



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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WEBSITE: WWW.USCCB.ORG/JPHD • FAX 202-541-3339

July 5, 2016

Excmo. Mons. Luis Augusto Castro Quiroga
Presidente, Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia
Carrera 58 No. 80-87
Bogotá, Colombia

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Your Excellency:

At this time of hope and encouragement in your beloved country of Colombia, I write to express the solidarity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) with the Church and people of your nation. The recent Statement concerning the cease-fire, issued by the Colombian Bishops' Conference (CEC), deserves our enthusiastic endorsement. Please be assured of my sincere expressions of support and friendship, extended on behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace. We agree with you that only by continuing the hard work of reconciliation and dialogue, including providing for the peaceful elimination of unnecessary weapons and instruments of violence, will peace be secured. We have shared the CEC's Statement with the Secretary of State of the United States. A copy of this letter is enclosed.

We look forward to continuing communication with you and your brother bishops in Colombia, and to being of any assistance that you may find advisable during these hopeful times for your country. To this end, please be aware that, as already notified to you in a separate letter, I am planning a solidarity visit to your country in late August. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and to hear directly of those steps that we can jointly take to address the challenging problems at hand.

Praying that God will continue to bless your work as pastors and peace builders, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú

Bishop of Las Cruces

Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace

cc.: Excmo. Mons. Juan Vicente Córdoba, Secretario General, Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia

Enclosure



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The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to share the hopes of my fellow bishops in Colombia regarding the encouraging political situation in that country. Attached please find the Spanish original version, as well as an unofficial English translation, of a recent Statement of the Colombian Bishops' Conference.

In this document, the bishops endorse the call for dialogue and reconciliation, as reflected in the recent cease-fire, as the means to effectuate a just and effective political solution. They also recognize the importance of continued efforts to reduce the number of weapons available to insurgents and other parties, as a critical path towards peace

We also congratulate and endorse the tireless efforts undertaken by you, your staff and your predecessors, in helping to bring about such a positive development. Our nation has a special moral responsibility to protect the lives, dignity and future of all our Colombian brothers and sisters. On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the USCCB, we ask the U.S. Government to continue in its path towards fostering peace in this troubled nation, through promoting vigorously the principles set forth in the enclosed Statement.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Oscar Cantú
Bishop of Las Cruces
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace

Enclosure: Statement, Colombian Bishops' Conference (Spanish original and unofficial English translation)