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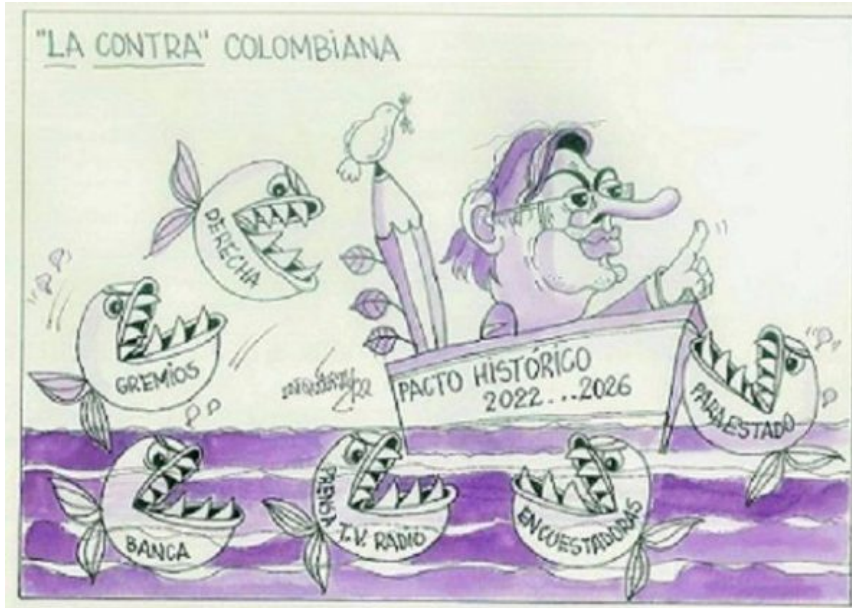
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Colombia / Coup d'état: from tanks to togas

Only an informed and mobilized citizenry can stop the reorganization of the right-wing coup plotters who intend to interrupt or at least hinder progressive popular mandates from the spaces they occupy in prosecutors' offices and courts. Colombia deserves the opportunity to build a future different from the oligarchic and paramilitary horror it has suffered for decades, but this change will only be possible as long as society speaks out firmly in favor of democracy, the rule of law and the inalienable sovereignty of the people.



The Colombian people await with great expectations the end of the term of the questioned Francisco Barbosa at the head of the Attorney General's Office as an unprecedented opportunity to have a democratic prosecutorial body, attached to the laws and human

rights, and not to their group interests and their ideological phobias and phobias. However, the historic moment that was supposed to arrive on Monday the 12th was thwarted by the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ), where the majority of its members refused to elect, as mandated by law, one of the candidates proposed by President Gustavo Petro and postponed the election indefinitely, leaving Deputy Prosecutor Martha Mancera as interim in office. as discredited and biased as the outgoing Barbosa.

The case is especially regrettable because of the proven abilities and the ideal profile of the three jurists proposed by the president, Luz Adriana Camargo Garzón, Ángela María Buitrago Ruiz and Amelia Pérez Parra. In his shortlist, Petro broke with the oligarchic political class's tradition of including former ministers, personal friends, and covering political quotas. On the other hand, those mentioned are women who have fought against corruption, parapolitics (the symbiosis between the institutional ultra-right and the counterinsurgency death squads financed by businessmen and landowners, long tolerated and even protected by the State) and other scourges of the Andean country, in addition to being tireless defenders of human rights who have obtained international recognition for their work.



In a cynical way, the magistrates who paralyze democracy say they are victims of illegal pressure and even "kidnapping" by the demonstrators who went to the headquarters of the

Judiciary on February 8 to demand that they fulfill their duty. The President of that body described as unacceptable that judges are besieged, whose independence, autonomy and impartiality should be encouraged and promoted both by society and by the public powers of the State, perhaps without realizing that citizens were rightly promoting the independence, autonomy and impartiality that he and his colleagues had lost.

This clash between the Executive and society, on the one hand, and the apparatus for the prosecution and administration of justice, on the other, reflects the entrenchment of the Colombian far-right in public ministries and courts after losing the Presidency in the 2022 elections. As has happened over the past decade in Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, and other Latin American nations, prosecutors and judges have become organizers or facilitators of *so-called "soft" coups* because tanks and military bayonets are replaced by unsubstantiated inquiries, procedural abuses, and prevarication.



In Bogota, as in other Colombian cities, large mobilizations were held on February 8 to demand that the Supreme Court of Justice elect the Attorney General of the Nation without further delay.

In Colombia, prosecutors and robes have undertaken an arbitrary and relentless persecution against the entourage of the first leftist president in the country's history; showing much more interest in the political coup than in resolving the open calls to depose him or the threats against the lives of Petro and Vice President Francia Márquez. In Mexico, despite the strength of the federal government thanks to broad popular support, there has been no shortage of coup attempts: just last August 23, the minister of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN) Luis María Aguilar Morales presented to his peers a bill that proposed to remove President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for an

administrative matter. The motion was so patently disproportionate and undemocratic that Aguilar Morales had to withdraw it immediately, but it laid bare the existence of coup plots within the highest court.

Only an informed and mobilized citizenry can stop the reorganization of the right-wing coup plotters who intend to interrupt or at least hinder progressive popular mandates from the spaces they occupy in prosecutors' offices and courts. Colombia deserves the opportunity to build a future different from the oligarchic and paramilitary horror it has suffered for decades, but this change will only be possible as long as society speaks out firmly in favor of democracy, the rule of law and the inalienable sovereignty of the people.

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Edited by [Maria Piedad Ossaba](#)

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