



## Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

### Witness Biographies

### Protests in Colombia

#### Panel I



**Elizabeth Dickinson** is senior analyst for Colombia at International Crisis Group. Her work centers around armed conflict dynamics in the country and the implementation of the 2016 peace accord between the Colombian government and FARC guerrillas. Ms. Dickinson first reported from Colombia as a journalist in 2011, covering topics including criminal and armed group violence, illegal mining, migration, and national politics. Ms. Dickinson previously served as Crisis Group's Senior Analyst for the Arabian Peninsula. Prior to joining International Crisis Group, Ms. Dickinson worked for a decade as a journalist, including roles at *Foreign Policy* magazine, *The National*, and *The Economist*. She holds a degree in African and International Studies from Yale University.



**Angela Maria Penagos-Concha** is the Director of the Agri-food System Initiative of Andes University in Colombia and the Director of the Rural Development Unit at the National Planning Department, where she introduced important changes in policy design and implementation to incorporate attention to rural areas and territory and integrate links to development policies. In this position, she also served as the technical secretariat of the Rural Mission, a mandate of the Colombian government seeking technical and policy recommendations for the road map for the next 30 years to transform rural territories and helped inform the action plan for the peace agreement's implementation process. Ms. Penagos-Concha previously served as the Director of the Colombia office for the Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP) for five years. During this period, RIMISP became one of the most important think tanks in rural and territorial development, linking knowledge generation, dialogue, and policy advocacy to rural and agrarian problems.



**José Miguel Vivanco** is the director of Human Rights Watch's Americas division and a general expert on Latin America. Before joining Human Rights Watch, Vivanco worked as an attorney for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights at the Organization of American States (OAS). In 1990, he founded the Center for Justice and International Law, an NGO that files complaints before international human rights bodies. Vivanco has also been an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center and the School of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University. He has published articles in leading American and Latin American newspapers and is interviewed regularly for television news. A Chilean, Vivanco studied law at the University of Chile and Salamanca Law School in Spain and holds an LL.M. from Harvard Law School.



**José R. Cárdenas** is a Principal with the Cormac Group and has served in senior positions in the U.S. Department of State, NSC, USAID, OAS and as a Senior Professional Staff Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In addition to testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations and the House Foreign Affairs Committees, he has written and spoken and been interviewed widely, and is an advisor to the Foundation for Human Rights in Cuba and member of the Research Council of the Center for a Free Cuba. He is a Course Coordinator at the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service Institute and has been a participant in the State Department's overseas Speakers Program.



**Steve Hege** is the regional Deputy Director for the U.S. Institute for Peace, USIP, and has nearly two decades of professional experience working on issues related to peace processes, human rights, security sector reform, local governance, and natural resource-related organized crime. He currently leads USIP's efforts in Colombia in support of the implementation of the peace accord with the FARC rebels, the dialogues with the ELN, and local peace-building and security transformations in municipalities previously under rebel control or influence. Over the last four years, he has also supported or managed USIP security and justice reform programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Central African Republic and Myanmar. Prior to joining USIP, Mr. Hege was appointed for three years as coordinator and armed groups expert of the U.N. Group of Experts on the DRC investigating and reporting on arms embargo violations for the Security Council's Sanctions Committee, including researching military integration challenges, illicit trade in natural resources and egregious human rights violations.