

# Testimonies of the victims of the armed conflict Catatumbo



The Cathedral in Tibú (Catatumbo)

## **Female Catechist, 23 years old** **Municipality of Convención**

In my opinion, the conflict has brought us massacres, displacements, violence, a lot of victimization and re victimization because although we are in the agreements we are still in the middle of the conflict. This creates a bit of uncertainty because there is talk of peace, but other armed groups live in the region and the sad reality is that we are still in the middle of the conflict.

As women in Catatumbo, we want that the agreements are implemented. The FARC and the Government have already sat down and talked. Now it is our opportunity and we must participate in these agreements. The Colombian government needs to comply because the FARC has all the disposition. We know that if the government fails to comply, the FARC will return to war and therefore as victims we do not want that. We want the agreements to be fulfilled to the letter.

The Diocese of Tibú has always accompanied us and empowered us as leaders, it has brought out the best in us. That should continue, they must continue to encourage participation and create new leaders that are outstanding and work for the region.

**Male Farmer, 65 years old**  
**Municipality of El Tarra**



Football championship for peace (La Gabarra, Catatumbo)

The conflict has brought Coca. In the 70's, when I arrived here, I only one saw that the farmers were harvesting banana, zapote yucca, all those sacks. Those truckloads of food arrived, so at that time there was no violence, there was peace because there was food. When the problem of coca arrived, people became excited, or the Americans got their hopes up that the coca would get them out of poverty, but on the contrary, they got them out of poverty and made them beggars, because many children were left without parents, many women were left widows so what it brought was violence.

The conflict has brought different kinds of disasters that have no name. There hasn't been government presence here. We have had the Diocese that has been with us. It has helped us with intermediaries with the government. For me the Diocese has been a blessing from God, That my God has looked at us with eyes of pity so that the violence ends. This what many of us have asked for, most of us are happy.

The Diocese cannot back down because when a Bishop or when the pope speaks the whole world stops and listens to them whether it's the government or world-wide, this is what had to be done

previously. I am very grateful and happy with the bishop that we have in Tibú, because he is participating a lot in these processes

### **Female Peasant, 50 years old**

#### **Village of La 40**

The conflict has brought a lot of violence, violence in deaths, disappearances, and financially also. Why do I say disappearances? Because my husband disappeared in 2006 and I am also a victim because they killed my son. He was killed in 2010, that is, I do not know how he died. We say that he was poisoned, but he was taken there to camp six and was poisoned there and died. This has brought a lot of pain for me and for many people and for all the victims.

With the Peace Agreement I want the violence to end and not repeat because we have been fighting since we were displaced, and now, hopefully, the agreements will settle the territory disputes.

The Diocese of Tibú should continue to give greater support to the victims. We have been supported a lot by the diocese, we are very grateful to them because they are the ones who have trained us and we are not afraid, we trust them to help us because they are the only ones who have approached us and we are very thankful to the diocese.

### **Female Community leader, 42 years old**

#### **Village of La Gabarra**



Community workshop organized by the Dioceses of Tibú (El Tarra, Catatumbo)

The conflict has brought many needs to people who have been victims, there are still victims in the municipality, many people have lost their families and everything they had, single mothers, people

without housing, without decent work. Some have recovered urbanizations some people have their land back their homes.

My biggest wish is that I hope there is peace in Colombia, because having peace one lives happily, and the other thing is that they take us into account as women, as single mothers and victims of the armed conflict and the needs that we have here in the town.

The Diocese of Tibú has been a helping hand for us victims, we have been taught leadership, we have learned a lot from them, I have much to thank them, it has been a helping hand in everything it has supported us as victims. I hope the Diocese of Tibú helps us to empower ourselves and that they have the empowerment to cope with us with the same projects and many things.

### **Female Community leader, 65 years old**

#### **Village of Caño Raya**



Catatumbo River

Well for me the conflict has brought us many difficulties because I was a very damaged woman by the conflict, it turns out that they killed my brother, they took on of my daughters and I had to leave as the story says leave everything I had, I was left as we say on the street, I took the most important stuff and left the rest. And what hurts me the most was the disappearance of my daughter and the death of my brother every day I cry, I remember my daughter, I remember my brother and that hurts my soul. Because he was the only brother I had to help me, he would help me out, he died, the paramilitaries killed him, and I was left alone responsible for my mother and now I am responsible for my sister and I live alone I have no husband, I live alone with the responsibility of my mother, my sister and my expenses. And it's a conflict that I do not want to ever repeat again.

For me the greatest desire I have with the peace signing is that the national government truly characterizes and recognizes the victims. We want the truth, that the government and the FARC give me an explanation of what happened to my daughter.

The Diocese should help us to understand the peace agreement. We do not understand what the peace process consists of, peace begins at home and from there, we have to keep working.

We have deleted the names of the victims.