

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

25<sup>th</sup> June 2021

*Dear Anthony,*

**RE: EDM 4 – COLOMBIA.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Colombia and associated Early Day Motion (EDM) 4. I am sorry to learn of the recent events you describe, and I thank you for bringing them to my attention. My thoughts are with all those affected.

I share your concerns and I know that Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ministers do too. Indeed, it is for such reasons including, but not exclusive to, those to which you refer, as to why Colombia remains one of thirty human rights priority countries for the UK.

Befitting its priority status, and as a UN penholder, I know that ministers and officials regularly raise human rights concerns directly with the Colombian Government and via the relevant multilateral fora, including in relation to the right to peaceful protest. The UK's Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, for instance, raised concerns on a virtual visit to Colombia in February.

The UK is forthright in supporting the right to peaceful protest everywhere, including in Colombia. I join the Minister for the Americas, Wendy Morton MP, in calling for an end to the violence and for all instances of excessive force used against protestors to be thoroughly investigated by the authorities, and for appropriate action to be taken against those responsible.

I note your concern for the training provided by the UK to the Colombian police force. I understand that fewer than ten UK personnel are engaged in such roles, and that the programme aims to contribute to the modernisation of the police service by improving police practices with a preventive approach, focusing on building links and trust within communities to help prevent violence; putting human rights first when managing social tensions and preventing violence; and developing strategies for approaching and preventing gender-based violence.

In light of the above, I do not feel it necessary to sign EDM 4, but in any event, as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs and I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system. I therefore think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs. With that in mind, I have relayed your concerns to my ministerial colleagues.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

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