



KUAGRO RI CHANGAINA RI PCN

For Immediate Release*

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Peace has to be a multidimensional commitment and a radical and sustainable political act

We, the Kuagro Ri Ri Changaina PCN, a group of women members of the Black Communities' Process in Colombia, declare our radical and passionate decision to support Peace in Colombia.

We recognize that the desire for Peace is at the forefront of the country's political discussions within the context of electoral process in Colombia. Therefore, this desire for peace among a significant majority of Colombians presents an opportunity to discuss the social, political and economic foundations that will generate the conditions to reach a real and sustainable peace.

It is also clear to us that, in spite of demonstrations of good faith, peace continues to be viewed in a superficial and one-dimensional manner –the talks in Havana. We believe that all the aspirations and commitments and discussion regarding Peace must recognize all the social actors and interests impacted by the various wars that are bleeding the nation. A viable, comprehensive peace process must consider the different scenarios, the multiple actions and wills that are required to advance a policy of peace and democracy, and must recognize the importance of having all the voices of victims and social actors involved to build from below, and not from a centralized and elitist process. Furthermore, we believe that without the direct and plural participation of women, any aspiration to Peace will continue to be androcentric.

For this reason the Kuagro Ri Ri Changaina Ri PCN firmly states that:

- We will recognize that there is PEACE when within the context of Colombia's social, economic and political life, our unique and concrete presence and voice as women and Afro-descendants are recognized and respected, at the individual and collective level and within the framework of recognition and respect for the rights of Afro-descent people, a people of which we are part.
- We recognize each other in PEACE when all forms of violence are banished from our ancestral territories and from our bodies as living spaces of identity, expression and exercise of Being Afro-descendant women. This must be done in such a way that these acts of violence that shed the blood of our brothers and sisters; that plundered the cultural, environmental and material heritage that belongs to our daughters and sons; that imposed policies of war and devastation; that discriminated against us to prevent us from educating ourselves and advancing to the same level of dignity as others, including the poor, but *not* the Black, *are never repeated*.

• This statement was issued and published in Spanish on June 12, prior to the second round of the presidential elections in Colombia and in a context where the issue of the peace talks between the Colombian government and the internal insurgency FARC, became the central difference between the two leading candidates for Colombia's highest office. The Kuagro determined that it was extremely important that civil society, and particularly Black women who have been disproportionately impacted by the multi-dimensional expressions of war, engage in a honest and political discussion that is informed by our historical experiences and social needs, to express from this point of view what elements constitutes the conditions for a just and sustainable social Peace in Colombia. As the peace talks between the FARC and the Colombian government advance, the understanding of what is needed to achieve Peace in Black territories beyond this conflict, is not an intellectual or electoral exercise but is a matter of life or death for us.



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- We recognize each other in PEACE when society, the actors involved in the war and violence, and the State, as one of those actors, have converted their discourse into acts of transformation of consciousness that views peace and its construction in a multidimensional way, not restricted to the internal armed conflict, not biased towards some of the armed groups without recognizing them all, not conditioned to the actions of armed war without recognizing the economic actions defined by neoliberal, capitalist policies, that have generated the social, economic, and environmental violence that undermines our culture and identity.
- We recognize each other in PEACE when there is a conscious cultural transformation coming from an imaginary, conscience and social practices that are committed to fighting and banishing racism, patriarchy and the class discrimination that strikes us in a particular and genocidal form.
- We recognize each other living in PEACE when we feel the freedom, spiritual and material peace to develop our individual lives and the communal (family, community, political and organizational) lives. Only by doing so, will we be able to participate in equity and equality in all the areas that our political project encompasses. Only by doing so, will we be able to live fully and joyfully in the private territory of our bodies and ancestral collective lands, exerting the autonomy to be Black-Afro-descendant women.
- We recognize each other in PEACE when the integral reparation for the country's historical debt with the people of Afro-descent is paid. This must be done based on the recognition and the judgment of the crimes against humanity that were committed against our kidnapped and enslaved African ancestors, as well as those crimes that continue to be committed against their descendants, who still suffer the discrimination and marginalization resulting from the structural racism that the country fails to recognize.
- We recognize each other in PEACE when justice has been achieved; when the truth dawns on crimes committed against us and other members of our rural and urban communities; when we can give our deceased the proper ritual of release of their spirits, which will guide them to the place of our Ancestors; when we can say that there is place for our descendants and that the fate of their lives is determined by our self-determination not by a racist system.
- We will participate, resist and fight for our project of self-determination until Peace and the Historical Reparation of the Black/Afro-descendent people, victims not only of the internal armed conflict, but also victims of structural and historical racism, become State policies, not mere "acts of good faith" or circumstantial racial-democratic rhetoric.

Until this kind of peace is achieved, as Afro-descendant women we declare ourselves to be in resistance. Our struggle and actions are in defense of our rights as Afro-descendants women, and to defend and protect our vital territories: the bodily and the ancestral, both of which are wombs of individual and collective life. Our commitment, as Kuagro and as part of the PCN, is to build a peaceful, democratic process that will allow us to return to our bodily and ancestral territories of joy, peace and freedom and exercise authentic self-determination.

El Kuagro Ri Changaina Ri PCN does not claim to represent the voice of all Black women in Colombia or PCN. The Kuagro is a collective of women that reaffirms its commitment with the political principles of the Black Communities' Process in Colombia and the struggle in defense and appropriation of the territorial, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Black/Afro-descendant, Raizal and Palenque women and communities, within the context of the struggle against all forms of oppression exercised through racism, imperialism, capitalism, neoliberalism and patriarchy. Our commitment to this political project is reflected in our critical assumption of a radical feminist position informed by our own experience as Black-Afro descent women.