

<p>via fax: 011 571 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia</p>
<p>via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876 Sr. Ministro Juan Fernando Cristo Minister of the Interior</p>	<p>via fax: 011 57 1 444 3100 Sr. Ministro Enrique Gil Botero Minister of Justice</p>

March 26, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply troubled to learn about the arrests of social movement leaders in a state crackdown in the south of Bolivar Department. Colombian authorities have arrested and detained (without charges) at least 12 social movement leaders, including members of FEDEAGROMISBOL (Agro-mining Federation of the South of Bolivar) and the People's Congress. On March 20, combined troops of armed police and military arrived in Micoahumado and started photographing homes of several community leaders. On March 21 and 22, they raided homes and made arrests.

March 21, afternoon: **Floro Edilberto Díaz Gamboa** was arrested in Aguachica and detained in Cartagena.

March 21, evening: **Isidro Alarcón**, a community leader in Micoahumado, was arrested in Arenal del Sur and transferred to Cartagena for detention. He is a founder of the Popular Constituent Assembly of Micoahumado.

March 21, evening: Police raided the home of **Joaquín Gómez** in the village of Unión Doradas. When they couldn't find him, they arrested his daughter instead. He had been receiving threats from paramilitaries via pamphlets.

March 21, evening: **Kelly Johana Zabaleta Guerrero** and Kamer **David Salazar Cruzado** were arrested in Micoahumado. Kelly Johana is the daughter of Manuel Francisco Zabaleta, president of the Association of Miners Casa de Barro and member of Fedeagromisbol.

March 22, morning: Witnesses saw police beat **Manuel Francisco Zabaleta** when they arrested him in Norosí.

March 22, early morning: National Police arrested **Milena Quiróz** after raiding her home in Arenal at 5am. She is a prominent Afro-Colombian representative of various social organizations, including the the Peoples' Congress and the Agrarian, Ethnic and People's Summit.

We see these attacks on community leaders as an attempt by authorities to dismantle their organizations and their legitimate work in defense of human rights. We therefore urge that the national government:

- immediately cease the repression against social organizations in the south of Bolivar
- explain the reasons for ordering the arrests that occurred March 21-22 and provide all procedural guarantees to the detainees
- immediately release the social movement leaders

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email DaleyRS@state.gov
Ian Arzeni and Gail Morgado, Colombia Desk, US State Department ~ via email
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia and Human Rights Defenders, 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

3/22/17 FEDEAGROMISBOL Colombia

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