

5.3. Office of the Ombudsperson (Defensoría del Pueblo)

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The Office of the Ombudsperson (Defensoría del Pueblo) was also established in the 1991 Constitution, and has a mandate to defend, promote, and protect human rights and liberties.849 It has four national-level offices (protection and promotion of human rights; resources and judicial actions; complaints reception and procedures; and public defender office); and 18 delegations that touch a broad spectrum of human rights issues in Colombia ranging from advice to victims of the armed conflict, ethnic groups, transitional justice, and freedom of expression, among others.850 According to the Conflict Analyst, under the leadership of the current Ombudsperson, Iris Marín, the Office of the Ombudsperson has been significantly revitalised—morale has improved, credibility in rural communities has strengthened, and the institution's voice has been effectively used to highlight key issues.851

In 2017, the Office of the Ombudsperson established the Early Warning System (*Sistema de Alertas Tempranas*, SAT) to warn the government on the potential or actual risk or actions of human rights violations committed against a segment of the population.1178F852 The UARIV reported in 2022 that, although alerts were being issued, there was a low level of compliance with the recommendations of the SAT by national and territorial entities.1180F853 Between 2020 and 2024, the Office of the Ombudsperson monitored and issued Early Warning 019 of 2023 (AT 019-23), which identified 706 municipalities at risk for the work of human rights defenders. It also issued Early Warning 007 of 2024 for the Amazon concerning risks posed to environmental leaders. Moreover, the Office of the Ombudsperson issued over 100 municipal-level early warnings, highlighting human rights defenders at particular risk.854

According to the Office of the Ombudsperson, persistent violence in Colombia against social leaders and human rights defenders, in particular, is due to limited state response, lack of coordination between national and local levels, and insufficient resources, which 'seriously hindered the effective protection of civilians.'855 The UNVMC reported in September 2025 that a new updated system was launched in September 2023 to support the prompt response to early warnings issued by the office, with the aim to improve operational response capacity.856

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  Colombia, Defensoría del Pueblo, Qué hacemos, n.d., url

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  France, OFPRA, Rapport de mission en République de Colombie, 28 November 2024, url, p. 19

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  Conflict analyst, Interview with EUAA, 14 October 2025

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  Colombia, Decreto 2124 de 2017, 2017, url, Art. 4

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  Colombia, Comisión de Seguimiento y Monitoreo a la Implementación de la Ley 1448 de 2011, “Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras”, Noveno informe de seguimiento al Congreso de la República 2021-2022, 22 August 2022, url, p. 104

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  Colombia, Defensoría del Pueblo, Los Contrastes de la Realidad Humanitaria, 2024, url, p. 74

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  Colombia, Defensoría del Pueblo, Los Contrastes de la Realidad Humanitaria, 2024, url, pp. 87-88

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  UNVMC, Report of the Secretary-General, 26 September 2025, url, para. 37

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