

# PUBLIC STATEMENT

## One Voice for One Path: Dialogue and Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean

June, 2024.

We, the representatives of the ACT Alliance national forums in: Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, members of ACT Alliance in Latin America and the Caribbean, accompanied by the Regional and Global Secretariat, and other member organizations of ACT from Europe and North America, have gathered in Bogotá, Colombia, from May 19 to 23, 2024, to continue the dialogue on: "Regressive Agendas and their Impact on Democracies and Human Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean."

From our principles of compassion, equity, inclusion, respect, and justice, we have updated the available information, promoted, and deepened the analysis of the impact of regressive agendas on rights, the convergence of fundamentalisms on democracies, the recognition of their impact on human rights in the region, and defined general guidelines on how, from our contexts, resources, and joint pastoral and diaconal action, we can address these issues.

We are a region and an alliance in constant relation and movement. Therefore, in 2019, concerned about the deterioration of democracies in the region, we met in Guatemala. At that time, we identified a profound similarity in the negative influence of these regressive agendas in most of our nations and spaces. Today, five years later, together in Bogotá, Colombia, we reaffirm the deepening reduction of spaces for real and effective dialogue, the increase in hate speech, racism, xenophobia, persecution, threats, and the murders of human rights defenders, especially towards youth and the LGBTQ+ community. We also observe with deep concern the loss of quality of life, the increase in social stress, the setbacks in democracies, and the indiscriminate actions against the resources of our Mother Earth. All this is a result of the advance of fundamentalisms, in hand with the economic powers present in the region and associated with transnational corporations, which use technologies to misinform, manipulate, and exert control, in complicity with our governments.

We also re-acknowledge the increase in various forms of gender-based violence against women, youth, and girls, and the setback in sexual and reproductive rights. We jointly proclaim that the agenda of gender equality and the eradication of all forms of violence against women is non-negotiable.

Therefore, knowing that fundamentalisms are part of our current reality and particularly affect our beloved region of Latin America and the Caribbean, we raise our voices and call on churches, faith-based organizations, ecumenical and social movements to, in God's name, act now in a firm and determined manner to eradicate all types of practices that harm, threaten, and violate human rights, democracies, creation, and social justice, wherever they come from.

We also call on the international community, including the United Nations system and interreligious organizations, to promote inclusive agendas that defend human rights and strengthen our democracies. To governments and economic actors, we urge you to open spaces for real and effective dialogue. For our part, we declare ourselves ready and willing to engage in dialogue.

ACT Alliance does not turn away from the world, nor do we succumb to inertia. We are a coalition and a region deeply committed to the construction of peace. From our rebellious joy, we dream, love, and dance to the rhythm of notes, slogans, and songs that cry out for peace. With great hope, we greet, pray, and observe the peace processes in Colombia. We call all parties of the conflict to sustain the Peace Dialogues and to pursue the ongoing quest for peace with social justice.

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