



Social unrest in Colombia at the heart of joint meeting

28.6.2021

Meetings, agendas



An exchange of views on 16 June gave the floor to key stakeholders to discuss the latest developments in Colombia following the social protests on the tax reforms announcement.

AFET, DLAT, DAND and DROI

Guests included Adriana Mejía Hernández, Vice Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs in Colombia; Veronique Lorenzo, Head of Division for South America at the EEAS, and José Miguel Vivanco, Human Rights Watch Executive Director of the Americas Division.

The meeting was organised by the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), in association with the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (DLAT) and the Delegation for relations with the countries of the Andean Community (DAND).

Official authorities have confirmed 51 people have died since the beginning of the unrest; speakers and Members expressed their condolences to those affected.

Right to protest and police repression

While Vice Minister Adriana Mejía Hernández highlighted that Colombian authorities recognised the freedoms of expression and assembly, Human Rights Watch stated the protests have been largely peaceful and have answered with police repression. She also explained that a committee has been established to monitor public protest and follow up on cases of enforced disappearances. She added that the Attorney General activated [the investigation Alison Menendez](#) that will result in disciplinary action where necessary.

Some Members underlined that the economic struggles in Colombia have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic but emphasised that violent protests should not be tolerated. Other members stressed that police repression cannot be the only response to protests and warned against overly focusing on the minority engaging in vandalism and violence.

The EEAS welcomed the National Strike Committee announcement on the suspension of protests but recognised that the situation is not yet resolved. Veronique Lorenzo also emphasised the need to legitimate the right to protest and encourages an inclusive dialogue that results in peace.

More information:

[AFET](#)

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