

Mr Wilson Ruiz Orejuela
President of the National Narcotics Council
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Dear Mr Wilson Ruiz Orejuela:

I am writing to express concern for the health and safety of thousands of people whose rights are on peril if the Colombian government resumes the eradication of illicit crops through aerial spraying glyphosate. Colombia should ensure that efforts to prevent illicit drug cultivation or eradicate illicit crops do not adversely affect the enjoyment of human rights, including of peasant communities whose livelihoods depend on such crops.

It is widely documented that the use of glyphosate has had a serious impact on the environment and the human rights of thousands of people, such as right to life, health, water, to a healthy and safe environment and to an adequate standard of living. The force eradication of illegal crops with glyphosate will exacerbate the situation of conflict in the country, leaving rural communities in an even more vulnerable situation.

We urge you to immediately agree on a suspension of aerial spraying with glyphosate, and to refrain from adopting drug policies that harm people. In this sense, I call on you to develop instead policies that address the underlying socio-economic causes that lead people to cultivate these crops and avoid entrenching poverty and deprivation in these communities. The government must provide peasants farmers who depend on such crops with the necessary support to develop economically viable and sustainable alternatives and to realize their right to work and an adequate standard of living. The programs for voluntary substitution, recognized in the Peace Agreement, have proven to be more sustainable and effective for the protection of communities' human rights.

Yours sincerely,