

Solidarity



with Colombian Peace Community

Support the Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó on their 8th anniversary on 23 March



Join us on 23 March
Colombian Embassy London, 5.00pm - 6.30pm

3 Hans Crescent London SW1X 0LN

(Nearest Tube: Knightsbridge or Sloan Square)

Bring placards, banners

For more information, contact: War Resisters' International, 5 Caledonian Rd, London
Tel 020-7278 4040, Fax 7278 0444, email info@wri-irg.org, <http://wri-irg.org>

Solidarity with Colombian Peace Communities

Support the Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó on their 8th anniversary on 23 March

Out of the horrors and suffering of displacement in Colombia, eight years ago - on 23 March, 1997 - was born a new hope. War Resisters' International sends greetings to the Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó as it celebrates its eighth anniversary.

Eight years ago, displaced peasants opted for nonviolence - to build a community at San José de Apartadó without the arms of any faction, nor the government. In that eight years you have withstood violence from paramilitaries, guerrilla and state forces, persistent threats from the paramilitary, and governmental harassment and misrepresentation.

Today we are particularly mindful of the recent killing and mutilation of Luis Eduardo Guerra and other members of the Community. Not only does the Colombian state neglect to investigate the crimes against the Community, but its own armed forces are actually responsible for terrible acts against members of the Community.

The path of nonviolence is not easy to follow - it takes courage and vision, and requires the solidarity of those less threatened. Yet, despite the deaths of 130 members of the Community, San José de Apartadó is an inspiration. It has inspired other displaced people in Colombia to establish their own peace communities, and it has stimulated people in areas threatened by armed groups to stand up and declare themselves as "zones of peace". Other initiatives have flourished, such as the Peasant University whose first agro-alimentation course took place last year at San José itself. Despite paramilitary blockades of the roads connecting the Community to Apartadó, crops of bananas and cocoa have been taken to market.

Therefore today, War Resisters' International - taking our lead from our affiliate, the Red Juvenil of Medellín - invites our supporters and all those who use nonviolence to resist war to mark the eighth anniversary of San José de Apartadó. The Red Juvenil is organising a public fast in Medellín. Other groups and individuals should decide what to do in their own circumstances. At least, we would ask you to stick up this flier.

The repressive policies of the Colombian Government (backed by the USA) cannot offer real security, but rather intensify the strife and suffering of the people of Colombia. The nonviolent option of San José de Apartadó demonstrates that another way is possible.

Contacts:

War Resisters' International, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, Britain, tel. +44-20-7278 4040, email info@wri-irg.org, <http://wri-irg.org>

Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó, fax +57-4-8282003 or 8245090, email cdpsanjose@hotmail.com