

via fax: 011 57 1 565 7682 Dr. Francisco Santos Vice-President of Colombia	via email: reygon@procuraduria.gov.co Dr. Edgardo Jose Maya Villazon Chief Federal Prosecutor, Colombia
via email: siden@mindefensa.gov.co Dr. Manuel Santos Minister of Defense, Colombia	

September 11, 2006

We are saddened and outraged at the recent **massacres of indigenous people in Colombia**, who have been displaced, disappeared and murdered in various parts of your country. On Aug. 2 in the Serrania de Perija region of La Guajira Department, indigenous Wiwa campesino **Roman Vega Nieves** disappeared after leaving his home in the Loma del Potrero community to go work on a nearby farm. Witnesses saw armed men with military uniforms take him. On Aug. 4 his wife identified her husband in photos as the man whom the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) alleged on Aug. 3 had been killed in combat. In the municipality of Jagua del Pilar, at least nine Wiwa community members have been killed in similar circumstances since July 2004.

In another recent incident, a hired killer shot a Wayu indigenous street vendor, **Martin Edgardo Galvan Arpushana**, in Riohacha, capital of La Guajira. The killer fled on a waiting motorcycle.

On Aug. 4, in Florida municipality, Valle del Cauca Department, a group of hooded armed men forced 64-year-old **Rosa Tulia Poscue Ortiz** from her vehicle in the Triunfo Cristal Paez indigenous reservation. Hours later she was found stabbed to death. On Aug. 6, an unidentified armed group stopped and killed 67-year-old campesino **Jose Olmedo Pillimue** as he was driving a bus from Villa Pinzon, on the same reservation, toward Florida.

On Aug. 9, a group of several masked persons dressed in camouflage went from house to house and selected five Awa indigenous victims from a list. The victims were among the 1,350 Awa who took refuge in the towns of Altaquer and Ricaurte in Nariño Department (where the National Police and Colombian Army have permanent posts) when they were displaced from their lands in the Chagui Chambuzza reservation. The five victims are: **Jesus Moran, Jairo Ortiz, Adelaida Ortiz, Marlene Paí, and Mauricio Urbano.**

Furthermore, **17 indigenous children** have died from hunger and tuberculosis in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region of northern Colombia where a blockade by paramilitary groups does not allow food or medicines to enter the region.

Because of our concern for the safety of the indigenous citizens of Colombia, we strongly urge you to:

- Conduct a full and impartial investigation into the murders described above, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Take immediate and effective action to protect the life and integrity of all indigenous peoples of Colombia and to protect their territorial autonomy as guaranteed by the 1991 Constitution.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Andres Pastrana, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax 1 202 232 8643
 William B Wood US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax 011-571-315-2197
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax 1-202-647-2628
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: 202-458-3992/6215
 US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
 US Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: