

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0234/04
by Miet Smet (PPE-DE)
to the Council

Subject: Violation of human rights of Cacarica communities in Colombia

For some years now, Colombia has been ravaged by violence between the government-backed army, paramilitaries and various guerrilla movements. This violence has also affected Colombian citizens, directly or indirectly. Members of the Cacarica communities, who live in the Cacarica River Basin, in the departamento of Chocó, say they are being forced to leave their homes.

In 2000, these Cacarica communities reached agreement with the government of the then president Pastrana allowing their safe return. They also urged that, as private citizens, they should not be affected by the conflict. With the help of international organisations and the Justicia y Paz Commission, few problems arose in the initial phase after their return.

Recently, however, the Cacarica communities have been accused by both the military and the guerrilla fighters of siding with their respective enemies. These accusations have been accompanied by renewed violence. Even human rights activists have been threatened, and recent statements by President Uribe and certain of his ministers have called into question the legitimacy of the work carried out by human rights organisations.

Has the European Council already reacted to the violations of human rights in Colombia?

If so, has the Colombian Government already reacted to this approach?

If not, can the Council urge the Colombian Government to adopt the UNHCR's recommendations, guarantee the protection of human rights activists and strive to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, which has already lasted a number of years?

In the event that the Colombian Government has not responded or does not respond to the Council's approach, does the Council intend to impose sanctions on Colombia?