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Responses to Information Requests

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6 May 2020

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Colombia: Situation of Afro-Colombians, including treatment by society and authorities; state protection and support services available (2017–May 2020)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Overview

The National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, DANE) indicates that approximately 3 million individuals self-identified as Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal of the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, or Palenquera from San Basilio in the 2018 national census, a decrease from the 4.3 million counted in the 2005 census (Colombia 6 Nov. 2019, 16). In contrast, the DANE's 2018 survey on quality of life reports that there were around 4.7 million individuals who identified themselves as Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquera, accounting for approximately 9.34 percent of the Colombian population (Colombia 6 Nov. 2019, 29). The [apparent] decrease in the number of Afro-Colombians in

the 2018 census compared to the 2005 census was criticized by some organizations, including the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 4) and the National Conference of Afro-Colombian Organizations [1] (Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas, CNOA) (CNOA 7 Nov. 2019). The Colombian newspaper *El Espectador* states that scholars and researchers estimate that a quarter of the Colombian population is Afro-Colombian (*El Espectador* 9 Nov. 2019).

The World Bank indicates that Afro-Colombians are mainly concentrated on the Pacific Coast of Colombia (World Bank 2018, 20). The Office of the Ombudsperson (Defensoría del Pueblo), based on the DANE's 2005 census, states that Afro-Colombians make up 90 percent of the population in the region (Colombia Aug. 2016, 18). According to the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Cartagena (Bolívar) and Cali (Valle del Cauca) are among two of the cities with the largest proportion of Afro-Colombians (UN 2018, 26). The *Economist* indicates that almost half of Cali's population of 2.5 million is Afro-Colombian (*The Economist* 29 Aug. 2019).

2. Treatment of Afro-Colombians

2.1 Treatment by Society

The UN's CERD states that Afro-Colombians face "persistent structural and historical discrimination" which results in "high levels of poverty and social exclusion," when compared to the rest of the population (UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 16). The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019* states that Afro-Colombians face "significant economic and social discrimination" (US 11 Mar. 2020, 28). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of black studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, whose research includes black lives in urban Colombia, stated that there is an "unspoken and yet socially shared antagonism" towards Afro-Colombians, who are viewed as the "'enemy' of Colombian economic progress" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor of geography at the Florida International University, who has conducted research on Afro-Colombians, indicated that Afro-Colombians are "the worst affected" on indicators of well-being, including literacy rates, income disparity, unemployment rates, and poverty levels (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). According to 2015 statistics compiled by the World Bank and the Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the

Caribbean (SEDLAC) of the Center of Distributive, Labor and Social Studies (CEDLAS) at the National University of La Plata (Universidad Nacional de La Plata) in Argentina, approximately 41 percent of Afro-Colombians were living in poverty [2], compared to 27 percent of the non-Afro-Colombian non-IP [Indigenous People] population (World Bank 2018, 129). Sources state that Afro-Colombians have difficulties accessing healthcare and education (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 548; UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 16). The Assistant Professor of black studies indicated that Afro-Colombians in major cities are "discriminated [against] in the access to public policies meant to reduce poverty and provide food security" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020).

The Assistant Professor of black studies stated that most Afro-Colombians in the Pacific region have "no access to potable water, electricity, health care and food security" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). Data from the DANE's 2018 survey on quality of living indicates that Chocó, located on the Pacific Coast, was the poorest department in 2017 and 2018 (Colombia 12 July 2019, 8). The World Bank states that over 80 percent of the urban population of Chocó live in poverty and 20 percent have access to piped water (World Bank 2018, 62). According to the 2018 census, the DANE reports that 50 percent or less of the people in Chocó have access to the water system and garbage collection, and 30 percent or less have access to sewage (Colombia n.d.a), compared to approximately 86 percent, 82 percent and 77 percent, respectively, at the national level (Colombia n.d.b). According to the 2018 national quality of life survey by the DANE, approximately 8.9 percent of Afro-Colombian, Black, Raizal and Palenquera populations have encountered [translation] "barriers" in accessing health services, compared to 6.2 percent of the general population, and 14.3 percent are illiterate, compared to 10.1 percent of the general population (Colombia 6 Nov. 2019, 66). International Crisis Group reports that high school education in most rural schools in the Pacific Coast is available up to grade eight or nine, out of eleven grades [in the Colombian school system] (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 17).

The Associate Professor of geography indicated that there is "ample evidence" of racism in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali, as well as in the country as a whole, while noting that "it is probably most evident in Cali, where the black population is large and there is some racial segregation" (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). According to a book chapter on identity politics in Colombia by Nick Morgan, a lecturer in Latin American studies at Newcastle University in the UK who has researched representations of race, class and gender in Colombia (Newcastle University n.d.), Cali faces "endemic racism" (Morgan 2019, 26).

Colombia indicates in a report submitted to the UN's CERD that the cities that registered the most complaints of racial discrimination between 2014 and 2018 with the Observatory on Discrimination and Racism (Observatorio contra la Discriminación y el Racismo), an advisory body to the Ministry of the Interior (Ministerio del Interior) created in 2012, are Bogotá with 65 cases, followed by Medellín with 11 cases, Cartagena with 9 cases and San Andrés with 7 cases (Colombia 14 Nov. 2018, para. 37, 40).

The Associate Professor of geography indicated that Afro-Colombians in the middle class have an "unequal position," including in terms of income and life expectancy (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). In an interview with the Research Directorate, a consultant in Colombia for the International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights [3] stated that urban-dwelling middle-class Afro-Colombians, like all Afro-Colombians, face racial discrimination, such as when trying to get a job or entering a restaurant (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020).

2.2 Employment

Sources state that Afro-Colombians have difficulties accessing employment (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 548; UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 16), particularly at management and senior levels (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 548). According to the Assistant Professor of black studies, Afro-Colombians in major cities are "subjected to discrimination in the job market" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The Associate Professor of geography stated that the unemployment rates of Afro-Colombians in urban areas are "particularly high" due in part to forced displacement, as racial discrimination makes it "even harder" for displaced Afro-Colombians to find employment than for non-Afro-Colombian displaced people (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). According to a 2013 survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour (Ministerio del Trabajo), cited in a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the unemployment rate for Afro-Colombians in Cali was approximately 21 percent, compared to 13 percent for White workers (UN 2017).

The UN's ECLAC states that Afro-Colombian men in Cartagena occupying high-ranking positions, such as directors, earn one fifth the income of their non-Afro-Colombian male colleagues, and Afro-Colombian women in professional positions earn one fourth as much as their non-Afro-Colombian female counterparts (UN 2018, 26). Sources indicate that Afro-Colombians are underrepresented in politics (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 548) or in Congress (Morgan

2019, 27). Morgan's book chapter on identity politics in Colombia states that minorities in ministerial positions are given portfolios fitting the "stereotypes," such as culture and the environment (Morgan 2019, 27).

2.3 Housing

Sources indicate that [urban (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020)] Afro-Colombians face challenges in securing a home (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 548; Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The Consultant in Colombia stated that large numbers of Afro-Colombians in urban areas live in marginalized neighbourhoods, where they face a high rate of criminality in the form of *microtráfico*, or gangs with small-scale drug trafficking operations, and other criminal gangs who are trying to take over the neighbourhood, such as the Agua Blanca district in Cali, the Altos de Cazuca district in Bogotá, and the Nelson Mandela district in Cartagena (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The World Bank, citing a 2017 study on gentrification in Cartagena by Melissa M. Valle, an assistant professor of global urban studies at Rutgers University (Rutgers University n.d.), reports that Afro-Colombians are being pushed out of traditional black neighbourhoods in Cartagena by gentrification caused by a booming tourism sector, and into "poorer, more dangerous neighbourhoods" (World Bank 2018, 67). The World Bank states that, based on the 2005 census, 22 percent of Afro-Colombians residing in urban areas live in slums [4], compared to 8 percent of the non-Afro-Colombian population (World Bank 2018, 66).

2.4 Treatment by Armed Groups

Sources indicate that violence from armed groups, who are battling for territory in areas vacated by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) since the signing of the 2016 peace agreement, particularly impacts the Pacific Coast (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 1; *Foreign Affairs* 30 Oct. 2019; Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). According to the UN's Verification Mission in Colombia, illegal armed groups are responsible for "recruitment, forced recruitment of children, homicides, displacement, confinement, and attacks and threats against ethnic authorities and leaders" (UN 26 Dec. 2019, para. 60).

Sources indicate that Afro-Colombian human rights defenders [or community leaders (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020)] are targeted and can be killed for speaking out (Amnesty International Feb. 2020; Assistant Professor

10 Apr. 2020; Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). According to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), out of the 110 cases registered in 2018, 27 percent of human rights defenders killed were indigenous or Afro-Colombian (UN 4 Feb. 2019, para. 15). According to *US Country Reports 2019*, citing the National Association of Displaced Afrodescendants [Afro-Colombians] (*Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados*, AFRODES) [5], "threats and violence" against Afro-Colombian leaders and peoples led to high rates of forced displacement, particularly on the Pacific coast (US 11 Mar. 2020, 19). The same source, citing Colombian government statistics, indicated that 834,597 Afro-Colombians registered as internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of June 2019 (US 11 Mar. 2020, 18-19). International Crisis Group indicates that, according to various sources, the fighting in Chocó between the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN) and the Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, AGC), Colombia's biggest organized crime organization, led to the displacement of over 50,000 residents since 2015 (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 7).

According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), armed groups on the Pacific coast control territory by confining communities, including limiting movement and restricting access to goods, services and livelihood (UN 10 Jan. 2019, 15). The same source reports that data from the Monitor, a database on armed conflict and natural disaster incidents in Colombia, shows that from January to October 2018, 20,498 confined individuals were recorded, out of which 83 percent were indigenous and Afro-Colombian (UN 10 Jan. 2019, 15, 18). The UN's Verification Mission in Colombia, citing the Colombian Office of the Ombudsperson, states that eight Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities were confined due to clashes between armed groups in December 2019 (UN 26 Dec. 2019, para. 62).

According to a November 2017 ruling by the Constitutional Court of Colombia, the situation in Tumaco [translation] "reflects the generalized violence affecting Afro-Colombian communities and indigenous peoples in all of the Pacific region of Nariño"; the court further states that the area is experiencing a "grave humanitarian crisis" (Colombia 15 Nov. 2017, para. 17, para. 22). Human Rights Watch (HRW), citing the DANE and UN sources, indicates that 95 percent of the 210,000 residents of the municipality of Tumaco are Afro-Colombian, and over half of the municipality's population resides in Tumaco city (HRW Dec. 2018, 10). Sources state that in Tumaco, the level of violence perpetrated by armed groups has increased since the signing of the peace agreement (The New Humanitarian

23 May 2019; HRW Dec. 2018, 1-2). Sources indicate that Tumaco's homicide rate is four times that of the national average (The New Humanitarian 23 May 2019; HRW Dec. 2018, 4, 22). Based on a government source and interviews with a community leader and activists in Tumaco, International Crisis Group reports that the FARC dissidents' groups operating in Tumaco agreed to a truce in December [2018], which led to a decline in homicides in the urban areas of Tumaco (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 6). However, the UN's Verification Mission in Colombia indicates that the mayor of the municipality of Tumaco declared "a state of humanitarian and social emergency" on 20 January 2020 after activities by armed groups displaced 3,000 individuals, mainly Afro-Colombians, from rural areas to the urban centre (UN 26 Mar. 2020, para. 56).

2.5 Treatment by Authorities

International Crisis Group states that "formal state institutions are absent" in the Pacific coastal region (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 1). The Assistant Professor of black studies similarly indicated that Afro-Colombians living in the traditional territories of the Pacific coast face "state abandonment" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). According to the UN's Verification Mission in Colombia, the institutional response to the proliferation of armed groups since the signing of the peace agreement "has been limited" (UN 26 Dec. 2019, para. 60). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) indicates that Colombia's "failure to maintain a presence in certain regions following the Peace Agreement has led to a proliferation of organized criminal groups," particularly in the departments of Nariño and Chocó (OAS 21 Mar. 2019, 549-550). Similarly, humanitarian organizations in Tumaco interviewed by HRW indicate that the delay in the establishment of the State's presence after the FARC's demobilization is one of the factors that prompted the presence of armed groups (HRW Dec. 2018, 47).

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) [6], in regions formerly controlled by the FARC, minority groups including Afro-Colombians rely on "local protection mechanisms and volunteers" for protection due to lack of trust in the police and military forces (CSIS Mar. 2020, 5). International Crisis Group, based on interviews with ethnic leaders, states that

indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians armed with wooden batons form "collective protection bodies," known as guards, to protect their territory from armed groups (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 24-25).

The Consultant in Colombia stated that the behaviour of the police "very often includes expressions of racial discrimination" (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The Assistant Professor of black studies stated that Afro-Colombian youths are viewed as "'Afrodelinquent'," which leads to "repressive policing practices" in urban areas (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The same source provided the example of the Agua Blanca district of Cali where activists have reported a "consistent pattern of violence" against Afro-Colombian youth as the Colombian government is trying to "'pacify'" the area through "new military efforts" to attract foreign investments (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). Sources indicate that a mass protest on the rights of ethnic minorities by primarily indigenous and Afro-Colombian participants took place in Cauca in early 2019 (Colombia Reports 25 Mar. 2019; Forest Peoples Programme 18 Apr. 2019). The Forest Peoples Programme, a human rights organization based in England "working with forest peoples across the globe to secure their rights to their lands and their livelihoods" (Forest Peoples Programme n.d.), indicates that the *Black Communities Process* (Proceso de Comunidades Negras, PCN) and the *Palenque of Human Rights, Ethnic and Cultural Integrity* (Palenque de Derechos Humanos Integridad Étnica y Cultural) have denounced riot police for "calling their leaders 'resentful blacks,' 'black faggots,' and 'cowardly blacks'" (Forest Peoples Programme 18 Apr. 2019).

3. State Protection

The Consultant in Colombia stated that there is a "lack of political will" to implement measures to protect Afro-Colombians (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The Assistant Professor of black studies indicated that government efforts to protect Afro-Colombians are "disorganized" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The same source further reported that the lack of public policies sensitive to the needs of the Afro-Colombian population has "led to societal discrimination in the job market, in access to public health, and education" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The Consultant in Colombia added that the Colombian government has not complied with orders from the Constitutional Court directing the State to address the impact of the internal conflict on Afro-Colombians, including Order 005 of 2010, which instructed the State to adopt specific programs for Afro-

Colombian communities (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The Assistant Professor indicated that the land restitution program contained in the peace accords, intended to provide Afro-Colombians with control over their traditional territory, is underfunded and "undermined by the ruling right-wing political coalition" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020).

The Associate Professor of geography stated that Law 70 of 1993 is "perhaps the most significant legislation in the Americas that aims at protecting the rights of Afro-Latin American communities" (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). According to the World Bank, Law 70 recognized the rights of rural black communities (*comunidades negras*) of the Pacific Coast, including the right to own their collective territory, to maintain their rural-based traditional economies, and to develop in ways that were appropriate to their cultural identity and social practices. It also mandated the inclusion of Afro-Colombian history and culture in public school curricula. Finally, it reserved two seats in the National Congress, and over 300 government positions, for members of *comunidades negras*. (World Bank 2018, 46, italics in original)

In a submission to the UN's CERD, a group of eight local, national and international organizations report that although the law and its implementation decrees allow for the recognition of "black communities' collective lands on 'barren, rural and riparian' lands outside the Pacific Basin," their application in this area has been "restricted by government authorities" (ACIBAC, et al. 31 Oct. 2019, 21). Sources indicated that the implementation of Law 70 faces "severe limitations" (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020) or is "very poor" (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020).

The UN's CERD reports that there are long delays in "implementing decisions of the Court requiring the titling of collective territories," and that 64 percent of land restitution applications were rejected by the Land Restitution Unit (UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 20). The World Bank indicates that Law 70 and successive legislation have resulted in "capacity-building programs for Afro-descendant teachers, the inclusion of Afro-Colombian conten[t] in school curricula, and the creation of the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies (Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos)" (World Bank 2018, 95). The same source further states that the programs had "mixed results," with implementation being driven by individual rather than national initiatives and hampered by the lack of resources

for teacher training (World Bank 2018, 95). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.1 Judicial Response

Law 1482 of 2011 (*Ley 1482 de 2011*) provides the following regarding acts of discrimination:

[translation]

Article 3. Modified by Art. 2, Law 1752 of 2015. The Criminal Code shall have article 134A, which shall read as follows:

Article 134 A. *Racist or Discriminatory Acts.* Anyone who arbitrarily prevents, obstructs or restricts the full exercise of the rights of persons on the grounds of race, nationality, sex or sexual orientation shall be liable to imprisonment for twelve (12) to thirty-six (36) months and a fine of ten (10) to fifteen (15) times the statutory minimum monthly wage.

NOTE: Article declared CONSTITUTIONAL by the Constitutional Court's Sentence C-671 of 2014. (Colombia 2011, emphasis in original)

According to the Associate Professor of geography, "numerous" Afro-Colombians have filed *tutelas* or formal complaints against individuals or the government for racial discrimination (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). The same source further stated that the process is "difficult" and "often drawn-out" (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020).

According to the research project Latin American Anti-Racism in a 'Post-Racial' Age (LAPORA) [7], an Afro-Colombian man filed a complaint to the Prosecutor's office (Oficina del Fiscal) in March 2013 based on his colleagues who made racist remarks and his company who directed him to cease submitting internal complaints (LAPORA n.d.a). The same source indicates that the man was fired afterwards, which led him to file a claim for unfair dismissal and racial discrimination to the Prosecutor's office and the Ministry of Labour; neither office resolved his case (LAPORA n.d.a). LAPORA states that the man, with the support of a legal NGO, submitted his case to the Constitutional Court in 2016, which found in his favour in 2018 (LAPORA n.d.a). Morgan states that between 2012 and 2016, one person was convicted under the anti-discrimination law, out of 873 cases which were brought (Morgan 2019, 27). In its 2018 report to the

CERD, Colombia states that the Office of the Attorney General (Fiscalía General de la Nación, FGN) was working on 368 investigations of acts of racism, discrimination and harassment, with 9 cases which have "moved beyond the preliminary investigation stage, 3 are under investigation, 5 are before a court and 1 has resulted in a conviction" (Colombia 14 Nov. 2018, para. 34).

Sources report that two former mayors of Tumaco face accusations of corruption (HRW Dec. 2018, 11; International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 22). Sources indicate that the last four mayors of Buenaventura [a port city with a majority Afro-Colombian population (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 19)] were jailed on corruption charges (*The Economist* 29 Aug. 2019; International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 22). International Crisis Group states that the judiciary in Tumaco and Buenaventura are "overwhelmed" by the caseload and "corrupt" (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 23). The same source further reports that, according to an interview with a government official, Buenaventura had 25 prosecutors working on 17,000 cases (International Crisis Group 8 Aug. 2019, 25). Based on interviews with government officials in 2018, HRW reports that Tumaco had one judge who handled "aggravated murder" cases and one prosecutor who handled extortion, enforced disappearance and displacement cases, and that one person has been convicted of homicide, out of over 300 murders committed in Tumaco since 2017 (HRW Dec. 2018, 4, 50-51).

3.2 Human Rights Defenders

The UN's CERD states that the authorities have investigated and prosecuted a "low number" of killings of human rights defenders (UN 22 Jan. 2020, para. 28). The UN's OHCHR indicates that protection measures provided by the State "were not suited to the risks and complexities of the context," and gives the example of a protectee, located in a "remote area with limited access to communications," who was provided with a panic button, a mobile phone and a bulletproof vest (UN 4 Feb. 2019, para. 27). The Assistant Professor of black studies reported that the Colombian Ombudsperson (Defensor del Pueblo) criticized the protection program for activists by stating that "'it is not enough to provide a car and armed guards'" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The Consultant in Colombia reported that the National Protection Unit (Unidad Nacional de Protección, UNP), responsible for providing protection, often requires international pressure to accept individuals into the program and have assessed several Afro-Colombians leaders, who were later assassinated, as not at risk

(Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The same source, who worked on the case, indicated that a member of AFRODES received protection from the UNP one year after being granted protection by the IACHR (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). Sources indicate that a leader of AFRODES, murdered in 2017, was denied protection from the UNP (WOLA 9 June 2017; Amnesty International 19 Mar. 2018). The Spain-based news agency Agencia EFE indicates that the authorities previously provided the leader with a bulletproof vest and a cell phone, but withdrew the protection measures after reassessing the danger he faced (Agencia EFE 9 June 2017).

4. Support Services

The Assistant Professor of black studies indicated that support programs for Afro-Colombians are "limited in reach and resources" (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020). The Consultant in Colombia stated that the programs are "symbolic" (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The same source further indicated that government programs such as the Observatory on Discrimination and Racism and scholarships for Afro-Colombians pursuing education are not a "significant" allocation of resources given that the most pressing issue facing the Afro-Colombian population is internal displacement (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The Assistant Professor of black studies stated that a loan program failed to increase Afro-Colombian participation in post-secondary education; as of April 2020, 2 percent of Afro-Colombian youths were enrolled in a bachelor's degree program (Assistant Professor 10 Apr. 2020).

The Associate Professor of geography stated that the Observatory on Discrimination and Racism and other local-level government agencies are either dedicated to ethnic minorities or deal generally with equality and diversity (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). The Colombian government states that the Observatory on Discrimination and Racism supports victims of racism through the "analysis of cases, referral to the competent authorities, follow-up actions and the generation of statistics on reported cases" (Colombia 14 Nov. 2018, para. 39). The same source describes the mission of the Observatory as to design educational strategies aimed at raising awareness of racial discrimination and racism, to advise local bodies and communities on providing comprehensive care based on a differentiated approach, to establish a methodology for handling cases, and to formulate recommendations on public policy to prevent racial discrimination. (Colombia 14 Nov. 2018, para. 38)

The Colombian government also reports that

[b]etween 2014 and 2018, the Observatory received 104 complaints of racial discrimination. Of these, 49 involved men, 34 involved women, 11 involved children and 8 involved groups. ... In total, 42 of the reported cases have been transferred to the Attorney General's Office for investigation while 18 have been transferred to the Counsel General's Office, 15 to the National Police, 14 to the Ombudsman's Office and 22 to other institutions. (Colombia 14 Nov. 2018, para. 40)

Further information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Associate Professor of geography indicated that "hundreds of NGOs, big and small," offer programs and services to Afro-Colombians, including national-level organizations such as Cimarrón, "the longest-standing Afro-Colombian human rights organization," PCN, "an influential network of Afro-Colombian organizations that was pivotal in the passing of Law 70," and AFRODES, the "important Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians that was founded in 1999 as a direct result of the increasing human rights emergency in the Pacific lowlands" (Associate Professor 6 Apr. 2020). The Consultant in Colombia indicated that AFRODES, Cimarrón, PCN, and other organizations are grassroots organizations that represent the Afro-Colombian social movement (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). According to the same source, it is the mobilization of the Afro-Colombian social movement that pressured the Colombian government into adopting reforms (Consultant in Colombia 13 Apr. 2020). The World Bank indicates that Afro-Colombian organizations in Chocó were key to the recognition of Afro-Colombian rights at the national level (World Bank 2018, 64).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] The National Conference of Afro-Colombian Organizations (Conferencia Nacional de Organizaciones Afrocolombianas, CNOA) is "a social organization working to protect human rights and to further the collective interests of Afro-Colombians" (WOLA 2014).

[2] The study defines poverty as individuals subsisting on a per capita income of less than US\$5.50 a day (World Bank 2018, 130).

[3] The International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights is an "international, human rights capacity-building organization that works side by side with activists in Latin America to enhance their ability to promote and protect the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable people"; it is based in Washington, DC (International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights n.d.).

[4] The study defines a slum as "the absence of at least one basic public service (water, electricity, sanitation) and/or the presence of dirt floors, as a proxy for poor construction materials, in urban households" (World Bank 2018, 66).

[5] The National Association of Displaced Afrodescendants [Afro-Colombians] (*Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados*, AFRODES) is a coalition of 96 organizations that represent internally displaced Afro-Colombians (WOLA 9 June 2017).

[6] The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is "a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization" based in Washington, DC whose purpose "is to define the future of national security" (CSIS n.d.).

[7] Latin American Anti-Racism in a 'Post-Racial' Age (LAPORA) is a research project by the Department of Sociology at the University of Cambridge which investigates "anti-racist practices and ideologies" in Latin America (LAPORA n.d.b).

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