

**Question for written answer P-007725/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 117
Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)

Subject: VP/HR - Colombia: EU assistance in the area of military penal jurisdiction will increase impunity

On 17 June 2013, the Colombian Congress adopted a law regulating military criminal jurisdiction. The law was approved in the face of multiple recommendations to the contrary by UN bodies, including an unprecedented statement by 11 UN human rights experts who called for the reform to be withdrawn and stated: 'Should this reform be approved, it could seriously undermine the administration of justice for cases of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including serious crimes, by military or police forces (Fuerza Pública)'.

Numerous NGOs, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia (OIDHACO) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), have expressed concerns over this controversial military jurisdiction reform, and some of them have specifically called for the rejection of a proposed law whose purpose is to give greater powers to the military justice system and which will shield members of the armed forces and the police from justice for crimes under international law.

It should be emphasised that in its November 2012 report ¹, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) determined that acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes had been committed by organs of the Colombian state.

However, instead of expressing concern, during the recent visit of the Defence Minister of Colombia the EU offered its cooperation in implementing this reform ².

1. Is the Vice-President / High Representative aware that of the 1 579 lawsuits taken out in the last 13 years in Colombia over extrajudicial executions, only 1 % have resulted in sentences?³
2. How does the Vice-President / High Representative intend to 'consider assistance in the area of military penal jurisdiction as requested by the Colombian side'?
3. Is the Vice-President / High Representative aware that to support or help Colombia with this military jurisdiction reform means to legitimate a law strongly criticised by international organisations including the UN? Is the Vice-President / High Representative aware that in supporting this Colombian law the EU is acting without regard for the human rights standards of the UN?

¹ Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Interim report on its 'preliminary examination' of the situation in Colombia, November 2012.

² <http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/colombie589e.pdf>

³ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/pressdata/EN/foraff/137600.pdf