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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell i Fontelles  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(18.5.2022)

The EU Delegation and EU Member States in Colombia consistently raise concerns and speak out – both in bilateral meetings or dialogues (such as the annual human rights dialogue) and publicly - against threats and attacks against Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), social leaders and their communities. This is also a priority for the engagement of the Special EU Representative for Human Rights/Special Envoy for the Colombia peace process. By doing so, the EU regularly calls on authorities to redouble efforts, advocating for structural solutions including the strengthening of prevention and collective protection. Frequent meetings with HRDs and visits to social leaders and affected communities are integral part of the EU's actions, though it is impossible to meet all that are affected. The EU also supports the Ombudsman's prevention activities.

The latest report to the United Nations Security Council informs that 3 200 projects under the 16 PDET programmes<sup>1</sup> have been implemented with an estimated budget of USD 3 billion. The EU's Peace Fund directly supports projects in seven out of the 16 PDET in regions, though north-eastern Antioquia is not covered.

The EU's support project for the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) was completed in December 2021. It provided technical assistance in building capacity in investigation and dismantling of criminal networks. The SIU's capacity has been improving gradually though the impact assessment directly related to the EU support requires more time and needs in order to improve the SIU's performance. The EU is in constant dialogue with the government, the Attorney General and the SIU on the need to more effectively investigate and prosecute those responsible for the threats and killings, both perpetrators and instigators of these crimes.

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<sup>1</sup> Development Programme with a Territorial Focus