



Peace in Colombia is Possible

I never cease to raise fervent prayers to God for Colombia where for a long time many sons and daughters of this beloved country have suffered from extortion, kidnapping and the violent loss of their loved ones. I ask the Lord to end this inhuman suffering once and for all and that they may find paths of reconciliation, mutual respect and sincere harmony, thus restoring brotherhood and solidarity, the solid foundations necessary for just progress and the building of lasting peace.

--Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, February 3, 2008

Brief History of Colombia's Internal Conflict

For more than four decades Colombians have experienced an armed conflict between left-wing guerillas; right-wing paramilitaries, and government security forces, with civilian populations suffering the worst of the violence and human rights abuses. The current conflict is rooted in a long history of extreme inequality and political exclusion, though it has intensified dramatically in recent years due in part to the infusion of drug-related profits that many of the armed actors continue to receive.



CRS Responds to Colombia's Humanitarian Crisis

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) provides humanitarian assistance to people forcibly displaced by the conflict in Colombia and supports local and international efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to a very violent situation. In partnership with the Colombian Catholic Church, CRS works to strengthen Colombian families and communities by creating economic opportunities and a culture of peace in the face of the country's prolonged and complex crisis. CRS also engages Catholics in the United States, raising awareness of the situation in Colombia and advocating for U.S. policies that will help bring about a just and lasting resolution to the current conflict.

Colombia Quick Facts

- ❖ 4,500 - the number of civilians that perish each year due to the conflict
- ❖ 3.2 + million - the number of people that are internally displaced within Colombia
- ❖ 46.1 million - the country's total population

What You Can Do Now:

Pray for a just and lasting peace in Colombia. Visit <http://crs.org/public-policy/colombia.cfm> for resources.

Take action now and send Congress a message to change U.S. policy towards Colombia. Go to <http://actioncenter.crs.org> today.

Advocate for a just and lasting peace in Colombia. Join the CRS Advocacy Network <http://actioncenter.crs.org/signup> today.

Learn more about CRS' Colombia advocacy efforts at <http://www.crs.org/public-policy/colombia.cfm>.

Buy fair trade products from around the world, including Colombia, that support fair wages and uphold human dignity. Go to <http://crsfairtrade.org> now.

CRS' *In Solidarity with Colombia* program began in June 2000 and marks a milestone in the transformation of the CRS' response to the crisis in Colombia. This program expands and strengthens our focus on projects in the areas of humanitarian response, justice, peace education and peacebuilding, and programming activities in the United States that emphasize education and awareness-raising of the American public on issues of importance to Colombia.

CRS' Advocacy Efforts in Support of Peace in Colombia

In its advocacy for positive change in U.S. policy towards Colombia, CRS promotes greater awareness about the human rights and humanitarian crisis and the most important issues identified by the Colombian and U.S. Bishop Conferences. CRS calls on the U.S. Congress and Administration to:

- **Support efforts to bolster a negotiated, political path towards peace.**
- **Increase development and humanitarian aid to Colombia.**
- **Include basic standards for the protection of human rights in all aid programs.**
- **Phase out aerial fumigation, and increase appropriate alternative development.**