

1 [Opposing Human Rights Violations in Colombia]

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3 **Resolution opposing human rights violations in Colombia and demanding the**
4 **implementation of the Leahy Law to suspend economic assistance to the Colombian**
5 **Anti-Riot Police Force, also known as the Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squadron.**

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7 WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco is
8 committed to upholding the Freedom of Assembly and is deeply concerned about the human
9 rights violations being perpetrated against civilians across Colombia; and

10 WHEREAS, On April 28, 2021, protests in Colombia erupted over a tax reform that
11 would have increased taxes for working-class individuals and businesses, and eliminated
12 multiple exemptions while the country faces a COVID-19 surge fueling increasing inequality
13 and unemployment, as currently over 42% of the population lives in poverty; and

14 WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of protesters have marched in Colombia and globally
15 over the proposed reform, and although Colombian President Ivan Duque recently withdrew
16 the policy, protesters remain in the streets to denounce human rights abuses towards
17 Colombian activists during the national strike, and demonstrations are anticipated to continue;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, As of the day of this Resolution’s introduction, national protests have
20 continued for 14 straight days responding to police brutality, the devastating economic
21 impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, massive inequality, and rising distrust of the government;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Police have been widely documented firing indiscriminately at protesters
24 and activists, leaving at least 40 people murdered by security forces and another 489 injured;
25 and

1 WHEREAS, As of May 8, 2021, 1,814 people had reported cases of police brutality; and

2 WHEREAS, There have been at least 12 victims of sexual assault and 15 victims of
3 gender-based violence, committed by the Colombian police force in connection with the
4 protests; and

5 WHEREAS, Colombian police have carried out 1,365 detentions during recent
6 demonstrations, and 435 people are presumed missing; and

7 WHEREAS, Social media users in Colombia have reported censorship of videos and
8 hashtags, such as #SOSColombia, as they fight for international intervention; and

9 WHEREAS, Crowds of protesters continue to grow even as Colombia endures its third
10 wave of the COVID-19 virus, with ICU occupancy in the country's most populated cities above
11 75% and an average 500 people dying per day, further demonstrating the urgency of the
12 protesters' cry for justice; and

13 WHEREAS, Last year, Colombia's domestic product dropped by 6.8%, signaling the
14 deepest economic crash in half a century, and creating further precarity for Colombians as 3.6
15 million Colombians were pushed into poverty; and

16 WHEREAS, The demonstrations are a continuation of protests expressing concerns
17 about limited opportunity and corruption that spread throughout Latin America in late 2019-
18 2020, and were only interrupted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

19 WHEREAS, Colombia routinely ranks as one of the worst countries for human rights
20 violations globally by groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and
21 has over 7 million internally displaced residents as identified by the United Nations Refugee
22 Agency; and

23 WHEREAS, More than 27,000 people have been displaced from their homes due to
24 violence in Colombia this year, a 177% spike from the previous year, leaving Colombians no
25 escape from the bloodshed; and

1 WHEREAS, Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities in Colombia are at risk of
2 and have been disproportionately impacted by poverty, violence, and displacement as a
3 consequence of historic government neglect and disregard for their human rights; and

4 WHEREAS, Over 1065 social leaders, 287 of which were Indigenous peoples and 75
5 Afro-descendants, have been murdered between 2016 and 2020 since the Colombian Peace
6 Deal was signed in August of 2016; and

7 WHEREAS, The violent response to the National Strike in Colombia represents a
8 significant threat to democracy, rights to peaceful assembly and protest, and could be
9 perceived as a warning to other Latin American countries fighting for democracy and civil
10 rights; and

11 WHEREAS, The United States has aided and abetted these murders by using taxpayer
12 dollars to provide weapons, resources, and other equipment in the form of military aid
13 packages, which are now being used to open fire on civilians; and

14 WHEREAS, Since 2001, the U.S. has sent over \$9 billion dollars to Colombia through
15 Plan Colombia, which is how the Colombian Anti-Riot Police Force, Mobile Anti-Disturbances
16 Squadron (ESMAD), a police force used solely during protests and responsible for the deaths
17 of over 300 people, was founded; and

18 WHEREAS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), known for human
19 rights abuses and threatening civil liberties, was dispatched to Colombia in 2016 to provide
20 training for the national police; and

21 WHEREAS, The Leahy Law was approved by Congress in 1997 to prohibit the U.S.'s
22 complicity in international atrocities by supplying equipment and training to a foreign military
23 suspected of perpetrating "gross human rights violations;" and

1 WHEREAS, U.S. Representatives have called on the Leahy Law to freeze aid to
2 Colombian military forces until the violence ends and the government has taken appropriate
3 action towards bringing perpetrators to justice; and

4 WHEREAS, Senators Bob Menéndez (D-N.J.) and Jessica Ramos (D-13), and
5 Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), Gregory
6 Meeks (D-N.Y.), Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) and Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) have expressed concern
7 over the government’s violent response and solidarity with protesters; and

8 WHEREAS, On April 25, 1945, the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the
9 New International Court of Justice were signed in San Francisco, making the City the home of
10 human rights progress and defense; and

11 WHEREAS, Hundreds have gathered in San Francisco, and across the Bay Area, to
12 protest the ongoing police brutality and national crisis to show support for the international
13 Colombian community; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors fully
15 supports the protesters and activists in Colombia and joins the international condemnation of
16 the repression and violence being perpetrated by the Colombian government against civilians
17 and protesters; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco stands in solidarity
19 with the Latin American immigrant community, and recognizes the contributions of Colombian
20 immigrants and Colombian-Americans to the social fabric and diversity of our community; and,
21 be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors
23 calls on the Congress of the United States of America to apply the Leahy Law and suspend all
24 sales of crowd control equipment, training, and services to the Colombian security forces to
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1 guarantee freedom of movement and equitable access to testing, health care, humanitarian
2 aid, and vaccinations; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors
4 demands that President Duque’s administration create and sustain pathways for dialogue with
5 Colombian communities harmed by violence, poverty, and displacement in order to advance
6 peace and equity in the country, be it

7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors
8 demands a suspension to U.S. military aid to Colombia and calls on Congresswoman Nancy
9 Pelosi and Senators Diane Feinstein and Xavier Becerra to support the suspension of US
10 military aid to Colombia; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby directs
12 the Clerk of the Board to transmit copies to the members of Congress from San Francisco and
13 the United States Senators from California with a request to take all action necessary to
14 achieve the objectives of this Resolution.

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