

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax 011 57 1 570 2000 ext 2023 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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May 4, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the assassination of **Fernando Salazar Calvo**, an indigenous leader who was shot dead at his home on April 7 by an unidentified gunman in the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reservation in Caldas Department. He was the president of the Association of Miners of La Union and a board member of the Association of Artisanal Miners of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reservation (ASOMICARS).

We are also concerned about the threats against many other indigenous leaders from the Reservation, including **Carlos Eduardo Gómez Restrepo**, the Governor of Cañamomo Lomapieta and **Fabio Moreno Herrera**, the President of ASOMICARS.

The Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reservation (Resguardo Indígena), located in the municipalities of Ríosucio and Supía in Caldas Department, was established in the 1700s. Embera Chami indigenous people have been living in the area for centuries. The Indigenous Cabildo of Cañamomo Lomapieta, the highest indigenous political authority within the territory, has been regulating mining in their area. Their regulations include the prohibition of the use of substances harmful to the environment and access or investment by people who are not part of their community.

Fernando Salazar Calvo and other indigenous leaders had been monitoring mining activities in the reservation. They closed down activities that were not in line with ancestral practice and the resolutions of the Indigenous Cabildo. Multinational extractive industries have been seeking to develop mining operations in the area. Illegal armed persons have also expressed an interest in developing mining operations there. There have been reports of the presence of paramilitaries and guerrillas in the area.

In November 2014, the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman issued a risk report warning that there were concerns for the safety of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous community. According to the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), 10 Indigenous people were killed for conflict-related reasons and at least 2,819 forcibly displaced in the first nine months of 2014.

Because of our ongoing concern for indigenous leaders in the area, we **strongly urge** that you

- order a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Fernando Salazar Calvo, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee the safety of Carlos Eduardo Gómez Restrepo, Fabio Moreno Herrera and other leaders in the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reservation, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- respect the peoples of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reservation in their efforts to pursue their own initiatives for resource extraction, in line with recommendations by the UN Special Rapporteur and Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: Resguardo Indígena Cañamomo ~ via US mail
 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

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