

Common Statement

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT OF ALAS AMÉRICA LATINA ALTERNATIVA SOCIAL

(Latin America Social Alternative)

Whereas:

1. Latin American and Caribbean people suffer the plagues of violence, corruption, drug trafficking, poverty and violation of Human Rights caused by the actions of the Transnational Mafia System.
2. The high level of Corruption and Impunity that has infiltrated huge portions of our countries' Governmental Institutions encourages and protects Organised Crime in our Region.
3. Our Region continues to suffer from existing and increasing inequality: economic wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a minority of individuals, while millions of people live in total poverty, unsheltered by their governments and institutions, especially children, women, teenagers, young people, native people, African descendants, migrants and persons of sexual diversity.
4. Most of our countries face the penalization of Social Movements, Civil Society Organisations, journalists, Human and Labour Rights activists, community leaders, activists in Peoples' Movements, trade unionists, people's economy promoters, and educators committed to denunciation and defence against violations of fundamental rights. Even the reporting of Organised Crime activity under the protection of corrupted Governments is considered illegal.
5. Past crimes against humanity and the violations of Human Rights are repeated: States were influenced, weakened and trapped and showed a lack of capability, interest and political will to carry out the required actions to fight, investigate, judge and punish the commanders and perpetrators of these condemnable acts.
6. Thousands of our Latin American and Caribbean young people are being killed. They are denied their fundamental Rights to life, freedom, education, health and work. Millions of them are suffering from criminal penalties, discrimination, racism, and social, economic and political exclusion. Due to the raging violence, corruption, poverty and marginalisation,

young people cannot afford to study, work and enjoy their time. The lack of positive opportunities is often driving these youth to join Crime Organisations. This phenomenon is largely caused by the failure of States and Governments and the current Economic System to develop what is needed to build for them a present and a future of opportunities, legality, dignity, freedom, democracy and prosperity.

7. Latin American women have fallen victim to gender violence and femicide. Women bear the burden of their families in the presence of Organised Crime, after being displaced due to undeclared armed conflicts. They are alone in their search for missing family members and justice for those killed.

Women are the prime target of human trafficking for working and sexual exploitation and reduction to slavery; the Latin American and Caribbean governments have never prioritised the allocation of economic, social and judicial resources required and sufficient to protect their integrity, belongings and lives. With this failure, the governments are hampering their social and human development both in the public and private spheres.

8. Organised Crime and the linked transnational Capital threatens the social and economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean, which are subject to and dominated by private interests linked with great multinationals and landowners' profits.
9. Civil Society Organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean keep fighting for a fair society free of violence. Conscious of the challenge, they are characterised by the strong will for public denunciation, among other actions. This force is represented by non-governmental organisations committed in the fight against crime and violence, in favour of the demand for, respect of, and full enjoyment of Human Rights and the establishment of a culture of peace coupled with social justice.
10. As a Network of Latin American and Caribbean Organisations, we keep building a world free of violence, characterised by social justice, freedom, democracy, gender fairness and equality and solidarity among peoples.

We declare:

- a) We are Latin American and Caribbean civil society citizens organised in groups and democratic, non-political and independent communities, who work in Europe and Latin America for the respect and promotion of Human Rights, Peace, and Justice, and against violence, corruption, impunity, inequality and poverty.

On the basis of this faith, we commit to build an association for international action

called “ALAS - America Latina Alternativa Social,” with the following purposes:
Promote the creation of a reliable connection among all the Civil Society Organisations fighting against Mafias and any kind of Organised Crime in our respective fields of activity. We organise through joint actions, by putting together our social skills, know-how and expertise, as well as adopted methods, to achieve different actions and subjects: Culture, Economy, Research, Education, Sports, the Environment, Social Promotion and International Cooperation, all in the framework of the Respect of Human Rights, and protection of Human Rights defenders.

- b) Promote coordination by favouring collaboration among ALAS members and their organisations at the national, regional and international levels.
- c) Promote a Culture of Democratic Legality and Justice, transparency, access to public information, accounting and liability in the field of Defence, promotion and respect for Human Rights, as provided for in the International Treaties and Conventions for Human Rights of the OAS and CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States,) among others, also monitoring the progress made in our local Legislations and the required legislative change.
- d) Create effective alternatives for a decent life and work for young people currently living in vulnerability, in contact with crime and violence, through educational processes focussed on Peace, Non-Violence and vocational training.
- e) Promote the building of a proactive citizenship in the field of International Solidarity, by putting together skills, experience and methods to defend against and report rights violations as well as corruption and violence caused by Organised Crime and make the States responsible for their actions and omissions.
- f) Prevent and eradicate violence against women, specifically addressing femicide and sexual crimes, by promoting and demanding from the Governments the development of gender-wise public policies for their Right to life with dignity.
- g) Recognise the dignity of, and protect and defend the nations, people, and native communities of our countries and their culture and world visions, as well as the land on which they dwell, through Respect, Justice and Freedom for such populations.
- h) Conceive collective actions in the Region with an aim to report, seek justice, judge and order full reparation of the damage and guarantee it will not be repeated; offer professional psycho-social assistance to the victims and families facing the actions that protect Transnational Organized Crime (TOC).

i) Build mechanisms for the creation of operational technical skills among the society for the surveillance and reporting of TOC crimes and creation of legislative initiatives and influence on public policies.

ALAS will seek the achievement of the above mentioned objectives through different activities, including:

- a) Organising cultural, scientific and social activities for reporting, information, prevention and fight against Mafias and Organised Crime at the local, national and transnational levels.
- b) Promoting, as ALAS Network and Civil Society Organisations, cooperative international and development projects, including proposals within the framework of programmes funded by International and Regional Organisations aimed at conceiving and conducting social campaigns and activities for the fight against Mafias and other Crime Organisations. The projects supported by the Network will specifically focus on the most vulnerable groups, such as children, women, teenagers, youth, native people, African descendants, migrants and persons of sexual diversity.
- c) Organising training and learning activities for teachers, students, social workers, youth, women belonging to Civil Society Organisations, and for anyone willing to commit to the dissemination of a Culture of Legality and Social Justice.
- d) Producing, publishing and disseminating the following, in collaboration with Universities and Research Centres, Civil Society Organisations, organisations for the defence of Human Rights, journalists, victims' families and their organisations: joint publications, documents, analytical reports and research to analyse Crime in its regional, national and international structure, as well as its impact in the influence of public policies.
- e) Boosting the visibility of social response and public reporting brought about by the Civil Society, with an aim to support our organisations' actions.
- f) Providing legal consultancy and international attention to assist and protect the victims of Human Rights Violations and those threatened, in order to support the rebuilding of the social fabric.
- g) Promoting processes aiming at institutional innovation to foster the establishment and proper performance of national, regional and international judicial bodies for the prosecution of TOC and corruption as provided for in the Merida and Palermo Protocols, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the need to participate in the

supervision of their activities once they are established.

- h) Creating network coordination systems through advanced communication technologies as vital tools to articulate and consolidate the ALAS Network. Facilitating information exchange, debate and analysis, in the framework of a democratic, plural, free and joyful approach, means improving life in our society and ensuring freedom and justice to our people. Fighting against paedophilia; child pornography; sexual exploitation; child labour; trafficking and kidnapping of children, teenagers and young people; protecting and caring for unaccompanied migrant minors, and creating a transnational programme for the full protection of those threatened with death for their commitment in the greater interest of the child.
- i) Creating a transnational programme for the full protection of those threatened with death: members of Social Movements and Civil Society Organisations, journalists, Human and Labour Rights defenders, community leaders, People's Movements militants, trade unionists, People's Economy promoters and educators.
- j) Sharing good practices and actions implemented by organisations in the Network in a framework of international cooperation. Libera, Associations, and Names and Numbers against mafias, offer support to promote the growth and improvement of the actions and projects by the signers of this Declaration of Commitment.

Signed by the following organisations:

Proposals

ORGANISATION

Strengthening ALAS national groups

Promoting regional and international articulation

Creating focus groups

Establishing research agreements among Network members and other institutions

Defining the Network structure

Creating an internal information platform

Sharing and harmonising methods

Creating a database of CSOs committed to the fight against organised crime in the whole region

Creating a tutorial support mechanism among the network members to collaborate on the different topics through regular meetings.

Conducting permanent campaigns to achieve international focus

Raising funds through the participation in tenders, calls for proposals and projects.

SOCIAL ANTIMAFIA AND FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Influencing the creation of new institutional frameworks for the fight against corruption and organised crime.

Bringing the case of Mexico to the InterAmerican System

Promoting the election of rulers without any mafia relations

Fostering, monitoring and strengthening legislation on the seizure of assets for social use

Boosting civil party participation by groups, communities and organisations, or strengthening their role

Promoting the restorative approach rather than the punitive approach

Giving impetus to consistent antimafia consciousness and participation

Recovering the role of the State as guarantor of Rights, preventing mafia permeation in the gaps resulting from State failure.

SOCIAL PREVENTION

Influencing public policies for children and youth

Creating international programmes to protect Human Rights defenders and those reporting mafia activity

Creating international shelters for Human Rights defenders and people fighting against the mafias

Sharing knowledge and methods among networked CSOs to achieve more strength.

Elaborating country-specific diagnoses on the current situation for each focus pillar.

GENDER EQUALITY

Creating a regional bloc to boost the effective implementation of legislation and international treaties dealing with women's rights.

Using inclusive language to reflect a practice that seeks equality.

Tightening sanctions against mafias that use the bodies of children, women and persons of sexual diversity for sexual exploitation and drug smuggling.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Conducting a project for access to public information on seizures against organised crime.

Promoting networking among journalists to share information and experience on organised crime and natural resource exploitation

Creating manuals to train new organisations.

Sharing with other organisations information on the performance of Police and access to public information.

Creating databases of trials with access to the archives.

Training journalists and organising meetings among journalists and CSOs

Promoting laws for the protection of the freedom of conscience of journalists.

Promoting non-for-profit journalism, seeking international funding for investigative journalism in Latin America, to deal with transnational organised crime

Creating protection mechanisms for journalists and Citizen Observatories.

Promoting the creation of “opinion tribunals” and “international delegate caravans.”

Creating alliances for national and international litigation.

MEMORY

Promoting the creation of a genetic data bank and records with victims’ data.

Influencing the creation of full reparation laws

Teaching the “Never Again” philosophy.

Carrying out action to rescue and recover collective memory.

Creating a Remembrance Museum.