

via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000
Sr. Eduardo Montealegre
 Attorney General of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876
Sr. Juan Fernando Cristo
 Minister of Interior of Colombia

January 23, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are disturbed by the following reports of increased death threats and security incidents against defenders of Afro-Colombian territorial, labor, and civil rights:

January 4: **Francia Marquez** and **Lisifrey Ararat**, activists against illegal gold mining in the Afro-Colombian territories of Suarez, Buenos Aires, Guachane and Santander de Quilichao in Cauca Department were forced to flee their homes because of intimidation by illegal armed groups. National authorities have not complied with agreements made with these communities on December 11, 2014 after a group of Afro-Colombian women marched from La Toma to Bogotá to call attention to illegal mining operations in their lands.

January 5: two armed men shot **Jesús Enrique Andrade**, the driver for Arie Aragón, President of the Organizations of Unified Afro-Caucans (UOAFROC) in the municipality of Villa Rica in Cauca Department. Jesús Andrade was shot three times in the head and remains in serious condition. The paramilitary organization Los Rastrojos declared members of UOAFROC to be military targets because of their work defending Afro-Colombian land rights against illegal extraction of natural resources.

January 12: former Afro-Colombian Senator Piedad Cordoba, who recently participated in a delegation of victims to visit the peace negotiation table in Havana, Cuba, was sent a death threat in the form of a funeral bouquet. The threat appears to have come from the paramilitary group, The Black Eagles (*Águilas Negras*), who have been targeting supporters of the peace effort.

Luis Ernesto Olave Valencia has received public and private threats because of his legal work on a case involving two non-Afro-Colombians, with reported links to paramilitary-political networks, who are attempting to usurp Congressional seats designated for Afro-Colombians.

Because the perpetrators of the threats and violence described above continue to act with impunity, we **strongly urge** that you:

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attempted killing and threats described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
- comply with agreements made in December 2014 in Cauca Department;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax 1 202 232 8643
 Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax 011 571 275 4600
 Eric Falls, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept. ~ via fax 1 202 647 2628
 Jose de Jesus Orozco Henriquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, via fax 1 202 458 3650
 Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur for Afro-Descendant Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, via fax 1 202 458 6002
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline & WOLA_Colombia

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