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## Mennonite Church Canada response to

### Statement of the Colombian Mennonite Church on the massacres in communities and the assassination of community leaders and former guerrillas.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Colombian Mennonite Church,

We greet you in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

We are shocked and saddened by the reports as of December 2020, of 91 massacres that have taken place in one year in communities including young people, children and small farmers. We mourn with you the 249 people who have been killed in 2020 after laying down their weapons in compliance with the Peace Accords between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas. We are angered at reports of 310 civic and community leaders that were murdered. In this context of violence and injustice we stand with you, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We weep with you and cry out for justice.

As Mennonite Church Canada we denounce all forms of violence and all taking of human life, whether by the State or individuals. We support peaceful and nonviolent accompaniment of those struggling for justice. We have seen your example as the Colombian Mennonite Church as you have walked with those under threat and in the midst of violence and we praise God for your testimony to God's love in the midst of suffering.

As Mennonite Church Canada we walk with you in your commitments to:

1. Call things by their name: Denounce violence in all its manifestations, believing that the example and teaching of Jesus to love the enemy and seek their transformation is clear (Matthew 5:43-48).
2. Teach nonviolence as a way of life and as an ideal tool for transforming conflicts, be they social, community or family. This includes not using dismissive language toward another person or group (Matthew 5:21-24).
3. Work actively to build peace. May our churches and faith communities be known as messengers of peace and may our buildings be used as places of peace. Train our members and leaders as promoters and agents of nonviolent conflict transformation and peace. (Matthew



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5:9, 13-16). Promote both social and legal justice in our country.

4. Incorporate themes of justice, reconciliation, and peace into our teaching, preaching and singing as essential components of the proclamation of the Gospel and the call to a new life (2 Corinthians 5:20).

5. Accompany the victims in their pain and in their search for justice and truth. Support organizations that work to this end (Romans 12.15).

6. Invite those who commit violence to accept the Gospel's call to repentance and to a new and transformed life (2 Peter 3.9).

7. Practice solidarity by doing what we can to bring better opportunities and improved living conditions to our communities. Leave individualism behind and work for the common good in our economic activities.

These are strong calls for peace building and we are humbled by your commitment to walk in the way of Jesus. We live in hope of new creation and see the signs of all things new as God is reconciling the world to God's self (2 Cor. 5:17-19) in your words and action.

We have heard your call to invite us to walk with you on this difficult road and we commit to prayer, to calling on government leaders in Colombia and Canada to support your efforts at building peaceful, stable communities, and to deepening the understanding between churches in Canada and Colombia.

May God multiply your work and make you a blessing in your congregations, your communities, your country and the world. We pray that God will let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24).

"And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace" (James 3:18).

In Christ's love,

Doug Klassen

Executive Minister

Mennonite Church Canada

Jeanette Hanson

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*"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11*