

**NETWORK OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION  
AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS**

**WORKSHOP ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia — September 2–3, 2003

**CONCLUSIONS**

We, the members of the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Americas, meeting in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on September 2 and 3, 2003, for the Workshop on Security and Human Rights:

**We acknowledge and support** the essential work of national human rights institutions, the United Nations, the Organization of American States and other regional mechanisms for human rights do, to maintain peace and security and ensure respect for human rights.

**We also recognize** the fundamental role that governments must play in protecting their people who live with the threat of violence.

**We realize** that violence in all its forms, as well as the security measures that governments take to oppose it, affect the enjoyment of human rights.

Therefore we have come to the following conclusions:

**We call** on states to ensure that security measures are compatible with international standards of human rights, even in times of emergency, considering the profound consequences that such actions have on the civilian population.

**We consider** that when a state of emergency is declared, the rules of international human rights law, including the requirements of proportionality and necessity, must be observed. In this respect, we recall the essential role that must be played by bodies that have the power of constitutional oversight, especially the judicial system.

**We reiterate** the fundamental principle of legality and the norms of international law, which assert that in all circumstances, including states of emergency, there are certain inalienable rights, including the right to life, not to be tortured, not to receive cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the basic elements of due process, recognition of human dignity and non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion, social origin or any other reason.

**We call** on governments to be precise in their legislation and in developing polices and security measures, and to avoid describing *a priori* any situation of conflict or social upheaval as terrorism.

**We urge** parties to armed conflicts to find a negotiated solution and to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law.

**We remind** governments of countries in the region to fulfil their duty to guarantee integral security, to deal with the threat of violence in accordance with the international human rights regime and to act to solve the social, economic and political causes of violence in an environment of tolerance and dialogue.

**We ask** governments to give national institutions the resources that they need to do their work to promote and protect human rights.

**We will work** together with governments and civil society to preserve peace and the rule of law when emergency situations arise that endanger social stability.

**We will review** the security measures that governments take, thus ensuring respect for legal guarantees as well as for the human rights recognized universally in international instruments.

**We will ensure** that activities to promote and educate on human rights are carried out, including training the police and military who implement security measures that may affect the most vulnerable groups.

**We call** on states to promote human rights education from the first years of schooling until the advanced level, and to promote training programs for personnel responsible for human rights and the civilian population in general.

**We ask** international human rights organizations to cooperate in training and advising on “security measures.”

**We undertake** to promote dialogue between the civilian population and governments on developing national security strategies and violence prevention measures.

**We will continue** to cooperate and share experiences on security and human rights issues.

**We express** our deep condolences on the death of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other officials of the United Nations who died in the service of peace and who dedicated their lives to humanitarian work and human dignity.

**We express** our solidarity with the Human Rights Prosecutor of Guatemala, whose office was recently raided; we condemn these abusive acts and demand that they be clarified immediately.

**We thank** Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, Edward J. Flynn, Eric Lair, Román Ortiz, Mauricio García Villegas and Amérigo Incalcaterra, who shared their knowledge and enriched this workshop.

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Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; September 3, 2003.