

via fax: 011 57 1 565 7682 <b>Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon</b> Vice President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 562 7822 <b>Dr. Jaime Bermudez Merizalde</b> Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Mario German Iguaran Arana</b> Attorney General of Colombia	

May 24, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, continue to be extremely concerned for the welfare and safety of **Aida Quilcue**, leader of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC), whose husband, Edwin Legarda, was killed by Colombia soldiers in December 2008 (see our letter of January 22, 2009 ).

On May 11, her 12-year-old daughter was standing outside her house in the hamlet of Clarete, municipality of Popayan in the department of Cauca, when a car with four men wearing civilian clothes stopped in front of her. The man in the passenger seat pointed a gun at her; he put it away when the driver told him people were looking. Aida Quilcue's daughter ran into the house to tell members of the Indigenous Guard, a nonviolent group of volunteers organized to protect indigenous communities from armed actors. The car slowly moved off, stopped 30 meters away and then sped away.

We are glad to learn that seven soldiers, including two junior officers, were arrested in April by judicial police investigating the killing of Edwin Legarda. However, we are concerned for the safety of his widow, her family and other CRIC members. In response to the killing of Legarda, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States issued an order to the Colombian authorities on January 14 to provide protection to Aida Quilcue and 32 other members of the CRIC. Despite this protection, she, her family, and the other members of CRIC are still in danger.

Therefore **we strongly urge** that you:

- Immediately take effective action to protect Aida Quilcue, her daughter and other members of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC), in accordance with their wishes;
- order full and impartial investigations into the May 11 threat against the life of Aida Quilcue's 12-year-old daughter, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice
- continue the investigation into the killing of Edwin Legarda, making sure that it is thorough and independent, that it identifies all those responsible and brings them to justice;
- produce policy and plans, in conjunction with human rights defenders, to guarantee their safety according to the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and make these plans public..

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Consejo Regional Indigena del Cauca (CRIC) – via US mail  
 Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197  
 Nan N. Fife, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
 Javier Hernández Valencia, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571. 658-3300  
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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