



## **The role of human rights defenders in developing EU relations with the Andean Community**

---

Intervention by Ms. Gabriele Juen, Executive Officer CFSP/External Relations, Amnesty International EU Office, on the occasion of the first **EU-Andean Community Civil Society Forum**, organised by the European Commission, which took place on 3 March 2005 in Brussels. The main objective of the Forum was to allow for an open, transparent exchange of views and experiences on the EU relations with the Andean Community.

3 March 2005, Brussels

Amnesty International  
EU Office  
Rue d'Arlon 39-41  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel +32 2 502 14 99  
Fax +32 2 502 56 86  
E-mail [amnesty@aieu.be](mailto:amnesty@aieu.be)

## Social Cohesion

Social cohesion has been the overarching theme of the EU's political engagement with Latin America over the past two years. At the Guadalajara summit, EU and leaders of the Andean Community acknowledged their primary responsibility to increase social cohesion, fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion, and to work with their civil societies to achieve these objectives.

I would like to use this opportunity to speak about those who have fought, often against the odds, to establish fairer, more equitable societies; and, in so doing have enhanced human dignity and helped alleviate the hardships of many of the most impoverished, marginalised and deprived sectors of the population: human rights defenders – “the essential actors of our times”, as the Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS) called them once.

- It is human rights defenders who have campaigned to compel governments to deal with gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth, access to basic health facilities, education, water and food.
- Human rights defenders have fought to protect the environment and defend economic, social and cultural rights.
- Human rights defenders have sought justice for crimes against humanity, and for violations committed by state agents including extrajudicial killings, “disappearances” and torture.
- They have insisted on democratic and judicial reform and exposed government corruption.

The region has a long tradition of repression against those who defend human rights. Amnesty International has documented more killings of human rights defenders in Latin America than anywhere else in the world. Impressive improvements have been achieved, but the exercise of fundamental freedoms is still fragile in many countries. In others, past practices designed to silence critics, while no longer recognised as official state policy, frequently guide and shape the behaviour and actions of officials at different levels of the state apparatus. In a few cases, notably Colombia, serious regressions are becoming an issue of worldwide concern.

Against this backdrop, we hope that the European Union's engagement with representatives from civil society working for the promotion, protection and defence of human rights in the development of EU-Andean Community relations will be testimony to their role as crucial actors in the struggle to ensure that governments account for their actions and strive to uphold the principles of the rule of law.

If dialogue with civil society in the region is to become more than just “another box to be ticked”, a public relations exercise without any real bearing on the shaping of EU policies towards the Andean Community countries, today's meeting can only be a first step, an opening gesture that Amnesty International would like to see followed up in EC headquarters and delegations, in member state capitals and embassies – and in the way the EC is shaping its trade relations with the Andean Community countries in the WTO arena.

Before making a couple of suggestions in this regard, I would like to provide you with a sketch of the challenges human rights defenders in Andean Community countries are facing.

## Colombia

Unfortunately, the most dangerous place for a human rights defender in the Americas – and worldwide) is still in the heart of the Andean Community region.

Of the 15 killings of human rights defenders in Latin America the UN Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders will report to the UN Human Rights Commission in March, 10 were killed in Colombia alone. Another 10 have been abducted, assaulted, or had their houses attacked.

Colombia's internal armed conflict continues to lead to the systematic violation of human rights and international humanitarian law by the warring parties – the security forces and army-backed paramilitaries on the one side and armed opposition groups on the other.

The government continues to undermine human rights and social activists through statements equating their work with terrorism. Activists also continue to be victims of serious human rights violations and abuses, including extrajudicial executions. Human rights defenders, community leaders and trade unionists have been subjected to arbitrary detention by the security forces, often solely on the basis of information from paid informants. Some of those detained have been threatened or killed following their release.

- ▶ On 25 February, the bodies of Luis Eduardo Guerra Guerra and Alfonso Bolívar Tuberquia Graciano who defended the right of the peace community in San José de Apartado under international humanitarian law not to be drawn into the armed conflict, were found alongside the slaughtered bodies of their partners and children, one as young as two. According to witnesses, members of the XVII Brigade of the Colombian army have been carrying out military operations in the Mulatos area since 21 February. Soldiers in the area have reportedly told local inhabitants that if the killings had not been reported, they would have killed more civilians. The soldiers have allegedly referred to the eight victims as "dead guerrillas" (*"puro guerrillero muerto"*). Luis Eduardo Guerra Guerra had represented the Peace Community in talks with the Colombian government on issues relating to the safety of the community's inhabitants. The Peace Community was founded in March 1997 in an effort by the civilian population to insist on their right not to be drawn into Colombia's internal armed conflict. It has repeatedly been labelled as subversive by the security forces. These accusations have been followed by the reported killing and "disappearance" of over 100 of its members, by members of the army and their paramilitary allies, and also by the guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

This is not the time and place for me to elaborate on the ongoing human rights and humanitarian law crisis in Colombia. But I would nevertheless challenge the notion that the EU can embark on a regional dialogue with the Andean Community on regional security focussed primarily – according to the conclusions of the EU-Andean Community Summit 2004 – on the fight against drugs and terrorism without engaging the Andean Community member states on the armed conflict in its midst. This armed conflict continues to produce systematic human rights and humanitarian law abuses and, according to UNCHR, the "worst humanitarian crisis in the Western Hemisphere, the third worst in the world after the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Sudan" and has considerable repercussions for its neighbouring countries. We hope that the new Political Dialogue and Co-operation Agreement will provide for a more comprehensive, human rights-oriented regional dialogue in the future.

## Ecuador

In Ecuador, journalists and indigenous and community leaders have increasingly become subject to armed attacks and threats. There is a tendency to misuse the judicial system to harass those critical of government policies. Journalists are increasingly facing threats by the government of defamation charges against them. This is an effort to silence criticism, rather than to protect reputations, which should be the primary and sole purpose of laws criminalizing and providing redress against certain types of malicious statements.

- ▶ In January, Miguel Rivadeneira, from Radio Quito, received anonymous threatening telephone calls after reporting government corruption.

Most of the cases taken up by the UN Special Representative with the Ecuadorian government last year related to defenders targeted in connection with their work in the defence of indigenous, land and labour rights, in particular in the context of oil extraction by international private companies.

- ▶ Members of the Sarayaku indigenous community in Pastaza province and others campaigning to stop oil exploitation on their territory were subjected to physical attacks, death threats and other forms of intimidation during 2004. The Sarayaku community strongly opposes the

activities of an Argentine oil company, Compañía General de Combustibles (CGC), General Fuel Company, which has been granted a concession by the Ecuadorian state to extract oil in the region. The Sarayaku community argue that oil extraction in their territory will damage their environment and way of life, which they do not want to abandon. They have proposed alternative, sustainable development in their territory so that their culture will not suffer. In 2003 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Ecuadorian State to protect the Sarayaku community in the province. Marlon Santi, President of the Sarayaku Association, was attacked and beaten in Quito in February, the day before he was due to travel to Costa Rica to present his community's case before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In January 2004, Ecuador's Minister of Energy and Mines reportedly responded to the Inter-American Commission's precautionary measures by stating that "the OAS does not give orders here" (*"la OEA no manda aquí"*).

- ▶ In February 2004, Leonidas Iza, President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador, CONAIE), was shot at by unknown individuals in Quito. He was unharmed but four members of his family were injured. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has told the Ecuadorian government to protect Leonidas Iza, his family and members of the CONAIE, of which he is the president. The government has ignored such instructions in the past, and Amnesty International remains gravely concerned for their safety.

Although the Ecuadorian government has assured us in relation to one of the cases of death threats we raised with them in 2004 that the safety of all Ecuadorian citizens was guaranteed by the Ecuadorian State and that it was a priority for the Ecuadorian government to ensure the well being of all its citizens, we have had no indication as to whether the Ecuadorian authorities had opened any investigation into the complaints filed by members of the concerned human rights organisation, nor what measures the Ecuadorian state has taken to ensure their safety and to guarantee that such acts are not repeated.

When a state fails to investigate such incidents and to provide human rights defenders with adequate protection against further abuses, the state not only creates an environment where human rights defenders are regarded as legitimate targets by state and non-state actors. It also undermines efforts to enforce the accountability of state agents, thereby tackling an entrenched culture of impunity for human rights violations.

## Peru

In Peru, it is precisely witnesses to widespread and systematic gross human rights violations committed during the two decades of the internal armed conflict between the Peruvian State and the armed opposition groups, Shining Path and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, and those defending the rights of victims to justice and reparation who are facing intimidation, death threats and attacks.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up to establish the circumstances surrounding the human rights abuses and violations committed between 1980 and 2000 found that gross human rights violations such as torture and ill-treatment, as well as "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, had been committed by the security forces, and that the armed opposition groups, in particular Shining Path, were responsible for 54 percent of the total number of deaths and cases of people whose whereabouts remain unknown.

The Commission's work has triggered the opening of a judicial process against agents of the state who were reported to have committed human rights violations during this period. The process, however, has been slow and there continues to be the possibility that cases may be transferred to military courts despite there being a clear message not only from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but also from the national and international human rights community that human rights violations have to be seen by independent and impartial courts to avoid impunity.

- ▶ Attempts on the lives of people like Luis Alberto Ramírez Hinostroza who is a key witness in the judicial process against a retired general charged with the “disappearance” in 1991 of nine people in the city of Huancayo deepen our serious concern that justice will not be forthcoming for the thousands of victims who suffered during Peru’s internal armed conflict.
- ▶ Death threats and attacks have also accompanied the work of the human rights organisation Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH), Association for the Defence of Human Rights on behalf of the families of three members of the armed opposition group Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA). These three members were reportedly extrajudicially executed during a military operation to rescue 72 civilians taken hostage in the residence of the Japanese Ambassador in 1997, under the government of former president Alberto Fujimori. APRODEH has repeatedly been subjected to threats and intimidation in response to their campaigns against human rights violations committed under the government of Alberto Fujimori. When APRODEH filed a complaint on behalf of the relatives of the victims of the 1992 La Cantuta University killings, they received several death threats and wreaths inscribed with the APRODEH’s managers’ names. APRODEH has filed complaints regarding all of these incidents before the Attorney General’s office. However, it appears that none of these acts of intimidation have been investigated independently and impartially by the authorities.

## Venezuela

Statements made by President Hugo Chavez at the beginning of 2004 suggesting that the activities of human rights organisations were intended to fuel political turmoil exposed defenders to threats and intimidation.

Such slurs and attacks ignore the fact that non-governmental human rights organisations have and do play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law in Venezuela. Most recently such organisations contributed to developing the new constitution and legal reforms. They have also defended the rights of the poor and most marginalised sectors of society and attested to the breach of the constitutional order during the attempted coup of 2002.

To our knowledge, the Venezuelan President has not retracted his allegations against human rights organisations. We hope that the government of Venezuela will recognise the important contribution these organisations have made, over several decades, in seeking to ensure that the rights and dignity of individuals from all sectors of society are converted from myth into reality.

## Bolivia

In December 2002 Amnesty International published the document: Bolivia: the Need to Protect Human Rights Defenders (AI Index AMR 18/04/2002). Since then there have been only a few situations of harassment of human rights defenders. The national government does not seem to obstruct their work, although at provincial level we have recently received information concerning the human rights work of the NGO Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social (CEJIS) - Centre for Legal Studies and Social Research, which offers legal aid to indigenous and peasant communities on land issues in the north of the country.

- On 5 January 2005, an association of cattle ranchers and foresters attacked the offices of a non-governmental organisation that represents indigenous and peasant farmers seeking their land rights, and threatened to burn lawyer Cliver Rochas alive. Cliver Rochas heads the CEJIS office in the town of Riberalta, Beni department. Amnesty International believes his life is in grave danger. The local authorities reportedly refused to give protection to CEJIS in Riberalta after the attack, suggesting instead that they close the offices until a national commission was expected to arrive to solve the land problems affecting the indigenous community of Miraflores. CEJIS lawyers have been subjected to threats in the past mainly due to their legal work supporting peasants and indigenous peoples in their land claims. Cliver Rocha has not been able to return to the town (Riberalta) because he feels at risk. We welcome the fact that a judicial investigation into the threats has been initiated. However, it is very important that

pressure is exerted on the authorities for an independent and impartial investigation and that safeguards regarding the security and physical integrity of CEJIS lawyers and other human rights workers are guaranteed.

## How should the EU reflect on the situation of human rights defenders in developing its relations with the Andean Community?

We trust that all EU policy makers gathered in this room today are aware of the Guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders which the Council adopted in June 2004 under the Irish Presidency.

The Guidelines, together with the commitment made by EU and Latin American and Caribbean leaders in Guadelajara to protect human rights defenders provide the EU with a solid starting base to engage governments of the Andean Community to improve the situation of human rights defenders. It also provides us with a starting point to hold EU policy makers to account for their stated commitment to engage with human rights defenders and wider civil society. The Guadelajara declaration states: "We are fully committed to provide coherent and effective support to those individuals, organisations or institutions, including human rights defenders, working for the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with international law and UN General Assembly Resolution 53/144 on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."

Let me start with the second aspect: This engagement should not be limited to organising meetings like this from time to time. As much as these gatherings are welcome, we believe that the EU should have a hard look at what level of engagement and dialogue they have actually had with the human rights community beyond similar meetings that have taken place with Mexican civil society or their counterparts from the MERCOSUR region and Chile.

- As the European Commission is thinking about new Country and Regional Strategy Papers beyond 2006, we would hope that consultation with the local human rights community concerned with civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights developments in their countries will not simply be a matter of initiatives by individuals in EC delegations and EU embassies, but a systematic and pro-active effort. In view of the ongoing de-concentration of decision-making and management of EC assistance from Brussels to the delegations this is of particular importance.
- We want to see EC trade negotiators engage with local defenders on the potential impact of liberalised trade relations with the EU on the enjoyment of human rights (For that reason, we hope for the active presence of DG Trade staff at the next gathering of this kind).
- We hope that those chosen to be consulted will not simply be limited to representatives from initiatives in the Andean Community that are beneficiaries of EC or Member State funding, but will go beyond that.
- We would also like the EU to make a pro-active effort to reach out to human rights defenders in more remote regions and to ensure that dialogue *sur place* reflects all sectors of society, in particular more marginalised sectors such as campaigners for women's rights, gay, lesbian and transgender activists, environmentalists, leaders of indigenous communities or displaced communities.

When it comes to putting the Guadelajara commitment into practice in the EU's engagement with the governments of the Andean Community, we ask representatives of all EU institutions to consider the recommendations Amnesty International made to the EU and Member States ahead of the Ministerial Meeting with the LAC in Greece in March 2003. They build on a body of recommendations we have been discussing with governments across Latin America and the Caribbean since 1999.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Annex. Both sets of recommendations are contained in the *Amnesty International memorandum to the European Union and EU Member States: Addressing dangers and difficulties faced by human rights defenders in Latin America and Caribbean States*. (AI Index AMR 001/005/2003, available at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org))

I would like to highlight one core element here that remains of particular relevance in the Andean Community context: The EU should engage and assist the countries of the Andean Community to develop concrete action plans to live up to their responsibility to implement and respect the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Practical protection of human rights defenders from violations is integral to such plans, but they also need to include comprehensive measures aimed at the prevention of violations such as the ones I have outlined earlier and address their root causes. Two examples of the kinds of measures we would like to see included in such plans:

- Effective investigations to bring those responsible for the death threats, attacks and killings to justice;
- Reform or repeal of legislation that may impinge on the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association or security legislation or criminal defamation laws that are used to harass human rights defenders through legal means.

We welcome the fact that some of our recommendations have found their way into the EU Guidelines in the meantime. But, as the report of Hina Jilani to the forthcoming session of the UN Commission on Human Rights once again will underline, much remains to be done to make the Andean Community a safer environment for human rights defenders, so that they can effectively contribute to peace and stability, development, the rule of law and social cohesion in the region.

## Recommendations to the EU and its Member States

Amnesty International calls on the European Union and Member States, in its relations with Latin America and Caribbean States, to:

1. **Assist governments** in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop concrete plans on policy and practice to implement the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
2. Insist that plans to implement the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders do not consist solely of measures for practical protection, but consist of **comprehensive measures** aimed at preventing violations and addressing the root cause of such violations. Such plans should include measures suggested by Amnesty International in its recommendations for the protection of human rights defenders (see Appendix I), for example: effective investigations to bring those responsible to justice; steps to implement legislation that promotes the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association; reform or repeal of legislation that may impinge on these rights, for example, security legislation or criminal defamation laws that are used to harass human rights defenders through legal means; strategies to identify and deal with state and non-state groups hostile to human rights work and those who carry out such activities.
3. **Set benchmarks** to assess the implementation of these plans. Benchmarks may include: the designation of political responsibilities for overseeing implementation of plans on policy and practice regarding human rights defenders; allocation of budgets for this purpose; evaluation structures and reports on the effectiveness of the measures adopted; legislative measures; satisfactory conclusion on judicial investigations on a selection of emblematic cases of violations against defenders; establishment of special mechanisms to ensure such investigations; prompt replies to urgent appeals sent by UN mechanisms and compliance with UN recommendations; serious dialogue with defenders regarding their needs; public campaigns to offset hostility towards those who promote and protect human rights.
4. **Take up discussions** regarding plans to implement the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders with authorities at all levels of the state apparatus, including state authorities in federal systems, and departmental and municipal authorities.
5. Ensure that plans to develop policy and practice for the implementation of the principles of UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders address **the recommendations made by the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders**, in particular recommendations made on the situation of human rights defenders in Guatemala and Colombia, as well as recommendations made to all States; recommendations by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; and recommendations by the Inter-American Human Rights System.
6. Ensure that **practical protection programs** include judges, prosecutors and other government officials, who suffer human rights violations due to their commitment to human rights protection, as well as witnesses, but that such programs take into account the differing needs of these different sectors.
7. Highlight the important experiences and recommendations of **civil society and human rights groups** in improving public security and combating terrorism and insist on the effective incorporation of these considerations into programs aimed at developing policy and practice to improve regional security and combat terrorism. Ensure that programs of co-operation to combat terrorism respect internationally recognised human rights and do not impinge on or threaten the security of human rights defenders. Ensure that programs of assistance in security provided by governments of the EU, including training in security operations and security and intelligence equipment, adopt the appropriate safeguards and controls to ensure such assistance is not used to interfere with or hamper the activities of human rights defenders.



8. Ensure that co-operation programs involving **the media and promotion of freedom of expression** include components that seek to ensure the media plays a positive role in promoting the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the legitimate work of human rights defenders.
9. Ensure that **co-operation programs in education** include components that promote the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the legitimate work of human rights defenders.
10. Ensure that **programs on democracy and human rights** include components which encourage and emphasise the importance and legitimacy of critical scrutiny by civil society of government policy and practice on human rights.
11. Ensure that the Regional Program of Support to Ombudsman in Latin America, incorporates **advice and assistance on monitoring** respect for the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, as well as recognising ombudsman as human rights defenders, who may also on occasion require protection.
12. Support and encourage the establishment of mechanisms which ensure the **proper participation of the relevant sectors of civil society**, including human rights defenders, in the formulation and implementation by governments of policies and practices to further political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Including efforts to establish measures to improve public security and combat terrorism. Promote compliance with human rights principles and standards in free trade agreements by ensuring human rights defenders are invited to submit opinions and recommendations and set up mechanisms to ensure proper attention to these considerations.

Amnesty International calls on the European Union and EU Member States, in their efforts to protect human rights defenders and their work in Latin America and the Caribbean, to:

1. **Support human rights defenders** in their efforts to ensure states adopt policies and practice to guarantee respect for and implementation of the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
2. **Support programs adopted by non-governmental organisations**, as well as the offices of Human Rights Ombudspersons, which aim to overcome failure by governments to guarantee their safety and freedom to carry out their work.
3. **Support international non-governmental organisations** engaged in providing protective accompaniment to human rights defenders at risk.
4. **Ensure emergency procedures** are adopted so that human rights defenders fleeing their countries due to a well-founded fear of persecution can quickly apply for and be granted asylum.
5. **Support visits by EU delegations** to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to verify the situation of human rights defenders.
6. **Ensure EU diplomatic missions** guarantee respect for the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders by instructing staff to:
  - Act quickly to condemn threats and attacks against human rights defenders;
  - Help overcome the isolation of many human rights defenders and help legitimise their important work by receiving defenders and visiting their offices and areas of work;
  - Closely monitor investigations into threats and attacks against human rights defenders and send regular reports regarding the situation of human rights defenders to their respective Foreign Ministries;
  - Ensure dialogue with human rights defenders reflects all sectors of society, in particular more marginalised sectors such as campaigners for women's rights, gay, lesbian and transgender activists, environmentalists, leaders of displaced communities and community workers;
  - Attend and observe trials of human rights defenders;
  - Facilitate national and international meetings of human rights defenders;

- Refrain from making unsubstantiated statements or allegations that may jeopardise the integrity or security of human rights defenders.
- 7. **Support the mandate of the Human Rights Defenders Unit** of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and explore areas of collaboration.
- 8. Encourage all governments to **support the mandate of the UN Special Representative** to the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders.

## 9. Amnesty International's recommendations for the protection of human rights defenders submitted to the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean in 1999

Governments should:

1. **Ensure that the principles** contained in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility Of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote And Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, are fully incorporated into national law and mechanisms, including National Human Rights Commissions, for the protection of human rights. Authorities at all levels of government should explicitly commit themselves to promoting respect for human rights, and to the protection of human rights defenders.
2. Ensure that in the interest of fulfilling obligations contained in international human rights law, state officials at every level of the state apparatus, including lower-ranking officials, **fully collaborate with and facilitate the work of members of non-governmental human rights organisations.**
3. **Ensure exhaustive and impartial investigations** are conducted into violations against human rights defenders that those responsible are brought to justice and the victims or their relatives provided with reparation. The results of such investigations should be made public. Members of the security forces under formal investigation for human rights violations should be immediately suspended from active service until investigations have concluded. Governments should also set up information systems to ensure that no agent of the security forces dismissed because of possible involvement in human rights violations against human rights defenders is employed in other official departments.
4. **Effectively disband, disarm and prosecute paramilitary groups** which operate with the complicity or acquiescence of the security forces.
5. Ensure that the perpetrators of human rights violations against human rights defenders do not benefit from any legal measures exempting them from criminal prosecution or conviction. Previous legislative measures that prevent full and conclusive investigations into the cases of violations against human rights defenders should be repealed.
6. **Take effective action** to ensure all public servants, including the security forces, act to recognise the legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders and to abstain from making unsubstantiated allegations against human rights defenders. Statements of this nature must be publicly countered and appropriate measures applied to sanction those responsible.
7. **Take effective action to sanction state officials** who abuse the criminal process to the detriment of members of human rights and social organisations with the intention of harassing them or curtailing their legitimate activities for the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ensuring that human rights defenders have equal access to the law and that judicial investigations and proceedings against them are conducted in accordance with international fair trial standards set by the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the American Convention on the Human Rights and the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR).
8. **Adopt integrated programs for the protection of human rights defenders** that include preventative measures, such as thorough criminal investigations into attacks and threats against human rights defenders, education for security force agents on the rights of human rights defenders to carry out legitimate activities, as well as security measures to assist with immediate safety issues. Such programs should ensure that all measures to protect human rights defenders are adopted in accordance with the requests of members of human rights organisations.
9. Ensure full implementation of comprehensive **witness protection programs** for the protection of individuals, including human rights defenders, involved in criminal investigations and judicial proceedings against those accused of human rights violations.

10. Ensure the full implementation of **international recommendations and resolutions**, including precautionary or provisional measures, regarding human rights defenders, by the inter-American human rights system, including the OAS General Assembly and the UN. Appropriate measures should be taken to monitor implementation.
11. **Ensure full support for mechanisms and initiatives**, including special rapporteurs, within the UN and inter-American human rights systems that give wide and universal recognition to human rights defenders and their work. Also, recognise the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee against Torture in order to permit submission of complaints regarding violations against human rights defenders.