



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Peace and Victims' Rights in Colombia

Panel I



Elise Ditta is a Research Associate for the Peace Accords Matrix Colombia Barometer project at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies in the Keough School for Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. Ditta manages and analyzes information regarding Colombian peace accord implementation reported by 30 staff members across Colombia. She also participated in the development of metrics for measuring the fulfillment of gender, ethnic and territorial commitments in the Colombian accord. She is a graduate of the Kroc Institute's Masters in Peace Studies, where she focused on public policy and conflict analysis and transformation. As part of her studies, she completed a USAID Research and Innovation Fellowship in Colombia, examining urban violence and territorial peace on the Caribbean coast. She also earned a bachelor's degree in International Development and Spanish from Calvin College.



Jenny Piedad Neme Neiva is the Coordinator for Public Advocacy at the Inter-Ecclesiastical Dialogue for Peace (DiPaz). A native of Colombia, Jenny's professional background is in social work and political studies. She is a member of the Mennonite Church of Colombia and served a total of 22 years in its Justapaz Institute, 11 of them as Director General. She has led accompaniment processes for communities in the construction of peace, education on peace and reconciliation, and for cases of people affiliated with churches and communities affected by the armed conflict. Jenny promotes the creation and sustaining of networks in civil society such as the Coalition Against the Recruitment of Girls, Boys, and Youth to the Armed Conflict, the Permanent Assembly for Peace, Redprodepaz, Women's Peace and Security Collective, and others. She has also led the creation of platforms of churches and faith-based organizations with peacebuilding and human rights agendas, such as the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia, the Ecumenical Program of Accompaniment to Colombia, and more recently DiPaz.



Angela Maria Escobar is the Coordinator for the Network of Women Victims and Professionals, a national network dedicated to supporting the rights of women victims of sexual violence in Colombia. She herself was a victim of violence related to Colombia's armed conflict and broke her silence after eight years in order to defend the rights of other women victims. She currently leads workshops on the prevention of sexual violence in diverse regions of Colombia, works to empower other victims and helps efforts to ensure access to justice. Angela was invited to participate as a victim by one of the women's delegations to the peace negotiation table between the government of Colombia and the FARC. She also spoke on behalf of women victims in the 2017 commemoration at the UN headquarters for the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in the Conflict, where she emphasized the obstacles women face in accessing justice.



Luis Fernando Arias is the Secretary General for the National Indigenous Association of Colombia (ONIC). First elected to this position in 2007, Arias leads the ONIC's institutional relationship with national and international organizations, as well as with the Colombian government. During the peace negotiations in Havana, he was the leading indigenous voice during the development of the Ethnic Chapter of the agreement. Prior to joining ONIC, Arias worked for the rights of indigenous peoples at the Indigenous Kankuamo Organization. He studied law at Cesar University in Colombia. Subsequently, as a trained lawyer, he coordinated the ONIC's Legal Department from 2004-2007.



Adam Isacson is the Director for Defense Oversight at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). Isacson accompanies WOLA's Colombia program on peace and security issues. He has worked on defense, security, and peacebuilding in Latin America since 1994. Monitoring U.S. aid, and advocating for peaceful resolution to Colombia's long armed conflict, has led him to visit Colombia more than 70 times. He has done work in 24 of the country's 32 departments. Before coming to WOLA in 2010, Isacson worked on Latin America demilitarization at the Center for International Policy (CIP). At the start of his career, in the mid-1990s, Isacson worked on the Central America Demilitarization Program at the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress in Costa Rica. Isacson holds an M.A. in International Relations from Yale University and a B.A. from Hampshire College.