autonomously to reflect together on our past, present, and future, to strengthen our cohesion as a people and our self-determination. To open a new chapter in our process of unity, at a time when our communities and territories face serious challenges related to the historical and systematic marginalization that affects us; the resurgence of armed conflict and widespread violence forced displacement and dispossession of our territories and natural resources; the COVID-19 pandemic; and the social uprising that exasperated the current situation.

Undoubtedly, the persistence of systematic racism and racial discrimination in Colombia are among the causes of this situation and the lack of regulation and comprehensive implementation of Law 70 of 1993.

Therefore, we present the following:

- We are aware of the need to respond to these challenges, we have decided to reaffirm our commitment to peace and human dignity; to defend our territories and communities; to banish racism and racial discrimination from our lives and our future; and most especially, to fight for comprehensive reparations in response to the atrocious crimes against humanity of which our peoples and communities have been victims.
- We express our complete solidarity with the Raizal People in the archipelago of San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina in the face of the devastating tragedy of Hurricane Iota. Specifically, the suffering resulting from the slow reconstruction by the institutional bureaucracy of state interventions in response to our needs. We reject the lack of respect concerning their right to autonomy and prior, free and informed consultation. We request all state institutions ensure the communities' desire to safeguard their territory and rights are respected. We urge the National Navy to comply with its constitutional duty to protect the communities' life, honor, property, beliefs, and other rights and freedoms, including territorial integrity,

instead of jeopardizing the right to territory and prior consultation of the Raizal people.

- We express our deep concern for the worsening of the armed conflict and its disproportionate impact in our ancestral territories of the Inter-Andean Valleys, Orinoco, Amazon, Caribbean, and Colombian Pacific. The security deterioration has forced communities to migrate and become internally displaced, and as a result, structural racism has pushed them to urban centers that are also rampant with violence. We stand in solidarity with the millions of Afro-descendants that have suffered this social exclusion and unjust war. We demand that state institutions fulfill their essential function of protecting all people and the environment. To effectively protect all Afro-descendant people and their communities, honor, property, beliefs, rights, and freedoms, there needs to be an agreement of peaceful coexistence by enforcing just order in our communities and territories. The critical situation of the Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquero people in Colombia is not reflective of the constitutional agreements made by the state to protect ethnic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the persistent humanitarian crisis in our communities and territories is not consistent with the state's obligation to protect the cultural and natural wealth of the Nation. For all these reasons, we refuse to continue living in a country that has condemned us to violence and misery. Although the implementation of the Ethnic Chapter of the Peace Accords could partially mitigate this critical situation, its implementation is slow or almost non-existent, which has not helped our humanitarian crisis.
- We categorically reject all forms of violence that have affected and continue to affect older adults, children, young people, and adolescents of African descent in Colombia, particularly the recruitment and involvement in the armed conflict. We especially repudiate sexual and gender-based violence against women and Afro-descendants with diverse sexual identities, affected by the intersection of poverty, machismo, patriarchy, racial discrimination, and war.
- We are aware of the differential impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our marginalized rural and urban territories, deprived of the most basic health infrastructures and services to confront this severe pandemic and public health problems in general. In addition, our communities are the most affected by the extreme poverty that plagues this nation, while the national government fails to respond decisively or develop a comprehensive plan to guarantee our economic recovery. The commitments established in the different National Development Plans derived from the previous consultations have not fulfilled the intended design or implementation. Thus, for example, the agreements reached with the government for the 2018-2022 period are not compatible with the Afro-descendant people and communities' Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Convinced that it is necessary to make a radical change to this precarious state of affairs, we have decided to:

1. Urge all institutions of the Colombian state to carry out specific action plans and as a whole to develop a comprehensive plan to respond to the scourges of racism, war, and violence that devastate Afro-descendants in Colombia. These plans should include the urgent development of a comprehensive reparation system for communities that were previously in the Republic of Colombia during the nineteenth century. It is a legacy that continues to be evident in the social and economic marginalization of the Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquero people and communities. In addition, the urgent regulation of the pending chapters of Law 70 of 1993 is necessary for the collective ownership of land. The comprehensive implementation of Auto 005 of 2009, Decree Law 4635 of 2011, and the Ethnic Chapter of the Peace Accord must be part of the required structural intervention, prioritizing women, children, and adolescents. In particular, we urge the national government to carry out an immediate economic recovery plan to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in Afro-descendant communities and their territories.
2. Declare a humanitarian emergency within the Afro-descendant territories and communities. We demand that the national government negotiate to solve the multiple armed conflicts in the country that disproportionately affect us, especially the resumption of dialogues with the ELN. Furthermore, we demand backing, respect, and support with regard to the humanitarian and peace strategies that Afro-descendant organizations and authorities have promoted in their territories. Specifically, help is needed at the national level by organizations such as the Ethnic Commission for Peace and Territorial Rights regarding the Humanitarian Agreement Now! (*Acuerdo Humanitario ¡YA!*) in the Chocó and Buenaventura departments.
3. Develop comprehensive programs against racism and racial discrimination at the national and territorial levels. Therefore, a racially conscious reform is necessary to implement the future structuring and financing of federal, departmental, and municipal plans. Furthermore, these anti-racist territorial plans must be nationalized effectively in cooperation with the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and the Inter-American and United Nations Conventions against Racism.
4. Through the Secretary-General, especially the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, urge the United Nations to make a decisive intervention to respond to the persistent humanitarian crisis of Afro-descendants in Colombia. Our suggestion is to create a Commission of Inquiry composed of representatives led by the Group of Afro-descendants and the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms

of Racism. This commission will follow United Nations guidance on minority issues in Colombia (A/HRC/16/45/Add.1), including the many recommendations of CERD and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism.

5. Request the Organization of American States and its member states to make every diplomatic effort to invite Colombia to ratify the Inter-American Convention against Racism and Racial Discrimination. Secondly, to work with the Inter-American Human Rights System to promote the rights of Afro-descendants in Colombia, complying with the rulings of the Inter-American Court in favor of Afro-descendant communities and persons, to adopt precautionary measures issued by the IACHR. Also, these political bodies need to comply with recommendations made by this mechanism to protect the human rights of Afro-descendants in Colombia, of the Inter-American Court in favor of Afro-descendant communities and persons. Furthermore, precautionary measures issued by the IACHR need to be adopted.
6. Request that the African Union make every diplomatic effort to protect the integrity and human rights of Afro-descendants in Colombia in recognition of its express declaration to recognize the Afro-descendants of the diaspora as the sixth region. Furthermore, we urge Afro-descendants and Africans worldwide to make our critical humanitarian situation visible and to undertake all actions of solidarity and response that their resources and forces allow them to protect Afro-descendants from their progressive physical and cultural destruction in Colombia.
7. Recognize the strength of Pan-Africanism in the hope of increasing the recognition and reparation of all the damages of colonialism, slavery, and racism on African peoples on the continent and in the larger diaspora. Urge all stakeholders to strengthen Pan-African unity and articulation in the economic, environmental, social, cultural, technological, and scientific dimensions.
8. To invite all Afro-descendant organizations and people in Colombia, whether they recognize themselves as Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palenquero, Black or otherwise, to strengthen our solidarity, to multiply all efforts to protect our integrity as individuals and people. To protect and enrich our culture, and most especially to defend and exercise our right to self-determination and sovereignty over our territories and natural resources. Political and electoral empowerment is central to the objective of strengthening our organizational unification.
9. ***We assume as a summit the mandate to lead a process of national coordination and institutional dialogue to respond to all the challenges identified here.*** In particular, to continue strengthening the unity and legitimacy of the Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, and Palenquero people with state institutions, the

international community, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, to protect our integrity, ecosystems, central elements to respond to climate change, and fight against racism, misery, and injustice in Colombia and the world.

The Black community will not give up!