

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876 Estimado Sr. Ministro Juan Fernando Cristo Minister of Interior of Colombia
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May 3, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the deaths of three indigenous Nasa residents and the possible forced disappearance of two other Nasa residents in the community of Cerro Tijeras, Suárez Municipality in Cauca Department.

The Nasa communities have been resisting the arrival of international mining and other economic interests on their lands. Paramilitaries have made repeated death threats in recent years and months. On April 15, a paramilitary group calling itself Colombia sin Guerrilla, sent a death threat via SMS text message which declared a number of people to be military targets, including those participating in land protests.

On April 15, unidentified gunmen forced themselves into a home in the Agua Bonita area, jurisdiction of Robles, of the Cerro Tijeras Nasa Indigenous Reservation (Cerro Tijeras Resguardo), abducted **Mario German Valencia Vallejo, Belisario Trochez Ordóñez, and Cristián David Trochez** and forced them into a truck. Their bodies were found later the same day in the Guadalito area of the same Nasa Reservation. All had been shot in the head.

The whereabouts of **Berney Trochez** and **Wilson Trochez** have been unknown since April 14 when they were last seen in the Agua Bonita area. We are concerned that they have been forcibly disappeared.

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 (cf our letter of March 2, 2015). They have accused Colombian security forces, including ESMAD (Mobile Anti-Riot Squadron), of excessive force in reacting to their demonstrations.

In light of these incidents we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the whereabouts of Berney and Wilson Trochez, ensure their safe rescue, and publish the results of the criminal investigation;
- order a full and impartial criminal investigation of the murders of Mario German Valencia Vallejo, Belisario Trochez Ordóñez, and Cristian David Trochez; and
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links to security forces.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies ACIN: Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca ~ via email
 CIJP: Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz ~ via fax
 Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 Adam Lenert, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
 Tabatha Fairclough, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
 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

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