

via fax: 011 57 1 261 6287 Sr. Andrés Villamizar Director of the National Protection Unit	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 ext. 2023 Sr. Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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September 11, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Juan Pablo Gutiérrez**, a Colombian-French photographer and the international representative of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC).

On August 14, when Gutiérrez was near his home in the Colina Campestre neighborhood in Bogotá, an unknown individual gave him an envelope with no return address that contained a death threat targeting him, other members of ONIC and members of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC). The threat, signed by the Capital Bloc of the Black Eagles paramilitary organization, accused Gutiérrez of having ties to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and declared him a military target. It stated: “[W]e remind the snitch . . . Juan Pablo Gutiérrez and his ONIC and CRIC comrades manipulating the country’s indigenous peoples that Colombia must be respected! Those who dishonor the brave national state must be eliminated. It does not matter if the bastard ... is protected. In Colombia or elsewhere he has little time left.”

On August 18, he received the last of a series of text messages threatening him. On August 21 he received a phone call from unknown men telling him that he was under surveillance and that they knew his current location. On August 22 he received 17 phone calls from that same number.

Juan Pablo Gutiérrez has previously been at risk. On October 9, 2013 he escaped injury when two men on motorcycles intercepted the van he was driving and shot at him several times, hitting the vehicle. ONIC requested that the state’s National Protection Unit (UNP) grant urgent protection measures to him, but no measures have been implemented to date.

Because of our ongoing concern for the safety for Juan Pablo Gutiérrez and other members of ONIC and CRIC, we **strongly urge** that you

- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threat and continued harassment against Juan Pablo Gutiérrez and members of ONIC and CRIC, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately provide effective protection for them in accordance with their wishes;
- fulfill your obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) ~ via fax 011.571.284.3465
 Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600
 Eric Falls, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via US mail
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur for Indigenous Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email: cidhdenuncias@oas.org
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 210/14_Colombia

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