



Presbyterian Mission

**Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations**

# COLOMBIA

## The United Nations in Colombia

**UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** The UNHCR tracks and serves millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia. In 2017, they provided 126,080 vulnerable people with civil registration or identity documents, 19,860 people of concern with legal assistance, and helped build capacity for government institutions working toward durable solutions for IDPs.<sup>1</sup>

**UN Mission in Colombia (UNMC):** In January 2016, the UN Security Council received a request by the Colombian government and the FARC-EP for a political mission made up of unarmed international observers. Their mandate ended in September 2017. The Security Council now relies on the UN Verification Mission as support for compliance with the peace accords.<sup>2</sup>

**UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** Since 2009, the Humanitarian Fund of Colombia has mobilized \$15 million to reach 300,000 people living in need. This money is distributed between partners with the goal of improving healthcare, food security, education, and water sanitation hygiene.<sup>3</sup>

**UN Verification Mission in Colombia:** Following the signing of Colombia's peace accord, the UN Security Council approved a peacekeeping mission responsible for overseeing the reintegration of FARC-EP members into civil society and providing protection for reintegrated communities and other vulnerable territories.<sup>4</sup>

## The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & Colombia

**Presbyterian Mission:** Founded in 1856, the Presbyterian Church of Colombia was the first protestant church established in the country and the first Presbyterian mission in Latin America. Education has been a major commitment for the Colombian church: starting with public schools in various cities and eventually growing into the Reformed University in Barranquilla, founded with the help of mission co-workers in 1982. The Presbyterian Church of Colombia also speaks and acts to promote lasting peace in a country plagued by internal armed conflict. Young Adult Volunteers and mission co-workers support both of these mission areas in the church.<sup>5</sup>

**Colombia Accompaniment Program:** Since 2004, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship with PC(USA) World Mission have trained 150 short-term volunteers to serve for five-week periods of

accompaniment in Colombia. The Presbyterian Church of Colombia takes risks in support of human rights and those displaced by violence. This program is meant to fulfill their request for a measure of safety—provided by international eyes—in their work.<sup>6</sup>

**PC(USA) Policy on Colombia:** General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) have supported peace and human rights in Colombia through a variety of advocacy measures, including the suspension of U.S. military use of Colombian bases, rechanneling of foreign aid to civil society organizations that protect the rights of marginalized groups, ending aerial fumigation of coca crops, and increased aid for resettlement of displaced persons.<sup>7</sup>

## **Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN)**

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is called to act on an issue when it meets three criteria: the PC(USA) has a policy regarding the topic, partner churches are in favor of action, and it appears on the UN agenda. In the case of Colombia, PMUN has interpreted their ministry through participation in ecumenical advocacy on the UN Security Council.

**NGO Working Group on the Security Council:** The NGO Working Group was founded in 1995 to promote dialogue between the NGO community with foreign officials, policy experts, and members of the Security Council. PMUN involvement in the working group creates an exchange of information and perspective between the PC(USA) and the principal UN organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, including responsibilities for setting the mandate for the peacekeeping mission in Colombia.<sup>8</sup> In June 2019, PMUN co-sponsored an event in which faith and social leaders were given a platform to share the uneven progress made in the implementation of the peace accords.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup><http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2542>

<sup>2</sup><https://unmc.unmissions.org/en>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.unocha.org/latin-america-and-caribbean-rolac/colombia>

<sup>4</sup><https://colombia.unmissions.org/en/mandate>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/colombia/>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/colombia/accompaniment-program/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3285>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngo-working-group-on-the-security-council-4-24.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/pcusa-un-ministry-hosts-delegation-appealing-for-peace-in-colombia/>