

Testimony for *1325 on Trial*, 48th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Angela Patricia Guerrero, La Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas y LIMPAL-Colombia, Colombia

My name is Patricia Guerrero. I am the founder of La Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas (League of Displaced Women), an organization comprised of 300 Afro-Colombian, multi-ethnic and indigenous women who seek restitution on account of violations of their human rights, as a result of the on-going internal armed conflict in Colombia.

The numbers of victims of forced displacement in Colombia have risen to three million, a tragedy only comparable to the suffering of the people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Sudan. In Colombia, the displacement is feminized in that more than 50% of the displaced population is women, girls and boys. We, the women, have been victims of forced displacement, as well as other crimes of war and crimes against humanity. These include: sexual violence, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced recruitment, forced disappearances, forced sterilization, the taking of hostages, the massacre of women are some of the war crimes and the crimes against humanity under which women suffer.

I would like to cite operative paragraphs 9 and 10 in UNSC Resolution 1325 on the protection of women and girls.*

Despite the fact that these crimes have been reported by international and regional actors, such as Dr. Radhika Coomaraswamy in her 2002 report on violence against women in Colombia, and Dr. Marta Altolaguirre of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, gender-based violence has not been stopped. The Colombian government's implementation of 'Seguridad democrática', Democratic Security, does not ensure democracy or security for women. Impunity is rampant due to the lack of political will from the Colombian government to investigate sexual and gender-based violence. The government pretends to pardon and forgets through the means of a legal project called Alternative Law.

I would like to cite operative paragraph 11 in UNSC Resolution 1325 on the State's responsibility to end impunity.*

Colombian women demand the truth, justice and reparations, but we are excluded. We have not been able to participate at the formal peace negotiation tables in order to make our demands and to contribute our solutions to the armed conflict. We have made innumerable rallies and protests so as to demand our participation. Women will continue to distribute information about 1325, including to women whose work is consistent with the principles and mandates found in 1325, though they might not know of 1325 or other international law.

Despite the fact that the Colombian government says that it is implementing 1325, and though Colombia, at the United Nations, recognizes the importance of the resolution, the truth is that the Colombian government ignores it

completely, in all aspects. The facts are irrefutable. Never before in our history have there been women representing women in the negotiations, as it has been with the guerrillas and paramilitaries representing themselves.

I would like to cite operative paragraph 8 in UNSC Resolution 1325 on the responsibilities of actors involved in negotiating peace agreements.*

I ask that this tribunal condemn the State of Colombia for failing to involve women as stakeholders in peace at the negotiation tables, for discriminating against Colombian women, and lastly, for not complying with international law.

Muchas gracias.

Word count: 516

* References to operative paragraphs found in 1325:

[9. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;]

[10. Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;]

[11. Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls, and in this regard, stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;]

[8. Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia: (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction; (b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements; (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;]