

More than 3,000 victims of violence reported during National Strike

Via [Resumen Latinoamericano](#)

The NGO Temblores together with the Action Program for Equality and Social Inclusion (Paiis) and Indepaz presented the report on the alleged systematic violation of human rights by security forces against Colombian demonstrators in the framework of the national strike.

The organizations indicate that there were 248 victims of physical violence, 41 homicides allegedly committed by members of the security forces, 1649 arbitrary arrests against demonstrators, 705 violent interventions during peaceful protests, 65 victims of eye assaults, 187 cases of shootings, 25 victims of sexual violence and 6 victims of gender-based violence.

As a result of the report, they call on the Colombian state to disband the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squads and to completely and immediately ban the use of so-called “non-lethal” or “reduced lethality” weapons. They also call for an investigation “into the alleged existence of a system of incentives to police officers for arrests, prosecutions and transfers of protesters, in exchange for promotions within the security forces.”

The organizations also ask the state to “carry out a structural reform of the police force to bring it in line with international human rights standards. It should be a civilian force that does not continue to act under the logic of armed conflict and the fight against drug trafficking. This implies training with a human rights approach and with a differential perspective and the elimination of violent ways of dealing

with social protest.”

In addition, they ask the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to conduct a visit “that includes a rigorous investigation of the general human rights situation in the country, including verifications of the acts of violence committed by security forces in the framework of the Colombian National Strike in 2021.”

According to the organizations, since the strike began, 65 cases have been documented, “and there are certainly many more for which there is still no information, which is why we can no longer speak of isolated or accidental acts.” In fact, during the presentation of the report, the director of Pais, Juliana Bustamante, indicated that apparently there is “a tacit knowledge on the part of the security forces of how to misuse so-called non-lethal weapons.”

The report indicates that “the production of facial injuries, particularly to the eyes, in people who demonstrate or who are in places where social mobilizations occur, is a relatively new practice in Colombia, at least in the sustained form that has begun to occur since the November 2019” demonstrations. In fact, although these types of injuries had already occurred in similar contexts, they appeared to be isolated acts, also violating human rights, but did not indicate, at the time, a deliberate practice of repression.”