

THE MINGA: A SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN SOUTHWESTERN COLOMBIA

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze why the minga, which can be translated as “collective work,” is and should be considered a social movement. To this end, it examines the context in which it arises, as well as its range of actions, discourse, and the communicative, organizational, and legal strategies that have been applied since its genesis. Furthermore, this study explores the influence of this indigenous and peasant protest model on Colombian and Latin American politics and the restructuring of regulations. The findings demonstrate that the economic, social, and political conditions underpinning the lives of indigenous peoples are the fundamental pillar of the emergence of the minga and that over time, new social demands focusing on the defense of life, territorial autonomy, and the rights of nature have been incorporated. Finally, they also reveal how its successes have impacted the movement’s expansion and social support, as well as the risks posed by this kind of leadership in Colombia and the broader region.

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo se analizará las razones del porqué es, y se debe considerar a La *Minga*, como un movimiento social. Para ello se examinará como surge, el contexto en el que nace, así como su repertorio, discurso y las estrategias comunicativas, organizativas y legales que han sido empleadas desde su aparición. Además, se estudiará la influencia de esta protesta indígena y campesina en la política y en la reestructuración de la normativa colombiana y latinoamericana; se determinará que las condiciones económicas, sociales y políticas en las que se desarrollan los pueblos indígenas son el pilar fundamental del nacimiento de La Minga, y cómo, con el paso del tiempo, se han incorporado nuevas demandas sociales que giran en torno a la defensa de la vida, de la autonomía territorial y de los derechos de la naturaleza. Finalmente, se observará una incidencia en la expansión y adhesión social por sus procesos exitosos, y los riesgos que representan los liderazgos de esta índole en Colombia y en el resto de la región.

KEYWORDS: *Minga*, social movement, indigenous guard, indigenous uprising.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Minga, movimiento social, guardia indígena, levantamiento indígena.

JEL CODE: N460, N56

RECEIVED: 28/07/2023

ACCEPTED: 26/12/2023

DOI: 10.26807/rfj.vi14.483

INTRODUCTION

The *minga*, a Quechua word that can be translated as “collective work,” represents a clear example of a collaborative action that, according to Mónica Espinosa Arango, an anthropology professor at the Universidad de los Andes, has become a “political tool of resistance” (Departamento de Antropología, 2019). It is through this tool that fundamental changes are sought to advance the enforceability of the human rights of indigenous peoples. Primarily, the demands include the rights to territory and physical and cultural survival, as well as ancestral rights and those of Mother Earth, although their enforceability does not necessarily occur within the legislative and jurisdictional domains, as the relationship between law, politics, and activism within social movements is complex and multidirectional (Gurier and Torres, 2014).

This article aims to explore the dynamics and interaction between the social movement known as the *minga* and the regulatory restructuring and political advocacy in Colombia, drawing upon what Gurier and Torres (2014) call “demosprudence.” This study’s analysis is based on two parameters: 1) the examination of why this process of protest and demands on civil society constitutes a social movement, particularly with leadership from the Nasa, Pijao, and Yanacona ethnic groups (Departamento de Antropología, 2019), who have been victims of systematic genocides, epistemicides, and violations of their cultural, collective, and territorial rights; and 2) the investigation of the reasons that led to its emergence, range of actions, and discourse; its organizational structure and successes; and whether these experiences have qualitatively influenced Colombian democracy and the political and regulatory spheres.

This approach not only allows the trajectory and significance of a rural movement such as the *minga* to be observed in the Colombian context, but it also highlights its potential influence on other social, Afro-descendant, peasant, and even urban mobilization processes. In this way, it evolves into a “national minga for life, territory, democracy, justice and peace” (Profesores del Departamento de Antropología, 2019) and, more broadly, impacts social mobilization throughout Latin America.

1. The *minga* as a social movement

In terms of etymology, the word “*minga*” has had many meanings. Traditionally, it has been used to describe an ancestral practice not only in Colombia but in the entire Andean region. This practice involves collective work for a common purpose that promotes the well-being of the community. It has typically been applied to planting, making roads, clearing land, and building health centers and schools, among other activities (Departamento de Antropología, 2019). However, the term is conceived as “collective work done for community benefit,” as well as “a pre-Columbian tradition of community or voluntary collective work for social utility or reciprocity that is currently practiced in several Latin American countries” (Sánchez, 2021). The *minga* is a celebration, an opportunity for sharing, exchanging, and strengthening community ties. However, the indigenous people of Cauca have given it another meaning—“the minga of resistance”—which has transformed its use into one of political and social mobilization, born from the rejection of oppression and violence (Rozental, 2009) due to the absence of “opportunities for democratic discussion and participation” (Departamento de Antropología, 2019). According to Alhena Caicedo, an anthropology professor at the Universidad de los Andes and former president of the Colombian Association of Anthropology, “The minga has become a way for the indigenous peoples of Colombia to be heard” (Departamento de Antropología, 2019). The *minga* has been the mechanism through which the indigenous peoples of Cauca have exercised their sociopolitical enforceability in response to the Colombian state’s failure to fulfill agreements and how they have spoken out against the humanitarian crisis in their territories that has claimed the lives of their social leaders.

Additionally, through *mingas*, indigenous and other social groups that have joined this social enforceability process have brought to light how these breaches stem from “the prioritization of a development model focused on large extractive and agro-industrial enterprises that brush local communities aside and increase social inequality, especially in rural areas” (Departamento de Antropología, 2019).

In this regard, the *minga* has become a social movement encompassing various elements described by McCann (2006), including the purpose of

achieving true social transformation and the aspiration for a different and improved society. Likewise, *mingas* have employed a wide variety of disruptive symbolic tactics, such as protests and marches, to stop exclusionary social practices and communicate demands to be heard. Thus, it is indeed a social movement, as it involves coordinated actions systematically carried out and many sectors of the population, to the extent that it has become an indigenous, social, and peasant uprising, “a scenario that, without a doubt, has broadly and pluralistically included working class, Afro-descendant and peasant sectors, in addition to students and environmentalists in different departments of the country” (Departamento de Antropología, 2019).

One important, specific aspect of social movements is the convening groups’ ability to organize themselves, coordinate their actions, and sustain long-lasting relationships while pursuing their objectives; in addition, leveraging cultural symbols and social networks often leads to significant results. However, not all collective actions are worthy of being called movements, despite the diversity of social and political mobilization; to be labeled as such requires the ability to maintain collective action in the face of challenges from powerful opponents (Tarrow, 2012).

When referring to frameworks for collective action and groups that fight against “powerful opponents,” we reaffirm the *minga* as a social movement that has had to confront multiple armed actors, including the Colombian government itself within the framework of enforceability demands. This type of struggle has led to the creation of a nonviolent political action arm called the “Indigenous Guard,” which is conceived by communities as an ancestral body and mechanism of resistance that allows them to defend their territorial autonomy. This Indigenous Guard, which initially operated in Cauca, has spread to other departments, including Nariño, Tolima, and Bogotá, as a way of resisting generalized violence (Torres, 2020). At present, pluralistic, cimarrona (which refers to the descendants of enslaved Africans who escaped to form free settlements) (in Chocó and other departments with a high Afro-descendant populations), and farmworker guards are emerging in places besides Cauca.

The *minga* has become a stronger social movement because it encompasses more than just one coordinated collective action—it serves as a mechanism that preserves the historical memory of ancestral peoples

and the continual renewal of participants' intersubjective bonds. Further, it constitutes a social movement because of its openness to other sectors of Colombian society that have experienced the same historical violations of rights as indigenous peoples and a lack of representation and effective participation. In this regard, farmworkers, laborers, trade unionists, students, and many other groups have been part of the movement; from the outset, it has had a clearly political character and has had two main goals. On the one hand, it has aimed to reclaim lessons learned from the peasant movement in the struggle for land, and, on the other, it has attempted to harness the legal framework that has enabled their influence with the state, with their interlocutors being nonindigenous for the most part (Laurent, 2010).

2. Appearance, actions, and discourse of the *minga*

In early 1971, the indigenous peoples and nationalities of the Republic of Colombia began to assert their identity and organize via new regional and national structures. This process began with the convening of 14 councils and autonomous territories, which would culminate in the establishment of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC in Spanish) (2022). This organization called for the unity of indigenous peoples throughout Colombia, which led to the founding of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC in Spanish) (2022) in that same year. Through ONIC, the demands of historically marginalized peoples began to gain strength. This organization sought to reclaim the people's right to the land and ancestral territories from which they had been dispossessed during the rapid, unchecked agricultural expansion. Since the 1991 Constitution, indigenous communities in Colombia have been recognized as ancestral peoples. The incorporation of the special indigenous jurisdiction into Colombian law effectively acknowledged equality in diversity and included the indigenous normative system and jurisdiction into the national legal framework, recognizing ethnic diversity as a form of legal pluralism (Mora and Correa, 2020).

Despite this normative recognition, the social, economic, and political conditions in which the lives of indigenous peoples were unfolding did not undergo the necessary transformation and remained critical. For example, the impact the armed conflict has had on them has been disproportionate,

to the point that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and human rights organizations have stated that:

many indigenous groups are in imminent danger of extinction, and the greatest threat comes from government soldiers and army-backed paramilitaries who threaten, intimidate, and accuse them of complicity with insurgents, displacing them from their lands. Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable to the effects of displacement, as their culture is highly dependent on the land. (Wirpsa et al., 2014)

Given that the multi-ethnic and egalitarian demands enshrined in the constitution did not achieve the social impact expected by indigenous organizations, they mobilized, organized, and protested in 2008, blocking key roads, especially in the south of the country. Thus, given the characteristics of this protest/uprising and all that has been previously explained, the *minga* emerges as a social movement that has played a crucial role in resistance, mobilization, and the demand for rights, with an impact throughout Colombia.

As a collective phenomenon, the *minga* has advocated for democratic transformations aimed at ensuring the full and effective enjoyment of the rights promulgated in the 1991 Constitution. Throughout its history of social mobilization, the *minga* has experienced several pivotal moments.

The indigenous and peasant movement in the southern region of the country has carried out over 50 mingas over the last two decades. Although the claim of ancestral communities is long-standing, only since 1999, during the government of Andrés Pastrana, did the state formalize its commitments, such as Decree 982 of that same year, which established public policies for the benefit of these communities. (Bolaños, 2019)

Throughout their involvement in social protests, *minga* participants, with their staffs of authority hoisted on their shoulders and a cumbia anthem proclaiming, “We defend our rights, even if we have to die,” have faced successive governments, demanding the fulfillment of their social demands and collective rights (BBC News Mundo, 2020). Seen in this way, the *minga* becomes a means to demand structural changes in response to indigenous peoples’ needs, serving as an instrument of pressure on the state to obtain responses to their problems and challenges. Clearly, because of its historical

connotations, the *minga* represents the unity of peoples, but in this case, it unites for protest, resistance, and the struggle for rights.

New social demands have arisen year after year, which is why the rationale for mobilization via the *minga* has diversified. These include: respect for the lives of their leaders; enforceability of guarantees for the defense of rights; stopping the dismantling of the right to make decisions related to their future through prior consultation (El Heraldo, 2022); cessation of the structural and systematic violence imposed on communities by the state and paramilitary groups; termination of judicial persecution and stigmatization in the media; ceasing the criminalization of peaceful social protest; ending the armed conflict; compliance with the Peace Agreements; immediate cessation of mineral exploitation, oil extraction, and megaprojects on ancestral lands that physically and spiritually contaminate the communities; and, finally, the protection of water, land, and natural resources. The demands of 2008, in essence, urged the Colombian state to sign the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, while in 2020, movement participants went on to demand the implementation of the Peace Agreements. The core reasons behind the *minga* since its inception largely remain the same today (Mantilla, 2020). However, these have been supplemented by contemporary issues that have come to play a pivotal role in shaping its political agenda and social mobilization.

There have been attempts to delegitimize the *minga* in the eyes of the public as a violent act that terrorizes citizens (CRIC, 2022), despite the knowledge that the guardians of the territory mobilize peacefully with their symbolic staff as their sole means of defense. Nevertheless, the *minga* has played a fundamental role in supporting peaceful citizen mobilizations in Colombia. The best example of this occurred during the National Strike of 2021, during which the *minga* provided support to the so-called “First Line,” a spontaneous youth resistance organized to protect social protesters in Cali, Bogotá, and other large cities in Colombia. Over time, this movement has gained strength, becoming an example for Latin America for similar groups, and has engaged in dialogue with organizations like the CONAIE, FENOCIN, and FEINE from Ecuador, converging as a common struggle for the vindication of the collective rights of indigenous peoples.

The discourse of the *minga*, in short, includes the enforceability of the

right to land and territory; respect for life; social protest as a participatory and legitimate exercise of peaceful advocacy; and the assurance they can exercise indigenous forms of organization and territorial leadership, in addition to their identity as guardians of the territories. The empathy generated for its causes underscores the *minga*'s tireless defense of life, fight for territorial autonomy, and self-government that protects the exercise of indigenous thought and worldview. This pursuit promotes the full development of their lives, spirituality, and respect for their territory, as well as effective democratic and inclusive participation. Thus, the *minga* is one of the most recognized social manifestations advocating for democratic rights and is entrenched within the culture of indigenous and social resistance in Colombia. The recovery of ancestral imagery through the *minga* facilitates the Pedagogy of Resilience for Peace (Mora and Correa, 2020), which ultimately results in the enforceability of an enduring, inclusive, indigenous, and territorial tranquility.

3. *Minga* communication, organizational, and legal strategies

In terms of communication strategies, given that the *minga* is a social movement led by indigenous peoples, one of its primary actions for raising awareness has been the adoption of the Anthem of the Indigenous Guard (Parranderos del Cauca, cuatro más tres, 2020) as the emblem of its advocacy efforts. This anthem rallies for social protest and has been widely disseminated during mobilizations. It has helped portray guard members as peaceful protectors of protests during times when social mobilization has faced widespread delegitimization, especially from the media and public opinion, which has led to serious police violence.

Although the *minga* has no website, relevant information is shared through the official websites of its member organizations, including the CRIC (2021). In this regard, part of the communication strategy of this social movement, as well as the determination of its target audience for protests, lies in the positioning of the CRIC and its network of allied organizations at both local and national levels. For example, on April 30, 2021, a communication stated, "Once again, the strength of the national indigenous movement has united to convey its disagreement with the government regarding its policies of physical and cultural extermination. *The indigenous communities of Cauca are*

invited to join the great National Minga to reject the national government's policies of death" (CRIC, 2021). In a world where technological globalization, digitalization, and the immediacy of communications, along with the effective use of social media strategy, enable the growth of associations and social movements, CRIC serving as a *minga* ally is significant; it has 258,872 total followers across its four social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube). However, the use of traditional media outlets through CRIC has provided the social movement with communication channels such as the Virtual Radio of the Peoples, whose content is retransmitted through subsidiary indigenous broadcasters of the Association for Indigenous Media in Colombia (CRIC, 2021).

Furthermore, in complicated circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the *minga*'s organizational capacity has allowed it to establish the so-called "*minga hacia adentro*" or "internal *minga*" as a strategy of community well-being and survival. Likewise, during this time, aligned with its struggle for territorial governance that incorporates the pursuit of food sovereignty, the *minga*'s organization facilitated the delivery of food baskets to the poorest urban communities in Popayán. Thus, "[o]n May 20, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) took to the streets of the Cauca capital to deliver 5,000 food packages to various marginalized sectors affected by food shortages during the quarantine," (Kaosenlared, 2020), fostering alliances, empathy, and reciprocity within the urban area.

Additionally, when *mingas* have been part of uprisings or protests, their organizational strategies have included various elements, the first of which is physical and logistical mobilization facilitated by their own vehicles and traditional *chivas* for transporting members and allies. Participants are also fed through communal kitchens: "During *mingas*, singing, weaving, and other activities rooted in the traditions, culture, and collective memory of the peoples take place, which also include the participation of elders and children" (Departamento de Antropología, 2019). During *mingas*, their usual activities are paused, which requires a considerable organizational and cooperative effort to avoid negatively impacting *minga* participants' livelihoods after returning to their territories. The second element is security, in which the Indigenous Guard plays a fundamental role in safeguarding the rights of humans and nature, as well as indigenous territory, culture,

and autonomy (Comisión de la Verdad, 2020). The guard protects *minga* participants and shields the process from unwanted infiltrators who incite violence and delegitimize the mobilization.

As previously mentioned, the *minga* process involves a profound respect for the land and territory, manifested throughout the march in deeply sacred rituals; the land, regarded as an intrinsic component of nature, assumes transcendental significance in their collective journey. Accordingly, one of the most significant *mingas* has been that focusing on the liberation of Mother Earth, representing the struggle for respect for nature and ancestral territory (CRIC, 2021). *Minga* organizers also provide logistic support for lodging for participants. Strategies and alliances have been established with different associations, organizations, and student groups for safe accommodations in university facilities, as has occurred on various occasions with the National University (Pérez, 2020) and the Public University of Cundinamarca-Fusagasuga campus (Espinoza, 2008). This illustrates the formation of networks with student sectors that are aligned with the *minga*'s social demands.

Finally, *minga*-related legal strategies are largely focused on legislative work by *minga* political representatives within the Congress of the Republic; following the 1991 Constitution (Political Constitution of Colombia, 1992), two indigenous seats were created in the Senate and one in the House of Representatives. These positions have been occupied by several *minga* participants who, at various times, have represented and voiced the movement's struggles in the legislative branch.

In summary, as previously outlined, the *minga* maintains a direct connection with indigenous communities. Hence, it is relevant to highlight a specific legal case brought before the Constitutional Court of Colombia alleging the violation of indigenous rights. The aforementioned case, T-462A/14, also known as the Salvajina case, alleged that the rights to life, personal integrity, and due process of the communities of the Honduras and Cerro Tijeras Resguardos were violated. The Court ruled, among other orders, that the Empresa de Energía del Pacífico S.A. "complete within six (6) months [...] the prior consultation process for the Environmental Management Plan already in progress and guarantee opportunities for consultation and participation to the indigenous communities" (Caso

Resguardos Honduras y Cerro Tijeras, 2014). However, although this ruling was given in 2014, as of 2021, the Court-issued directives had not been fully complied with; thus, on September 17, 2021, CRIC issued the following statement:

After decades of complaints and half-hearted dialogue, the reparation measures have been ineffective. Consequently, the communities in this area determined the necessity to declare a permanent assembly, seeking a sincere discussion with Celsia, the new operating company of the Salvajina dam, which took place with the participation of international organizations and the Office of the Attorney General. (CRIC, 2021)

Similarly, in the context of the armed conflict faced by the Nasa People (who are CRIC members), specifically the communities organized in the Toribio, San Francisco, Tacueyo, and Jambalo Resguardos, in 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR, 2011) granted precautionary measures in their favor due to the homicides, forced disappearances, and other acts of violence committed against this group. Thus, the IACHR requested that the Colombian state:

take the necessary steps to safeguard the lives and physical integrity of the members of the Nasa People from the Toribio, San Francisco, Tacueyo, and Jambalo Resguardos, to coordinate the measures to be adopted with the beneficiaries and their representatives, and to report back regarding the actions taken to investigate the events that led to the adoption of these measures.

It should be noted that, as a *minga* strategy for the restitution of ancestral territories through de facto means, the process to liberate Mother Earth is consistently involved in legal disputes over land ownership with sugarcane industry landowners. In this regard, land invasion is a mechanism employed by *mingas* that walks the line between legality, illegality, and legitimacy: “The Nasa People from Norte del Cauca resist the dispossession and displacement to which they have been subjected through the liberation of Mother Earth, a political process involving the occupation of plantations” (Vargas and Ariza, 2019).

4. Interactions with other actors outside the movement

The *minga* has followed a robust agenda of direct pressure on the national government, forcing engagement with the state and demanding public hearings through de facto actions such as roadblocks, marches toward the capital, and plantation occupations. In 2008, during dialogues with Álvaro Uribe's government, *minga* participants demanded UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples James Anaya observe the discussions (El Espectador, 2008). Tensions continued with Juan Manuel Santos' administration, who refused to negotiate with the "agrarian *minga*" in 2016 (TeleSur TV, 2016)—this was highly contradictory to the peace negotiations with the FARC occurring at the same time. Later in 2017, they agreed to a dialogue, at which time CRIC highlighted breaches of agreements regarding land, education, and autonomy for indigenous communities in Cauca (El País, 2017). The government's strategy of refusing an audience with *minga* representatives persisted until Iván Duque's administration, who chose "to ignore the matter, perhaps with the futile hope that the massacre of its leaders by armed groups would break the movement's will" (García, 2020).

This constituted a moment of exacerbated delegitimization of state actions, particularly due to the police violence against social protest; it was simultaneously unprecedented in terms of the *minga*'s national visibility, with recognition of its leadership within the context of the 2021 National Strike. Since 2019, this mobilization has demonstrated greater persistence compared to the nine previous *mingas* developed over the last two decades (Semana, 2019). Relations with the current national government appear to be more fluid, given its broad social support and agenda that is beginning to be jointly constructed. "Territory, peace, and guarantees are the topics on the agenda of the political commission of the Popular, Social, and Community Minga of southwestern Colombian," bringing together farmworkers, Afro-Colombians, labor unions, indigenous peoples, and urban communities from Valle del Cauca, Nariño, and Cauca (CRIC, 2022). However, the reservations held by *minga* participants, and indigenous processes in general, toward state actions remain, and trust must be built through the fulfillment of demands and the rectification of systematic violations of community rights.

Furthermore, the indigenous *minga* has spurred the mobilization of a southwestern-based *minga* involving indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and farmworker communities and organizations in southwestern Colombia, as well as a national *minga*, particularly during the social protests between 2019 (ONIC, 2019) and 2021 (CRIC, 2021). This interrelation between social movements has led to the emergence of cimarronas and peasant guards, drawing from the experience of the Indigenous Guard, who join forces to support social protest (Caicedo et al., 2022). In addition, the *minga*'s legitimacy has extended to other social sectors, such as academia, with proclaimed support from various public and private universities, including from those around Latin American (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales [CLACSO], 2019; Profesores Departamento de Antropología, 2019), and from human rights platforms (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas [CCJ], 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis has discussed the strongest aspects of the *minga*, portraying it as a legitimizing, protective, and propelling force behind the growing social protests in Colombia in recent years. However, this role was gradually constructed through the historical mobilization processes of the 1970s, starting with the assertion of the right to ancestral territory and the liberation of Mother Earth; it then progressed to the demand for the effective exercise of collective ethnic rights proclaimed in the 1991 Constitution, championing respect for life, territory, and nature, within a context of escalating armed conflict. More recently, it has evolved into advocating for the fulfillment of the Peace Agreements signed between the state and the FARC-EP guerrillas.

The *minga* has been relevant not only to the indigenous peoples of Cauca but also to ethnic groups in southwestern Colombia and to Colombian social mobilization in general. It is perceived as legitimate and closely aligned with the feelings and needs of various social sectors, sowing empathy from *minga* participants outward. The National, Social, and Popular Minga of 2021 crystallized this leadership, reaching the cities with the most mobilization and those most emblematic within the framework of the National Strike, such as Cali and Bogotá. Its communication strategies, networks, and alliances have strengthened its impact, and it may have even influenced the

2022 presidential election, which marked the first time in Colombia's 200-year history that a left-wing political movement ascended to power. Further, the strategy to liberate Mother Earth has placed the reclamation of ancestral territories and the necessity of addressing the armed conflict's structural causes—namely, the inequitable distribution of land—front and center on the political agenda. For example, one of the current priorities of Gustavo Petro's administration has been comprehensive rural reform, the first point of the Peace Agreement.

In terms of replicability, for example, the *minga*, particularly the Movement for the Liberation of Mother Earth, can serve as a catalyst for demanding land and territory rights across Latin America and the Caribbean. There are precedents, such as the International Meeting of Mother Earth Liberators in northern Cauca, wherein Latin American indigenous leaders participated (CENSAT, 2017). On the other hand, the success the social movement has had with its self-protection strategy through the Indigenous Guard, which has already been replicated as *cimarrona* (Afro-Colombian) and peasant guards, has the potential to be applied in other contexts in the region. For instance, in Ecuador, indigenous communities have taken inspiration from Colombia to resist pressure from extractive processes, among other challenges faced by indigenous peoples and nationalities (Alvarado, 2022). Indigenous guards have enabled the reclamation of collective rights, which include self-governance and self-determination, as expressed in the demand for compliance with prior consultation.

The most prominent threats to the *minga* stem from persistent security risks and the lack of guarantees and protection for social leaders in Colombia, which are exacerbated by conflicts among various armed, legal, and illegal actors. Overcoming these challenges requires the current national government to have a strong political commitment. One of its major policies has been the pursuit of Total Peace, which includes negotiation processes with the illegal armed actors proliferating in the territories, perpetrating violence against communities and their leaders. The challenges of restoring ancestral territories under agrarian reform persist, owing to historical disputes with landowners, complicating their resolution. Likewise, improving the conditions of the ethnic population, and that of the most vulnerable groups in general, also poses a challenge

for the current government. Initial hurdles included fiscal constraints and legislative support for structural reforms, alongside ongoing social mobilization in the process of redefining its role in demanding change and confronting a government seemingly open to social dialogue.

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