



**EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

S-EUSWHT-22- 0966

Washington D.C., November 17, 2022

The Honorable
ANTONY J. BLINKEN
Secretary of State
Washington, DC

The Honorable
ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC

Honorable Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas,

The governments of Colombia and the United States have reaffirmed their shared values, and adherence to international norms and democracy, including the joint commitment to advancing equity for all, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity.

This bicentennial of our bilateral relations is a demonstration of the mutual strengths of our democracies and shared values, which have allowed Colombia to be the most important ally of the United States in Latin America and in turn, the United States to be the most important ally of Colombia in the world.

The government of President Gustavo Petro is committed to prioritizing the needs of the Colombian diaspora, including the nearly two million Colombians in the United States, a wealth of human and social capital that has contributed to the country's society, culture and economy.

For more than 60 years, hundreds of thousands of Colombian citizens have been forced to leave the country because of the conflict seeking to rebuild their lives, many of the more recently arrived still remain vulnerable and unprotected in the United States. Most of those affected are Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Descendants and Campesinos.

The Government is committed to the full implementation of the Peace Agreement of 2016 and we appreciate the efforts of the United States to support its implementation and hope to continue working closely, focusing on areas where implementation is most lagging. Moreover, President Petro has called on all armed groups to enter negotiations, and for them and high-impact criminal organizations to lay down their arms and -in the case of the latter- accede to plea-bargaining benefits, while committing to non-repetition, and to work towards a prosperous legal economy. This is a process, of course, but we are hopeful to bring it to fruition, so all Colombians may live in peace and enable those who were forced to flee and who wish to return, to do so.



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Migration should be an option or voluntary choice and not a life-or-death decision. After decades of conflict, and significant economic inequality, the people of Colombia deserve lasting peace and shared prosperity. President Petro has pledged to fully implement the peace accord of 2016 and seek Paz Total or "Total Peace" as a central tenet of his administration to allow people to live free from fear and free from want, protecting social leaders, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, and promoting social and economic opportunities for Colombians.

Colombia has been incredibly generous in receiving a population of over 2 million Venezuelan migrants. We have provided asylum, refuge, and recently a TPS for over 1.8 million migrants. President Petro is committed to the continuity of policies that promote opportunities for Venezuelan migrants, as well as for the Colombian host communities. Colombia also faces major challenges as a transit country for over 80,000 migrants transiting through our hemisphere per year.

Migration is a regional issue that should be addressed under the principle of shared responsibility, strengthening regional cooperation to ensure migratory regularization.

In that regard, I would like to formally request the Government of the United States to consider authorizing a temporary migration benefit for Colombians present in this country under the humanitarian **Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) program**, in the President's discretion as part of his power to conduct foreign relations.

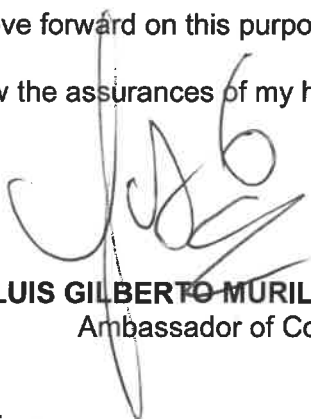
As stated, our goal is for our people to be able to return to Colombia in a dignified manner if they choose to or adjust their immigration status in the United States if they have the legal avenues to do so.

I trust that the administration of President Biden will see the benefits of this temporary immigration relief as we join forces to co-develop solutions to migration in the Western Hemisphere under a humanitarian approach that benefits all our people, economies, and democracies.

I am confident that we can move forward on this purpose for the benefit of our people.

I take this opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely Yours,



LUIS GILBERTO MURILLO URRUTIA
Ambassador of Colombia

C.C. The Honorable Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor