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## Colombia: Reports On Human Rights Situation

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According to a report released in April by the US-based Americas Watch, the human rights situation in Colombia shows no improvement despite political reforms introduced by the government of President Cesar Gaviria. The report is titled "Political Assassinations and Reforms in Colombia: Violence Continues." The report states that the number of assassinations, massacres, disappearances, and deaths in combat remains high, with 3,750 deaths attributed to political violence in 1991. Americas Watch said Colombia has the highest rate of political executions in Latin America, with the "possible exception of Peru." Americas Watch attributes responsibility for the violence to "government forces, paramilitary groups and guerrilla organizations...There is no doubt that government forces are directly responsible for many of these killings or else indirectly responsible for providing assistance to the killers." Americas Watch praised the Gaviria administration's "political liberalization" which included direct elections for the constituent assembly, direct government negotiations with the rebels and measures to promote respect for human rights. However, the report indicates that such measures have not been sufficient to reduce the high level of violence. In addition, Americas Watch criticized the new constitution for giving the military jurisdiction over criminal prosecution of military personnel. A report issued in early June by the Organization of American States' Inter-American Human Rights Commission (CIDH) noted "positive developments" on the human rights scene. However, the CIDH expressed "special concern" over the assassination of socially marginalized persons by so-called "clean-up squads," and continuing political violence perpetrated by guerrillas, paramilitary and drug trafficking organizations, and government security forces. The CIDH report called on the government to eliminate military impunity and paramilitary organizations. The Commission praised the creation under the new constitution of the Constitutional Court, Colegio Superior de la Judicatura, Defensoria del Pueblo, and the Fiscalia General de la Nacion. (Sources: Inter Press Service, 04/27/92; Agence France-Presse, 06/03/92)

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