

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890 Sr. Alvaro Uribe Velez President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 560 4630/599 8961 Sr. Fabio Valencia Cossio Minister of the Interior and Justice of Colombia
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September 22, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged about the massacre on August 26 of **12 Awá indigenous community members** of the Resguardo reservation of Gran Rosario, Tumaco Municipality, in the southwestern department of Nariño. According to our information, the perpetrators were unidentified gunmen wearing masks and military uniforms without insignia. Among those brutally killed while they slept are **four children** and **Tulia García**, wife of Gonzalo Rodríguez Guanga, who was killed on May 23, 2009. Since then she had denounced his killing as being carried out by the Colombian Army. She received a series of death threats about which she alerted the authorities.

Under Colombia law, the Awá are a protected people. However, since September 2008 over 50 members of the Awá community in Nariño have been killed by armed actors on all sides: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Colombian state security forces, and paramilitaries. According to the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), the FARC was responsible for another massacre this year, when 27 Awa people were killed in two separate attacks in February.

In January, the Constitutional Court of Colombia passed Auto 004, which order the Colombia government to create safeguard plans in coordination with indigenous peoples who run the risk of extinction. Since January, at least 77 indigenous people have been assassinated in Colombia, including 58 Awa people. The latest massacre shows that the Colombian government still is not taking sufficient measures to protect the Awa community in Nariño.

Because of our continued concern for the safety of all members of the Awá community in Nariño, **we strongly urge that you:**

- seriously and impartially investigate the events of August 26, in coordination with the indigenous authorities from the Awá people, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately take whatever decisive action, deemed appropriate by the Awa communities themselves, to guarantee their safety and protection.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: National Indigenous Organization (ONIC) ~ vis 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 ~ via email
 US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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