

## LASA statement on violent response to social protests in Colombia

May 2021

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The Executive Council of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) expresses its solidarity with the people of Colombia and its deep concern for the brutal way in which the Colombian government has responded since April 28th to social protest and citizen demonstrations, through the disproportionate use of force by the State, especially the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squad (ESMAD). The violations of human rights, the death of civilians in several cities of Colombia, the militarization as a response to maintain public order, in a context of the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic, are facts of extreme gravity.

We urgently call on the authorities to respect and protect peaceful mobilization in accordance with the law and international treaties in force. We reaffirm that peaceful protest is a fundamental human right that must be respected and guaranteed by the State and exercised freely. The abuse of public force cannot be justified or tolerated under any circumstances and under any pretext and, in all cases, the integrity of persons and human life must be respected.

Finally, we urge the national government of Colombia to listen to the right demands of its citizens, to regain the confidence of the citizenry in its institutions and to seek a solution to the widespread dissatisfaction as soon as possible, for the sake of a country that is trying to survive one of the most devastating crises in recent history.

### About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the world's largest professional association for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America and the Caribbean. LASA currently has more than 12,000 members worldwide, a section specializing in Colombian issues, and a committee that defends academic freedom and respect for human rights.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or send an email to [lasa@lasaweb.org](mailto:lasa@lasaweb.org).

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