

A Guide for Responsible Travel to Colombia



Is responsible travel to Colombia even possible given the levels of repression that occur there daily?

Our answer to that question is a resounding YES!!!

The Coalition for Peace in Colombia and the People's Human Rights Observatory have issued a People's Travel Advisory on Colombia. However, the advisory does not call for a boycott. Travel to Colombia is an important way that international human and labor rights defenders and peace advocates can show their solidarity. We believe we have a duty to go find out what's really going on in Colombia and come back home and educate and organize for change. Responsible travel to Colombia is a good thing. But travel that does not support the people's desire for peace and justice only reinforces a sad and unacceptable status quo.

The fact is, Colombia is not safe for many people:

- **Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a union organizer. In 2018, 34 union organizers were killed, more than twice the number killed in 2017 (15). The number is on track to be even higher in 2019. Already in the first six months of 2019, 10 members of just one labor organization, FENSUAGRO, have been killed.**
- **Colombia is dangerous for social movements and the political opposition. Since the implementation of the peace accord in 2016, over 730 social movement leaders have been killed.**
- **Colombia is not safe for former insurgents who have laid down their arms to reintegrate into civil society. Some 150 former guerrillas have been killed since late 2016.**

- **Colombia is not safe for families and the integrity of their homes and communities. Colombia has the highest number of internally and forcibly displaced persons in the world.**
- **For these segments of society, Colombia is extremely dangerous, and it is dangerous for anyone who goes off the beaten path to be with these people in the places where they live, unless you are traveling within the relative safety of an international delegation. Fortunately, as international labor and human rights monitors there is a safety available that is normally not available in the places we visit.**

Of course, some will say that it is ridiculous to issue a travel warning about Colombia. People go on vacations there all the time and never run into danger. Yes, it is quite safe if you only go where the government and the tourist industry want you to go. If you stay on the dotted line, only visit the officially approved and promoted places, and use basic common sense precautions, you can usually travel without incident. If you do nothing at all to stand with the people, if you cloak yourself in “first-world” tourist privilege, then, sure, Colombia is a paradise for the tourist who closes eyes and ears and heart to what is really going on.

But is that what you really want to do? The humanitarian crisis in Colombia is so bad that the world must take notice and do something. That’s why if you’re going to go to Colombia, you should do something to support the people’s aspirations for peace, justice, and liberation.

We urge people to consider responsible ways to travel to Colombia, including:

- Making contact with popular movements and learning about the struggles they are facing and how you can help;
- Paying a “peace tax” and financially contributing to Colombian popular organizations or to international solidarity organizations working for the peace of Colombia;
- Going to the US Embassy to demand an end to U.S. policies that finance and encourage violence and repression in Colombia;
- Visiting Colombian officials to let them know the world is watching, and to call for an end to military and paramilitary violence against social and labor movements;
- Joining a solidarity delegation to Colombia that educates and informs about the people’s struggle—many organizations, including Witness for Peace, the Alliance for Global Justice, US Labor Against the War, the US Peace Council, and others provide opportunities to visit Colombia safely and responsibly.

For more information about the People’s Travel Advisory to Colombia and announcements about responsible Colombia tourism, including upcoming delegations visit coalitionforpeaceincolombia.org or email peacecolombia@protonmail.com