



CRLN STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF COLOMBIA AFTER THE ELECTION

June 24, 2026

CRLN stands in unwavering solidarity with the people of Colombia at a critical moment. We stand with communities across Colombia and the diaspora defending life, dignity, peace, and democracy in the face of violence, disinformation, and political intervention.

We stand with Colombia because its democratic future is rooted in the struggles of its people—from Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities to workers, women, youth, and human rights defenders—who have long fought for justice.

Recent gains for peace, democracy, and social justice remain fragile amid threats of renewed militarization, oligarchical control, and political violence.

The defeat of progressive candidate Iván Cepeda, committed to continuing the reform agenda of President Gustavo Petro, marks a setback for progressive forces and reflects a broader regional trend of rising neo-authoritarian, far-right, fascist political currents across Latin America.

The electoral victory of Abelardo De La Espriella must be understood in light of widespread concerns regarding foreign intervention, vote-buying allegations by third actors, and broader irregularities documented by political actors, observers, and civil society organizations. International human rights-based methodologies understand electoral integrity as encompassing not only procedural findings but also the political environment, foreign interference, and conditions under which democratic participation takes place. In this context, questions of legitimacy extend beyond the formal outcome to the conditions under which that outcome was produced.

What happens in Colombia reverberates across the continent.

WE DENOUNCE FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN THE STRONGEST TERMS

We denounce in the strongest terms the intervention of President Donald Trump and other U.S. political figures, including Senator Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio) and Representative María Elvira Salazar (R-Florida), who openly inserted themselves into Colombia's electoral process. This reflects a long and ongoing history of U.S. interference in Latin America, where sovereign democratic processes are repeatedly subordinated to external political interests.

As Iván Cepeda stated:

“We denounce the open and improper foreign interference in Colombia’s internal affairs, particularly the interventions of the government of the United States and President Donald Trump in favor of a presidential candidacy.”

This interference is not symbolic—it shapes political conditions, deepens polarization, and undermines the autonomy of democratic decision-making.

A PATTERN OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY

This electoral moment cannot be separated from deeper structures of violence and historical impunity that continue to shape Colombia's political life.

The political ascent and electoral victory of presidential candidate **Abelardo De La Espriella**, and his documented and widely reported ties to paramilitary networks, including the U.S.-designated terrorist organization Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), reflects a broader attempt to normalize political projects historically rooted in violence against social movements and popular sectors.

The AUC were responsible for some of the most severe atrocities of Colombia's armed conflict, including massacres, forced disappearances, sexual violence, torture, and mass displacement. These crimes targeted Indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian communities, campesinos, trade unionists, and human rights defenders, in direct alignment with the defense of elite political and economic interests.

These concerns are not abstract. As Iván Cepeda warned during his concession:
“We denounce that this campaign involved massive vote-buying operations and sophisticated strategies of manipulation, including the use of artificial intelligence technologies.”

“No electoral victory can be built on practices that degrade democracy. Not everything is permissible in the struggle for power.”

These warnings emphasize a reality of the current moment, legitimacy cannot be reduced to electoral outcome alone, but must be assessed in relation to the conditions under which power is contested, produced, and consolidated.

COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY

CRLN remains in solidarity with the people of Colombia as they continue defending democratic space under difficult conditions. We will continue accompanying social movements, victims' organizations, and diaspora communities in their struggles for peace, truth, and justice.

Democracy belongs to the people—not to foreign powers, not to elites, and not to violence.

CRLN had international certified observers in Bogotá did not observe anything out of the normal, our team in Chicago witnessed voter intimidation and electioneering.

With respect to the voting of Colombians abroad, particularly in the United States, political actors have raised concerns regarding possible irregularities in the functioning of consular polling stations and alleged procedural or access-related problems during the electoral process. These claims have been interpreted within a broader political narrative questioning the integrity of the election and in the context of foreign intervention.

In its official reporting, the Misión de Observación Electoral (MOE) notes that the monitoring of overseas voting locations—including cities such as Miami, New York, and Houston—is integrated into its general electoral observation framework, which primarily records citizen reports and logistical or procedural incidents. Within this framework, the MOE has not identified evidence of systemic fraud or structural manipulation affecting the electoral outcome abroad.

MOE’s technical assessment of electoral irregularities contrasts with broader international observer frameworks, including the Progressive International and international human rights-based methodologies, which emphasize electoral integrity as encompassing not only procedural findings but also the political environment, foreign interference, and conditions under which democratic participation takes place.

CRLN raises serious concerns about the reports of the practice of vote buying which had allegedly been employed by De La Espriella’s supporters throughout Colombia and in the diaspora.

CRLN raises serious concerns about the political and mediatic environment in which the election took place with Abelardo De La Espriella and his supporters using violent rhetoric against supporters of the opposing candidate including a call to "disembowel the left" and nostalgia for right-wing paramilitaries responsible for the deaths of nearly 100,000 Colombians.

As an organization based in the United States, CRLN brings attention to the blatant interference of the Trump Administration in Colombia’s electoral process. This is public support by President Trump for De La Espriella constitutes political intervention, as well as and a smear campaign by congressional republicans and State Department officials against the supporters of Iván Cepeda.

Lastly, CRLN calls for the Department of Homeland Security to immediately release Beto Coral, a Colombian journalist and asylum seeker, who was arrested due to his political beliefs following a direct order from Secretary of State Marco Rubio. He has allegedly been tortured while in detention and ordered to sign his own deportation. CRLN sees Coral’s arrest as an affront to free speech for all residents of the United States and calls on Congress to thoroughly investigate his detention.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Colombia.

We demand the release of Beto Coral.