



Statement of Solidarity regarding sexual violence in the context of the National Strike in Colombia

Since the beginning of the ongoing Colombian national strike on April 28th, the [Ombudsman Office of Colombia](#) has reported 106 cases of gender-based violence against women and people with non-normative gender identities. Of these 106 cases, 23 cases included sexual violence. In addition to these reports, the national Colombian NGO [Temblores](#) reported 27 cases of sexual violence during the social protests. Knowing that most cases of sexual violence go unreported out of fear or lack of access to systems of justice, we cannot assume that these numbers are conclusive. *Temblores* stated that “the transgression of some bodies, especially of female and feminized bodies, has become a policy of repression and state correction.”¹

The case of a 17-year-old girl from Popayan, in the region of Cauca, has caught significant public attention and condemnation. After a video of her being detained with excessive force by members of the armed forces went viral, she reported through her social media that she was a victim of sexual violence by these men in uniform when she was simply on her way to her friend’s house. She was found dead hours later. The Police claim this to have been suicide, but the case continues under investigation by the Colombian Prosecutor’s Office. This is just one of the many statements of violence – sexual or physical – that are coming out against the armed forces. Human rights organizations are speaking out against the excessive force and concerning number of sexual violence cases perpetrated by police officers.²

VOICE rejects all forms of violence against women and girls occurring in Colombia. Women’s bodies are not weapons of war and revenge. VOICE condemns the patriarchal structures that breed this sense of impunity and entitlement to women’s bodies, and calls for systems of justice to denounce these acts and hold these men, in uniform or not, responsible for their grievous assaults.

VOICE stands in solidarity with the women and girls of Colombia.

¹ <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/la-defensor%C3%ADa-del-pueblo-de-colombia-registra-23-hechos-de-violencia-sexual-durante-el-paro-nacional/2250667>

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/05/colombia-preocupan-las-denuncias-de-desapariciones-y-violencia-sexual-contra-manifestantes/>