

Why Colombians Are Resisting

Iván Duque [2018-2022], is a president unknown to Colombians prior to his being chosen by Alvaro Uribe¹ and elected, as Colombians say, because he is “the one Uribe says (el que dice Uribe)”. Uribe, well known as Narcotics trafficker Number 82² with over 270 criminal lawsuits pending against him³, for, among other, assassinating witnesses who could testify to his crimes,⁴ was, as recently revealed by the JEP (Special Jurisdiction for Peace)⁵ said to have been behind the judicial assassination of 6,402 innocent young Colombians.⁶

Brought to the presidential post by Uribe through fraud,⁷ Iván Duque has surrounded himself mainly with people with criminal records from Uribe’s party, the Centro Democrático,⁸ and has made sure that there is no oversight from any and all supervisory bodies. To mention just a few, the Ombudsman⁹, Prosecutor General,¹⁰ Centro de Memoria Histórica,¹¹ Parques Naturales Nacionales¹² the Central Bank¹³ ...) thus limiting domestic oversight of, among other, the corruption with which they are destroying Colombia’s hope for peace,¹⁴ mismanaging Covid-19 and other investment funds,¹⁵ peace¹⁶ and environmental funding and mandates.¹⁷

The Uribistas with the money thus embezzled and gained from the narcotics traffic, through bribery, threats, fear and narcotics empathy instilled in their opponents, have also come to control the media.¹⁸ However, the resistance they’ve encountered is not minor, the 2016 Peace Accords have made many people aware that peace in Colombia, after 60 years of armed internal strife, is possible and we refuse to allow the narcotics traffickers to decide our destiny.

¹ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/colombia-s-most-powerful-man-alvaro-uribe-velez-/1945991>

² <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB131/>

³ <https://lasillavacia.com/detector-uribe-tiene-270-procesos-abiertos-delitos-graves-72692>

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/05/colombia-uribes-house-arrest-tests-rule-law>

⁵ <https://justiceforcolombia.org/news/colombian-military-murdered-6402-civilians-between-2002-and-2008/>

⁶ <https://colombiapace.org/tag/jep/>

⁷ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/former-lawmaker-causing-political-turmoil-in-colombia/1737935>

⁸ <https://theglobalamericans.org/2021/02/colombias-ruling-party-is-undaunted-in-its-foreign-overreach/>

⁹ <https://colombiareports.com/amp/duque-seeks-servile-colombias-new-human-right-chief/>

¹⁰ <https://colombiareports.com/colombias-chief-prosecutor-implicated-in-plot-to-rig-duques-2018-election/>

¹¹ <https://aldianews.com/articles/politics/colombias-national-center-historical-memory-no-longer-recognized-site-conscience>

¹² <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/03/colombias-national-parks-at-a-crossroads-as-new-director-installed/>

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/colombia-cenbank-idUSL1N2K1IE7>

¹⁴ <https://colombiapace.org/tag/jep/>

¹⁵ Since then this news has been censored <https://elexpediente.co/escandalo-en-fina%3Cbrgro-226-millones-en-creditos-para-el-campo-a-manos-de-estas-grandes-empresas/>

¹⁶ <https://www.latinusa.org/2020/05/05/duquesponds/>

¹⁷ <https://www.dejusticia.org/en/the-colombian-government-has-failed-to-fulfill-the-supreme-courts-landmark-order-to-protect-the-amazon/>

¹⁸ <https://thebogotapost.com/the-removal-of-semana-columnist-indicts-the-magazine-and-threatens-the-state-of-journalism-in-colombia/38435/>

<https://medialandscapes.org/country/colombia> Furthermore, if you do a net search, you can clearly see that Duque and his government’s interviews and statements are predominant, as opposed to the alternative sources of information to be found on social networks.

It suffices to listen to the innumerable grievances to understand why Colombians have to resist at the risk of contagion and of being killed for protesting. Thirty massacres just this year; untold hundreds of leaders and activists killed since Duque came to power; approximately 270 demobilized- FARC peacekeepers assassinated in cold blood. Third fiscal reform under Duque; pending resource-centralizing health reform; growing militarization expenses and presence; infinite corruption; and now this: pretending that they can spray toxic chemicals on Colombian biodiversity and people in the midst of a world-paralyzing pandemic born out of loss of biodiversity. Is this even remotely conscionable?

Álvaro Uribe is the president [2002-2010] who in the end made aerial spraying what it is today: a weapon of mass displacement, mass spoliation, and a means to massively spread coca throughout the whole country,¹⁹ not only because it serves the purpose of narcotics traffickers to have abundant coca but because it also contributes to clearing frontier lands for extensive cattle grazing and other megaprojects²⁰ not to mention the targeted military control of Colombian rural communities it allows for.

Under the Santos Government [2010-2018], in October 2016, Colombia finally signed the peace accords [1060 ²¹-2016] with the FARC and it had previously (November 2015) suspended aerial spraying operations and instituted several programs such as the Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de cultivos de uso ilícito (PNIS)²² to address the coca issue, considering that this is what currently fuels Colombia's armed conflict. Duque's first proposal was to destroy the peace accords and to renew aerial spraying and defund the alternative coca-eradication projects. During the transition process from the Santos to the Duque presidencies, aerial spraying was renewed by using drones in order to bypass the Constitutional Court's Sentencia T-236/17 ruling. The damage caused was extremely severe.²³

What is not so obvious from abroad is that what Colombia is going through right now is not a war of the government against the narcotics traffic but a war by the official narcotics traffickers in power against minor narcotics groups. They are fighting over who controls routes, laboratories, chemicals and crops. Aerial spraying is the best means to take full control over all of these. They are killing Colombia with the aim of holding the monopoly of power.

Since the only body basically left to limit the Duque government's corrupt control over the country is the judicial system, the Uribistas have done their utmost to take it under their control as well. In view of the resistance to aerial spraying, just a few days prior, April 6th, to issuing Executive Order 380 (April 12th) to renew aerial

¹⁹ A history of aerial spraying in Colombia (in Spanish).

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/MamaCoca_Memoria_de_las_fumigaciones_colombianas_1978-2021.pdf

²⁰ The Impact of Drug Policy on the Environment

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/e205c307-c17b-437b-bc35-cfb703bce4f2/impact-drug-policy-environment-20151208.pdf>

²¹ http://www.mamacoca.org/e_book/Compendio_rural/Coordinadora_Guerrillera_Simon_Bolivar.htm

²² Fumigar actualmente en el 2020 equivale a desconocer lo pactado mediante el Decreto Ley 896 de 2017

<http://es.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/DECRETO%20896%20DEL%2029%20DE%20MAYO%20DE%202017.pdf> que creó el Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de cultivos de uso

ilícito (PNIS). Éste programa se reglamenta con el Decreto 362 del 22 de febrero 2018

<http://es.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/DECRETO%20362%20DEL%2022%20FEBRERO%20DE%202018.pdf>

²³ <https://www.rcnradio.com/colombia/antioquia/fumigacion-con-glifosato-estaria-danando-cultivos-en-antioquia>

spraying²⁴, Duque issued Executive Order 333²⁵ which conditions access to the Courts when dealing with cases of forced eradication and national security.

Aerial spraying is intricate to the system of war that the uribismo has been implementing for decades. Bombing 10,4 lt/ha of a potent chemical cocktail (the Chinese Talanu Chemical Cuspide 480 SL²⁶ plus Cosmo-Oil²⁷) from 30 meters altitude from double-winged AT-802 planes (and if covered by machine gunning helicopters) is nothing other than chemical warfare targeting 50% of the Colombian territory.²⁸ Aerial spraying is not only illegitimate and contravenes several court rulings, it is an environmental disaster.

Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world.²⁹ If the world is, in effect, under sanitary and economic siege due to loss of biodiversity, how can aerial spraying in Colombia be an option accepted by the international community? Is it remotely possible, as stated by Duque Government agents, that chemical aerial spraying of this potent chemical mixture can be environmentally friendly? We are up against the narcotics traffic using the international community's fear of breaking "diplomatic protocol" to impose war mongering measures upon a country severely devastated by internal conflict, corruption and Covid. No matter if in political control of Colombia, these government officials are still no more and no less people suspected/under investigation by the law who have, nonetheless, been appointed to key supervisory bodies and government posts.

Do people sincerely believe that we Colombians are against eradication? Coca as it is means death and devastation for the whole country, particularly for the peasants caught in the crossfire between poverty, local narco bands and the narcogovernment. Can we not even refer to the protest by coca growers? Considering these peasants (230,000 families³⁰ or an approximate 124.600 to 169.000 homes [UNODC 2019] as criminals is an outrage. They are impoverished Colombian peasants. Colombians are against aerial spraying, not only because of the proven damages but because it does not eradicate, it didn't eradicate (but rather expanded coca growing) in the 37 years it was used as the main strategy (1978-2015), so why would it do so now? Those who suffer the most are children, animals (both domestic and wild) waterbeds and forests, as proven by the numerous and costly victims' actions for damages and compensation.³¹

²⁴

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/DECRETO_380_del_12abril2021_aspersiones_a%C3%A9reas.pdf (Spanish)

²⁵ http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/Decreto_333_reglas-reparto-tutelas-aspersiones_6abril2021.pdf (Spanish)

²⁶ <https://setac.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/etc.2913>

²⁷ Which mentions specifically that it is toxic dangerous for aquatic organisms and is will not be held responsible for the use to which it is put.

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/HSCosmoOil2014630101050.pdf

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/COSMO_OIL%20EMULSI%C3%93N_Hoja_Seguridad.pdf (Both taken from PMA online March 2021]

²⁸ http://www.mamacoca.org/Imagenes/Nucleos_fumigaciones_2020.jpg

²⁹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/megadiverse-countries>

³⁰ <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/lideresa-cocalera-detr%C3%A1s-de-cultivos-de-coca-hay-campesinos-que-ven-una-posibilidad-de-vida-digna/1838702>

³¹

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/demandas_por_fumigaciones_acciones_colectivas_de_grupo_reparacion_directa.html

<https://www.elespectador.com/entretenimiento/medios/glifosato-el-primer-caso-por-muerte-que-admite-la-cidh-mejor-reportaje-en-video-en-el-premio-de-periodismo-simon-bolivar>

(Spanish)

As pointed out by the International Red Cross (IRC), International Humanitarian Law (IHL) also applies to environmental concerns. The first principle is *the obligation for States to avoid causing environmental damage beyond their borders. ...*The second principle is *the obligation for States to respect the environment in general. .. Attacks against the natural environment by way of reprisals are prohibited* ³² The reason alleged by the Duque government for renewing aerial spraying operations is as a reprisal against the narcotics traffic and the environmental damages it causes. It is an environmental war on both sides. Furthermore, as proven by the case Ecuador vs. Colombia in the International Court of Justice, aerial spraying is not only deadly to Colombia.³³ Colombia was fined USD \$15 million , it was forced to agree to a 10 kilometer exclusion zone (which the Duque government is currently pretending to ignore in its 2020 spraying operational planning) and aerial spraying in bordering Putumayo department was suspended. The Duque government proposes renewing spraying in both the Ecuador and Venezuela borders (the latter suspended in 2014) .

If only out of respect for the rule of law in Colombia, IHL and sanitary and environmental protection for humanity under COVID, the Duque government cannot be allowed to undermine, coopt, bribe and coerce the judicial system just so it can wage war through chemical and other means. As politically incorrect as it might be to say it has to be said. The current Colombian government is dangerously becoming an authoritarian regime in in the shadow of narcotics traffickers. The narcos in power are playing with time. They hope to set up their war platform before they can be stopped. They are reconditioning 12 air bases and 6 will be used to spray from. Once at full-scale war with Venezuela and against the local narcotics competitors, they will become unstoppable.

Will non-narcotics traffickers win the coming 2022 elections in Colombia? Considering the control narcos have over the whole system and prior fraud, nothing is less certain. As it is yet uncertain to what use (other than the already-started war against Venezuela³⁴) the 24 Lockheed fighter jets will be put to in the future. Profit gained now by those who sell the planes might prove to be fatal in the future for their own countries. Furthermore, aerial spraying, apart from serving as the justification for the Duque government to further militarize the country, might well become one of the means of attacking Venezuela.

These are just some of the reasons why official narcotics traffickers' aerial spraying operations must be stopped by all means, among other by ceasing to fund the Duque Government or making sure the monies reach the people in need. Spraying of potent chemical mixtures as a war measure must not only be rejected by the international community, it must be fully and totally stopped under international treaties and laws. These are some of the less-publicized reasons why Colombians are still protesting.

Listen to the Indigenous MINGA

<https://twitter.com/HOLLMANMORRIS/status/1388944494981169156?s=19>

Maria Mercedes Moreno -MamaCoca
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³² <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/57jmau.htm>

³³

http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Fumigas/Las_repercusiones_legales_de_las_fumigaciones_colombianas_en_Ecuador_1997-2015.html

³⁴ <https://www.infodefensa.com/latam/2021/03/29/noticia-colombia-amplia-despliegue-frontera-venezuela-nuevos-efectivos.html>