

**Peace Prayers and Resources  
For Palm Sunday 2011**

**Solidarity with Displaced  
Peoples in Colombia**

**Materials by Christian Peacemaker Teams-Colombia**

[www.cpt.org/work/colombia](http://www.cpt.org/work/colombia)

**and Lutheran World Relief** [www.lwr.org/palms](http://www.lwr.org/palms)

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**Included in this packet:**

Palms: Symbol of Victory or Oppression?

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Palm Sunday: Bulletin insert/Litany of Commitment

Good Friday: Litany of Resistance to Violence and War

**Advocacy Actions:**

Support Displaced Families Returning to Their Land

Ask Congress to Promote Peace in Colombia

## Palms: Symbol of Triumph or Oppression?

Each year on Palm Sunday, Christians remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem by passing out and waving palm fronds (spending \$4.5 million per year on palm fronds). Today, however, in countries around the world palm is not a symbol of triumph, but one of displacement and violence. Palm plantations in Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are places of robbery, injustice, and destruction. In pursuit of ever larger profits for industrial agriculture, plantation owners (often large multinational corporations and their subsidiaries) displace thousands from their villages and farms and destroy native biodiversity.

In addition to use in churches on Palm Sunday, palm trees, fronds, and seeds are used in many facets of life, including religious ceremonies, party decorations, and food and household products. Palm trees that produce palm oil are used in everything from biodiesel, to soap, to microwave popcorn.

Harvesting palm products is an important source of supplemental income for many individuals and communities. Unfortunately, over harvesting palm can threaten the livelihood of these communities as well as the shaded forests where the palm plants thrive. In addition to harming the environment, palm plantations are often created by displacing local communities from their lands through coercion, intimidation, and violence.

In Guatemala and Mexico, an effort is underway to develop a new structure for harvesting palms that protects the environment and also provides a fair income for the harvesters of the palms.

Called Eco-Palms, the palms are harvested in a more sustainable way, whereby the harvesters are paid on the quality of the palms they harvest rather than the quantity, which helps to limit the amount of palms taken from the forest. These communities have taken upon themselves to learn about harvesting practices that minimize impact on the natural forest where the palm grows, and ways to protect this wild species of palm.

And, rather than sending the harvested palms off to a distant warehouse for sorting and packaging, the community members

complete those tasks themselves and sell their palms directly rather than relying on middlemen-ensuring that more of the money paid for the palms actually goes to those who worked the hardest to provide them.

When done in a socially and environmentally just way, palm gathering protects valuable natural forests and can provide dignified employment for the local community. Steady markets for palm prevent the forest from being destroyed for other uses. Eco-Palms protect the unique and important biodiversity of the region and maintain the local communities' standard of living.



**Eco-Palms**

### What can you do?

For Palm Sunday 2012, consider ordering Eco-Palms.

#### Ordering Information

[www.ecopalms.org/index-new.php?mode=card](http://www.ecopalms.org/index-new.php?mode=card)

#### Eco-Palm Brochures, Posters, and Inserts

[www.cinram.umn.edu/ecopalms/info.html](http://www.cinram.umn.edu/ecopalms/info.html)

#### Catholic Relief Services and Eco-Palms

[www.crsfairtrade.org/2008/01/08/order-soon-to-add-justice-and-joy-to-palm-sunday](http://www.crsfairtrade.org/2008/01/08/order-soon-to-add-justice-and-joy-to-palm-sunday)

#### Lutheran World Relief and Eco-Palms

[www.lwr.org/palms](http://www.lwr.org/palms)

#### PC-USA and Eco-Palms

[gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/enough/eco-palms](http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/enough/eco-palms)

#### UMCOR and Eco-Palms

[new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/media/cbi-pdfs/ecopalmbulletin09.pdf](http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/media/cbi-pdfs/ecopalmbulletin09.pdf)

## **Palm Sunday: Notes for reflection, sermon or homily**

During Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, palms waved and placed on the road were a sign of victory and recognition of Jesus' royalty. Many Israelites pinned their hopes on a King Jesus who would restore national justice through military power. However, Jesus enters into Jerusalem not on a war horse but rather a donkey, which symbolizes **his commitment to nonviolence as a way to achieve God's reign of justice on earth.**

The world's people, including most Christians, continue to put faith in violent and coercive force, a heresy somehow grafted onto the church under the emperor Constantine and strengthened through centuries of crusade, conquest and alliance with empire. People acting in Jesus' name continue killing, robbing and oppressing with all manner of lethal instruments, rather than risking violent reactions while—in a spirit of nonviolence—doing good to and loving our enemies, as modeled and taught by Jesus.

**Today massive oil palm plantations in Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and elsewhere pave the way for further injustice. It pushes wealth concentration, corporations displacing thousands from their villages and farms, destroying native biodiversity.** We live in a world where such crimes pass as acceptable business practice: a world much like that of Jesus.

But that is not the whole story. Just as Jesus, to achieve justice for the poor, remained steadfast in following God's call to right relations, truth telling, and risking injury without ever causing it, so today there are those who follow that narrow path.

**In honoring Jesus' courage, we can point to others who have acted in that spirit and suffered the consequences. Argénito Díaz is one such man.** This leader organized with communities needing to return to the lands from which they had been displaced, and that were subsequently taken over by palm oil

companies in northwestern Colombia. Argénito was gunned down in front of his wife and five other people on January 13 of this year. He is one of over forty five Colombians killed since 2002 while trying to return to their lands seized for multinational corporations.

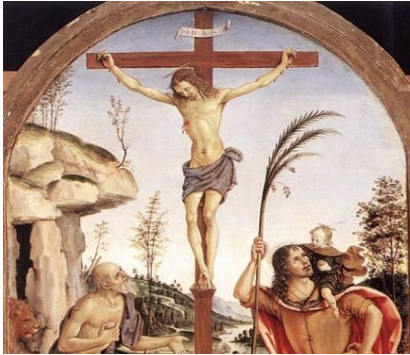
The witness and example of people like Argénito Díaz—whom people and powers that we associate with every day have killed in order to steal land, energy and wealth—lives on and empowers us to act in the power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. With a commitment sharpened by his example, let us defend life and the lands that God has allowed us to live on.

Let us declare that no one is saved, and **no one can ever be saved (as we have been led to believe) by the empire that persecutes Jesus in our name**, and even in His name. No. The salvation that is within everyone's grasp is being offered through the work of Jesus in those whom the empire continues, avidly, every day, to target for death.

They declare with Isaiah, "I did not hide my face from the insult and spitting" (Is. 50:6\*) by corporate dynasties and their client governments. With the Psalmist, they cry, "I hear the whispering of many – terror all around! – as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life" (Ps. 31:13\*). And many are joining Jesus, humbling themselves and becoming obedient unto death (Php 2:8\*), nailed to a cross through the palms.

\*These are lectionary texts for Passion Sunday.

## Palms: a symbol of victory or oppression?



Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' triumphant nonviolent entry into Jerusalem the days before his Passion. Crowds greeted Jesus by waving and carpeting his path with palm branches. In light of his subsequent crucifixion and resurrection, the palm has come to symbolize victory over death and injustice.

In countries around the world\*, **palm symbolizes not victory but displacement and violence by internationally financed palm projects.** In Colombia, whole regions cleared of people, food crops, and rainforests by acts of war are being planted with palm trees for the palm oil industry. In July 2009, 123 families were forced off their farmland, called Las Pavas, to make room for palm oil plantations. Another community, Garzal, is struggling to remain on their land, while large landowners attempt to remove them to plant palm. Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)\*\* accompanies these communities in their efforts to live on their land with justice and dignity.

**This Palm Sunday, CPT invites churches and individuals to recommit to joining Jesus in overcoming injustice and include the Colombian communities of Las Pavas and Garzal in your prayers and action.** Together, may we work to bring God's reign of peace and justice in the world as we shout, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the Prince of Peace!"

Pinturicchio: Crucifixion with Sts. Jerome and Christopher

\*including Colombia, Honduras, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines

\*\*Julie Myers and Chris Knestrick of Cleveland live as volunteers with CPT in Colombia.

## Palm Sunday: Litany of Commitment

**L:** Jesus, your family lost everything by fleeing from your home to escape the massacre; and yet,

**P: Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of God!**

The lands where you lived and worked have been taken for corporate pillage; and yet,

**Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land!**

Jesus, palms once waved in your praise now bring profit to your persecutors. You are threatened, called a rebel, jailed, tortured and executed for seeking justice for land, people and creation; and yet,

**Blessed are the persecuted, for so they persecuted the prophets before them!**

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

**And blessed are all who follow in his steps!**

Jesus, we want to follow you: not as consumers using things up, enriching a few,

**But as conservers of God's good earth, and all life that dwells in it;**

Not as viewers, seduced by images and the idolatry of wealth,

**But as visionaries seeing God's saving action through the persecuted poor;**

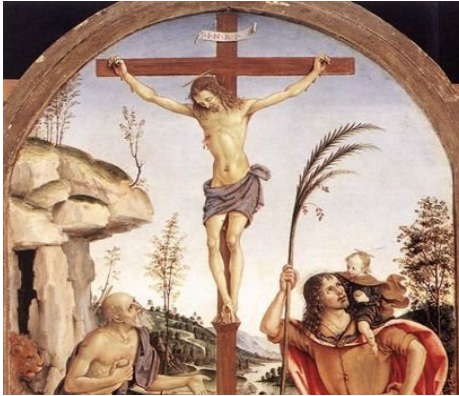
Not as listeners to lies broadcast by war profiteers,

**But as liberators of lives held hostage on both sides of the trigger.**

Together with all your sisters and brothers struggling for life, Jesus,

**We join you in making the earth a place where justice and peace reign and greed and violence are overcome.**

## Las Palmas: símbolo de la victoria o de la opresión?



El Domingo de Ramos conmemora la entrada triunfante y no violenta de Jesús a Jerusalén antes de su Pasión. Una multitud le saludó, agitando y alfombrando su camino con ramas de palma. De la perspectiva de su posterior crucifixión y resurrección, la palma ha llegado a simbolizar la victoria sobre la muerte y la injusticia.

En países de todo el mundo\*, como Colombia, la palma no simboliza la victoria sino el desplazamiento y la violencia hecho por los mega proyectos de palma de aceite con financiamiento internacional. Aquí en Colombia, regiones enteras han sido tomado por actos de guerra y ya están siendo sembrados con palma aceitera. En julio de 2009, 123 familias de las pavas fueron desplazadas con la fuerza pública a abandonar sus tierras para dar espacio a los monocultivos de palma aceitera. Además, la comunidad de Garzal está luchando por permanecer en sus tierras, mientras que los grandes terratenientes están intentando desplazarla para sembrar palma aceitera en su tierra. ECAP acompaña a estas comunidades en sus esfuerzos por permanecer en la tierra con justicia y dignidad.

Este Domingo de Ramos, ECAP les invita a las iglesias e individuos a unirse nuevamente con Jesús para vencer la injusticia, incluyendo a las comunidades de Las Pavas y Garzal en sus oraciones y acciones. Juntos, podemos trabajar para traer el reino de la paz y la justicia de Dios a este mundo, mientras clamamos “Bendito el que viene en el nombre del Señor! Bendito es el Príncipe de la Paz!”

Pinturicchio: Crucifixion with Sts. Jerome and Christophe

\*incluyendo Colombia, Honduras, Indonesia, Malasia, y Filipinas

## Letanía de Compromiso

**L:** Jesús, su familia lo perdió todo al huir de su hogar para escapar de la masacre y, sin embargo,

**P:** **Bienaventurados los pobres, porque de ellos es el reino de Dios!**

Las tierras donde viviste y trabajaste las han tomado para beneficio de las empresas; y, sin embargo,

**Bienaventurados los mansos, porque ellos heredarán la tierra!**

Jesús, las palmas que una vez fueron alzadas en tu alabanza ahora traen beneficios a tus perseguidores. Estás amenazado, señalado, acusado de rebelión, encarcelado, torturado y ejecutado por promover la justicia territorial, social y ambiental. Y sin embargo,

**Bienaventurados los perseguidos, porque así persiguieron a los profetas que les precedieron!**

Bendito el que viene en el nombre del Señor.

**Y benditos todas y todos que siguen sus pasos!**

Jesús, queremos seguirte: no como los consumidores que acaban con las cosas, enriqueciendo a unos pocos,

**Sino como conservadores de la tierra buena de Dios, y de toda la vida que en ella habita;**

No como televidentes, seducidos por las imágenes y la idolatría de la riqueza,

**Sino como visionarios viendo la acción salvífica de Dios a través de los pobres perseguidos;**

No como pasivos lectores de las mentiras difundidas por los toman provecho de la guerra,

**Sino como activos libertadores de la vida de los rehenes a ambos lados del gatillo.**

Juntos con todos sus hermanas y hermanos que luchan por la vida, Jesús,

**Nos unimos a tí para hacer de esta tierra un lugar donde la justicia y la paz reinarán, y donde la codicia y la violencia son vencidos.**

**Good Friday:**  
**Litany of Resistance to Violence and War**  
*Feel free to pick and choose the sections you wish to use.*

**Leader:** Let us pray...

**You have learned how it is said**

All: Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

**But I say this to you who are listening:**

Love your enemies.

**Do good to those who hate you.**

Bless those who curse you.

**Be compassionate.**

Judge not.

**Do not condemn.**

Grant pardon.

**Because the amount you measure out**

Is the amount you will be given back.

**Let everything you do**

Be done in love.

**Blessed are the poor**

For theirs is the kingdom of God

**Blessed are they who mourn now**

For they will be comforted

**Blessed are the meek**

For they will inherit the earth

**Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice**

For they will be satisfied

**Blessed are the merciful**

For they will be shown mercy

**Blessed are the pure in heart**

For they will see God

**Blessed are the peacemakers**

For they will be called the daughters and sons of  
God

**Blessed are they who are persecuted because of  
righteousness**

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**Leader:** Deliver us, O God

All: Guide our feet in the ways of your peace.

**In humility, we ask**

Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

**In humility, we ask**

Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world**

Have mercy on us

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world**

Free us from the bondage of sin and death

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world**

Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

**For the victims of war**

Have mercy

**Women, men and children**

Have mercy

**The maimed and the crippled**

Have mercy

**The abandoned and the homeless**

Have mercy

**The imprisoned and the tortured**

Have mercy

**The widowed and the orphaned**

Have mercy

**The bleeding and the dying**

Have mercy

**The weary and the desperate**

Have mercy

**The lost and the forsaken**

Have mercy

**For those fleeing in terror**

Have mercy

## **Litany of Resistance to Violence and War (con't)**

**Leader: For our scorched and blackened earth**

**All: Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For the scandal of billions wasted in war**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For our leaders who wage war in our name**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For our Caesars and our Herods**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For our generals and tacticians**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For the men and women in battle**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For the men and women training for war**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For the scientists and researchers**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For the arms dealers and the merchants of death**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**For our taxes that fund the evil of war**

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

**Deliver us, O God**

**Guide our feet into the ways of peace**

**In humility, we ask**

**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.**

**From the arrogance of power,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the poverty of violence,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the tyranny of greed,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the ugliness of racism,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the politics of hypocrisy,**

**Deliver us.**

**Leader: From the hysteria of nationalism,**

**All: Deliver us.**

**From the cancer of hatred,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the seduction of wealth,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the addiction of control,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the avarice of imperialism,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the idolatry of national security,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the despair of fatalism,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the violence of apathy,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the filth of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the profanity of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the necessity of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the madness of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the blasphemy of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the brutality of war,**

**Deliver us.**

**From the demonic waste of war and of preparation for war,**

**Deliver us.**

**Deliver us, O God,**

**Guide our feet into the ways of peace**

**In humility, we ask**

**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.**



## **Litany of Resistance to Violence and War (con't)**

**Leader: Obedience to God comes before obedience to human authority.**

**All:** Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's.

**Let your will be done, not mine,**  
With the help of God's grace.

**Let us resist and confront evil everywhere we find it**  
With the help of God's grace.

**With the waging of war,**  
We will not comply.

**With all preparation and training for war,**  
We will not comply.

**With the forces of fear,**  
We will not comply.

**With the legalization of murder,**  
We will not comply.

**With the legalization of genocide,**  
We will not comply.

**With laws that betray human life,**  
We will not comply.

**With the bombing of civilians,**  
We will not comply.

**With the bombing of cities,**  
We will not comply.

**With the violating of our earth,**  
We will not comply.

**With the destruction of peoples,**  
We will not comply.

**With the raping of women,**  
We will not comply.

**With governments that are blind to the sanctity of life,**

We will not comply.

**With economic structures that impoverish and dehumanize,**

We will not comply.

**Leader: With the manipulation and control of public information,**

**All:** We will not comply.

**With economics that manufacture instruments of death,**

We will not comply.

**With economics that practice the use of instruments of death,**

We will not comply.

**With the perpetuation of violence,**

We will not comply.

**With structures that divide rich from poor,**

We will not comply.

**With the hypocrisy of political maneuvering,**

We will not comply.

**With the help of God's grace,**

We will struggle for justice.

**With the compassion of Christ,**

We will stand for what is true.

**With God's abiding kindness,**

We will love even our enemies.

**With the love of Christ,**

We will resist all evil.

**With God's unending faithfulness,**

We will work to build the beloved community.

**With Christ's passionate love,**

We will carry his cross.

**With God's overwhelming goodness,**

We will walk as pilgrims of peace.

**With Christ's fervent conviction,**

We will labor for truth.

**With God's infinite mercy,**

We will live in solidarity with all people.

**In the end there are three things that last,**

Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

**Let us abide in God's love.**

Thanks be to God.



## **ADVOCACY ACTION:**

### **Support Displaced Families Returning to Their Land**

Dear friends of justice,

The time has come to act in support of the displaced Colombian community of Las Pavas!

After almost two years of forced displacement, the community has decided to take the courageous step of returning to their rightful land within the next weeks. They are asking for **your** support during this risky time.

Please sign a petition in solidarity with Las Pavas. For the petition, go to <http://www.fian.org/cases/letter-campaigns> and look for “Colombia: 123 families-Las Pavas.”

#### ***Background:***

The mono-cropping of palm trees in Colombia is being pushed by corporate interests in the Global North and implemented by forced **displacement and assassinations**. Palm oil is used for cosmetics, food products, and as a biofuel. **Touted as “clean” energy, it’s actually quite dirty.** Peasant and Afro-descendant communities are being forcibly displaced from their lands in Colombia in order to cultivate more palm plantations. Furthermore, companies are **clear-cutting the biodiverse Amazon basin** in order to plant their mono-crop: palm trees.

In July of 2009, the 123 families of Las Pavas, a community in Bolivar Department, were illegally and forcibly evicted from their land by the Colombian national police and riot squad at the behest of Daabon Organic, a palm oil supplier for The Body Shop. **They wiped out 60 hectares of food crops, demolished 14 homes, cut down a communal forest, and dried up wetlands.** The land has since been illegally used by the Daabon Group as a palm oil plantation, thus denying the community access to their farms, which are their major food source.

Cleveland InterReligious Task Force (IRTF) members Chris Knestrick and Julie Myers, as members of the Colombia Christian Peacemaker Team, have been accompanying these families as they struggle to have their land rightfully returned to them.

Last year there was a small victory. Hundreds of NE Ohioans signed petitions to The Body Shop circulated by IRTF. The UK-based company responded by cutting their ties with their Colombian supplier, Daabon. But that has done little to get the families back to their rightful land.

Though they are exercising their legal right to retake their land as displaced people, the Las Pavas community is undertaking a serious risk of violence. Sign the petition to demand that law enforcement refrain from excessive force during their return, to support the judicial process of transferring ownership to the community, and to urge investigation of recent harassment of a community leader by ten armed men, including one known paramilitary.

As a supporter of human rights in Colombia, you understand that there is danger of violence for these family farmers. And you also understand the need for action. **Your support could help secure a safe and just return for the families of Las Pavas!**

[www.cpt.org/work/colombia](http://www.cpt.org/work/colombia)

## ADVOCACY ACTION:

### Ask Congress to Promote Peace in Colombia

The people of Colombia have endured internal armed conflict for the past 50 years. But the killings and displacement of communities has increased since the US started infusing billions of dollars a decade ago. Church and human rights groups in Colombia are unanimous in their call to end Plan Colombia.

You can help take the voices of marginalized and displaced Colombians to the halls of Congress. Please take a few minutes to write a letter to your US senator or representative. You can mail your letter or email it via [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

US Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
US Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

US Representative \_\_\_\_\_  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

#### ***Use any of this information to draft your letter:***

With more than four million internally displaced people, Colombia endures the Western Hemisphere's greatest displacement crisis. The ongoing conflict has forced half a million people to flee to neighboring countries. The homes and lands of indigenous, Afro-Colombians and small-scale farmers in Colombia continue to be violently and illegally seized by paramilitary and guerrilla groups who often profit off of the sale of these lands to unscrupulous companies. Unequal land distribution is at the heart of Colombia's conflict. The new Colombian government's current attempts to address the issue take one step towards justice, but this will fall short of a complete and fair return of land to the millions of people who have been displaced.

Instead of protecting and defending the rights of these communities, the U.S. and Colombian governments have given priority to economic, corporate and military interests. Over the past decade, the U.S. government has given more than \$7 billion to Colombia—largely in the form of military aid. We cannot waste any more time or taxpayer dollars on a strategy that not only does not work but also has contributed to the country's protracted humanitarian crisis.

**Colombians are calling for peace, justice and for their lands to be returned to them! (As people of faith) we join them by stating that:**

- **We believe** that U.S. policy should focus on supporting negotiations for a peaceful end to the armed conflict. After 50 years of war, there

is a unique window of opportunity to reach a peace agreement that the U.S. can support.

- ***We do not believe the U.S. government should be moving forward with a trade agreement with Colombia that experience indicates will exacerbate the human rights and humanitarian crisis, while union leaders are assassinated, while the land rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities as well as small-scale farmers are consistently undermined, and millions of people have been violently robbed of their homes..***
- **We believe** that the U.S. should be forging economic ties that spur people-centered development and help create opportunities for the rural poor and endangered workers. The United States must support the efforts of victims in search of truth, justice and reparations. The protection of human rights defenders, community and religious leaders and those working for land return must be a priority. They should be afforded the opportunity to live in peace and without threats of violence from armed groups, including the military.
- ***We do not believe that the U.S. should continue a militarized approach to the conflict. Demilitarization of U.S. policy can begin by cancelling U.S. contracts for construction on Colombian military bases and implementing U.S. human rights laws that require suspending assistance to and training of the Colombian military. Our military approach has only fueled violence and displacement, and is not a "success" that should be replicated elsewhere.***
- **We believe** that the United States must prioritize social and humanitarian funding for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees and promote lasting solutions for the Colombian refugees and IDPs.
- ***We do not believe in the continuation of inhumane and ineffective forced eradication programs, including aerial fumigation. Their implementation over a decade has been shown to displace farmers, threaten food crops, human health and the environment while not significantly reducing coca production and should be halted immediately.***
- **We believe** that policymakers should be investing in drug prevention and rehabilitation programs to reduce demand for drugs here at home, while increasing funds and accountability for programs that promote sustainable alternative development. The United States should ensure that such programs are designed in consultation with Colombian small-scale farmers, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and not be carried out in partnership with the military.