

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of Colombia	via email: despachoministro@minagricultura.gov.co Aurelio Iragorri Valencia Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia
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March 2, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about the assassinations of four indigenous men and death threats in Cauca Department.

Since December 14, 2014 indigenous peoples in northern Cauca have been occupying land to demand full reparations, including access to land, as redress for several mass killings, including the El Nilo massacre in 1991. In August 2014 the Supreme Court of Justice in Colombia ordered that the investigation of a general and a major linked to the massacre, which had been archived by a military court in July 1999, should be reopened. In early February 2015 the general and the major handed themselves over to the police authorities. The Huellas Cabildo (Indigenous Council, which is the maximum political authority within their territories) issued a public statement on February 5 demanding justice and comprehensive reparation.

On February 5 the Black Eagles paramilitary group circulated a death threat in the municipalities of Caloto, Guachene, and Santander de Quilichao announcing that it was "time for social cleansing in northern Cauca." On February 6 sugarcane workers **Gerardo Velasco Escue** and **Emiliano Silva Oteca** of the Toéz Indigenous Resguardo (Reservation) in Caloto municipality were returning home from work when a witness saw them being stopped and taken by five unidentified armed men about 200 meters from an army checkpoint near the hamlet of La Selva, Caloto municipality. On February 8, the community found their bodies with signs of torture in Guanache.

Alfredo Campo Lectamo, the governor of the Toéz Resguardo, and other indigenous leaders have received further threats after speaking out against the killings.

On February 13 the bodies of **Arturo Andrés Galindo Bastos** and **Carlos Algeiro Mera Pino**, both Nasa indigenous peoples, were found in the Cerro Tijeras Resguardo, Suarez municipality in Cauca Department. Next to their bodies was a sign which read "For being snitches."

We **strongly urge** that you

- order a full and impartial investigation into the enforced disappearance and killings of Gerardo Velasco Escue and Emiliano Silva Oteca, as well as the killings of Arturo Andrés Galindo Bastos and Carlos Algeiro Mera Pino, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee the safety of Alfredo Campo Lectamo, and other indigenous leaders in northern Cauca Department, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats against indigenous peoples in northern Cauca Department;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated commitments of your government and UN recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

coipes: ACIN: Association of Indigenous Cabildos in Northern Cauca ~ via US mail
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 fax: 202.647.2628
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 43/15_Colombia

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