

Giving Peace a Place

LWR'S ADVOCACY WORK IN COLOMBIA



Conflict has raged in Colombia for more than four decades. Tensions among the government, guerilla forces and paramilitary groups have erupted into violence that has forced nearly four million people to flee their homes. The majority of displaced people are women and children.

Nearly half of Colombia's displaced people are unemployed, and those who find work usually obtain only poorly paid day labor. Faced with few options, some displaced people — including children as young as 10 — are recruited by armed groups or join voluntarily to escape poverty.

In the United States, LWR works to tell the stories of the Colombian people — stories of hope and faith amidst violence and destruction that are often drowned out in the battle cry for the war on drugs.

To date the United States has sent \$6 billion in mostly military aid to Colombia in an effort to curb the drug trade and end the conflict. It's not working — the result has been more violence and internal displacement with no decrease in drug trafficking.

It is time for a U.S. policy that promotes peace rather than fanning the flames of violence.

LWR ADVOCATES FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO:

- Increase humanitarian aid to victims of violence.
- End military aid to Colombia.
- End aerial fumigations.
- Promote a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Colombia.
- Support only fair and just trade policies with Colombia

Together, we will change minds — and votes — in Congress. We will send a message to the people of Colombia that we stand together with them in pursuit of peace.

HERE ARE SOME EASY WAYS YOU CAN HELP PROMOTE PEACE:

- Download free color postcards to send to your elected officials at lwr.org/advocacy or order them by calling 800.LWR.LWR.2.
- Sign-up to receive LWR Advocacy updates by e-mail at action.lwr.org
- Set up a meeting or send a letter to your Member of Congress to discuss improving US policy toward Colombia. Visit the LWR website for resources at lwr.org/Colombia.
- Learn more about the situation in Colombia through resources, "True Alternatives To Coca" and "Compass for a New Colombia Policy". Visit lwr.org/advocacy to download or call 800.LWR.LWR.2 to order your copy.
- Host "Remember Me: Voices of the Silenced in Colombia" at your church or city. "Remember Me," an interactive art exhibit, brings to life the stories, experiences and struggles of the people of Colombia and highlights initiatives for peace and justice. For more information, contact advocacy@lwr.org

"Most people do not hear our message. Now you have our stories and can share the truth with others."

—LWR Colombia delegate, April 2002