

Question for written answer E-002801/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL)

Subject: VP/HR - Increase in attacks on human rights defenders in Colombia

Human rights organisations have condemned the worsening situation in Colombia in recent months. In March 2017, the United Nations expressed its concern about violence against human rights defenders. In 2016, there were 389 registered attacks (59 killings). In 44 of the verified killings, the perpetrators appeared to be linked to group or individual criminal interests.

The United Nations urged the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia People's Army (FARC-EP) to 'fully recognise responsibility for serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations in order to generate effective reparations' processes based on consensus with the victims.'

In areas that were previously occupied by FARC-EP, reports have been surfacing of a greater paramilitary presence and a notable 'increase in killings [...] compared to 2015, when the OHCHR registered 25 victims. This is related to power vacuums being left by FARC-EP' and 'scarce or ineffective State presence', according to the report.

Given that this increase in violence is an obstacle to the realisation of the peace agreements:

1. What is the EU's position on this situation?
2. What action will the EU now take to urge the Colombian Government to ensure that its population is fully safeguarded, particularly in areas that were previously controlled by FARC-EP?