



**COMMUNICATION TO PUBLIC OPINION
ON VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION TO CITIZEN MOBILIZATION
AT THE NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT PROTESTS OF APRIL AND MAY 2021**

The Mennonite Christian Association for Justice, Peace, and Nonviolent Action is in solidarity with the National Strike. Just reasons motivate civil society to stand in solidarity with the peaceful protests led by social organizations, churches, trade unionists, human rights, women, artists, educators, student groups, and peace movements.

We support citizen mobilization, democratic debates, petition spreads for the National Unemployment Strikes, and popular expressions in different regions, expressed in marches, social networks, artistic expressions, sit-ins, and other creative actions. All of them are signs of public outrage at the Government's neoliberal and militaristic policies.

The general public rejected the tax reform. This social pressure caused President Iván Duque to decide to withdraw this project from the Congress of the Republic. However, social mobilization and National Unemployment strikes continue because they reflect the disappointment in the face of the low implementation of the Peace Agreement, the socio-economic crisis over the COVID-19 pandemic, the human rights situation of leaders who have been murdered, threatens, and massacres that have been taking place in the territories.

The reports of violent acts against the protesters are alarming. We urge the Government NOT to stigmatize mobilization and social protests by calling them "terrorists and vandals." Situations such as the militarization of cities, police brutality, wounded, missing, and murders in the framework of the National Unemployment protests must be grounds for investigations.

Justapaz, as an organization of the religious sector for peace and nonviolent action, continues to insist on options for social dialogue and agreement between the Government and civil society on social, economic, peace, and human rights policies. In particular, we accompany social, and peace agendas developed from trade unions, educational and human rights movements. We join in prayer and solidarity with individuals and families who have been affected by violent events. Violence is not the solution and only leaves pain, grudges, and death.

Finally, we deeply acknowledge the youth movements, women for peace, trade unionists, churches for peace, educators, peace and human rights platforms, and all the diversity of popular and citizen expressions present at these junctures. We reiterate our solidarity with social, just, peaceful, and democratic mobilization in our country.

We believe and insist that every social mobilization be and remain creative, peaceful, and engaged!

