

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW  
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW  
4<sup>TH</sup> HUMAN RIGHTS FILM SERIES**

**RESOURCE PAGE: *WAR TAKES*<sup>1</sup>**

In Colombia, leftist guerrillas fight both the Colombian government and the officially outlawed right-wing paramilitary organizations, which are often allied with the US-supported Colombian military. In 1999, after more than 40 years of internal conflict between the military and the country's largest guerilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), the two groups negotiated a cease fire and peace talks began. After almost three years of negotiations, however, peace talks broke down in February 2002. Colombia continues to face increasing political violence from guerilla groups and paramilitary forces. Paramilitary forces control approximately 40 percent of the drug trade in Colombia and have considerably increased their strength since the beginning of the peace negotiations. The AUC (United Self Defense Group of Colombia), the country's largest counterinsurgency group, was added to the US list of terrorist organizations in September 2002. As a part of the war on drugs, however, the US continues to fund the Colombian government, despite its failure to sever ties with paramilitary groups and prosecute human rights violations. Recently, Colombian President Alvaro Uribe proposed an amnesty plan for violent paramilitary members, patterned on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The following is a list of websites that provide more information about the human rights situation in Colombia and the current state of US aid to the country.

**Washington Office on Latin America – [www.wola.org](http://www.wola.org)**

- ⇒ WOLA regularly provides information and analysis to the U.S. executive branch, Congress and U.S. and Latin American media. WOLA monitors the impact of U.S. foreign policy on human rights, democracy and equitable development in Latin America.

**Latin American Working Group – [www.lawg.org](http://www.lawg.org)**

- ⇒ The LAWG is one of the nation's longest standing coalitions dedicated to foreign policy. They carry out the coalition's mission to encourage US policies towards Latin America that promote human rights, justice, peace and sustainable development. As a coalition, LAWG represents the interests of over 60 major religious, humanitarian, grassroots and policy organizations to decision makers in Washington, DC.

**Committee for Social Justice in Colombia – [www.socialjusticecolombia.org](http://www.socialjusticecolombia.org)**

- ⇒ The Committee for Social Justice in Colombia is a coalition of students, workers, social activists and members of the Colombian immigrant community that educate schools, union locals and communities throughout New York City to educate U.S.-based activists about the human rights situation in Colombia.

**Colombia Human Rights Network – <http://colhrnet.igc.org>**

- ⇒ This bilingual site offers a wide range of media resources. The Network publishes the Colombia Update, a quarterly newsletter with the latest information on the political, environmental and human rights situation in Colombia.

**U.S. Office on Colombia – [www.usofficeoncolombia.org/index.html](http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/index.html)**

- ⇒ The U.S. Office on Colombia is an independent, non-profit organization, not affiliated with any political party that seeks to educate U.S. policymakers, the media and the American public about the impact of U.S. policy on Colombia.

**Witness for Peace – [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org)**

- ⇒ Witness for Peace is a politically independent, grassroots organization, committed to nonviolence. Their mission is to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing US policies and corporate practices which contribute to poverty and oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Lucy Ferguson for writing this resource page.