

via fax: 011 57 1 566 20 71 <b>President Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> Presidente de la Republica de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 222 18 74 <b>Dr. Jorge Alberto Uribe</b> Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional, Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 342 97 93 <b>Dr. Edgardo José Maya Villazón</b> Procuraduría General de la Nación, Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Mario German Iguaran</b> Fiscalía General de la Nación, Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 337 46 67 <b>Dr. Carlos Franco</b> Presidential Program for Human Rights, Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 629 36 36 <b>Dra. Carmen Rosa Villa</b> High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia

June 14, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply troubled over the reported attacks on up to **50,000 peaceful protesters** and at least 4 deaths between May 14 and 19, especially in the departments of **Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo, and Meta**.

ONIC (National Indigenous Organization of Colombia) called together indigenous, Afro-Colombian and campesino organizations to protest Colombia's free trade agreement with the United States. Demonstrations were held in 14 of the country's 32 departments. At their national summit in La Maria Piendamó, Cauca, on May 15 they were scheduled to meet with government representatives. Instead, the Colombian government sent the Army and the anti-riot police (ESMAD) to attack people with rubber bullets, spray tear and pepper gas from helicopters, and beat demonstrators on the streets.

Although the total number of casualties is not known at this time, information we have received from trusted sources indicates that victims were treated for bullet wounds, that at least four people were killed, and that the police and troops in Cauca:

- raided a local indigenous radio station, destroying the equipment and arresting four journalists;
- attacked the health center, where children and pregnant women were receiving medical attention;
- destroyed the community store and merchandise on the shelves, and raided local homes, setting clothing and other personal belongings on fire.

As a result of our deep concern for the safety of the civilian populations we strongly urge you to:

- immediately remove army and police from indigenous lands and from La Maria Piendamó, Cauca;
- make sure that the police and military immediately release all community leaders whom they have taken into custody from these areas;
- reveal what steps you are taking to protect the civilian population in these areas and to ensure that their right of free expression and association, guaranteed by the Colombian Constitution, is upheld.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

CC: Andres Pastrana, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax  
 William B Wood US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax  
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax  
 Dr. Francisco Santos, Vice-President of Colombia ~ via fax  
 Dr. Michael Frulin, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax  
 Dra. Maria Carolina Barco Isakson, Minister of Foreign Affairs ~ via fax  
 US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email  
 US Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

2006/06/01-Cauca,Nariño-Colombia

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