



Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente
Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense

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**CITING RISK TO HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT, COLOMBIAN COURT
ORDERS THE SUSPENSION OF THE US-FINANCED SPRAYING
OF COCA AND POPPY CROPS**

OAKLAND, CA/BOGOTA, COLOMBIA— A recent decision by the Superior Administrative Court of Cundinamarca, Colombia, (released to the public on June 25) declared that the aerial spraying with herbicides to eradicate coca and poppy crops violates the Colombian constitutional rights to a healthy environment, security and public health. As a result, the court ordered that the aerial spraying of potent glyphosate herbicides be suspended until the government complies with the Environmental Management Plan for the eradication program, and conducts a series of required studies intended to protect human health and the environment.

This verdict supplements earlier declarations by the Colombian Constitutional Court and the State Council, which respectively ordered the suspension of spraying in indigenous territories and full compliance with the Environmental Management Plan approved by the Ministry of Environment.

According to Yamile Salinas of the Colombian Ombudsman's Office, "This ruling recognizes the potential risks that the herbicide and the manner in which it is being applied pose to human health and the environment in Colombia," She added that, "The application of the precautionary principle is of singular importance because the Court affirms that the significant and potentially irreparable risk posed by the spraying is reason enough to suspend the fumigation program."

"The US Congress has required the State Department to evaluate environmental and health impacts of Plan Colombia. This decision by a court in Colombia must be taken into account by the US State Department," said Anna Cederstav, staff scientist with Earthjustice and AIDA. "In light of the evidence presented and the court's clear decision on this matter, the Department of State cannot certify to Congress that the herbicide mixture, in the manner it is being used, poses no unreasonable risks or adverse effects to humans or the environment, or that the herbicide is being used in compliance with the Environmental Management Plan for the program." She concluded that, "It would be highly irresponsible for the United States to continue the eradication program in contravention of the Colombian court order to suspend the spraying until appropriate public health and environmental protections are in place."

"This court order formally adopts many of the requirements for environmental and human protection that the Colombian Ombudsman and Comptroller General, along with both national and international non-government organizations, have been demanding for years," said Yamile Salinas. "This decision is a victory for both public health and the environment of Colombia."