

via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co
Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez
 President of the Republic of Colombia

via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira
 Attorney General of Colombia

September 21, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are disturbed by death threats against Afro-descendant leaders in Colombia involved in the peace process, particularly in Cauca Department. We are particularly concerned for the safety of human rights defenders **Luis Alfredo Bonilla, Gary Escobar, and Roassana Mejía Caicedo**.

The Afro-Colombian Association of Community Councils of Northern Cauca (*ACONC, Asociación de Consejos Comunitarios del Norte del Cauca*) reported last month that Luis Alfredo Bonilla, Gary Escobar, and Roassana Mejía Caicedo received a death threat for their involvement in the implementation of the peace accords. On August 9, the Afro-descendant leaders woke up at 3:57am to a text that condemned their life because of their active participation in land restitution efforts, the planning of the Territorial Development Plans, and other projects under the accord's framework.

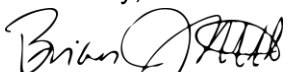
The Coordinator for Community Councils and Organizations of the Black Cauca Pacific Coast (*COCOCAUCA, Coordinación de Consejos Comunitarios y Organizaciones de Base del Pueblo Negro de la Costa Pacífica del Cauca*) also reported last month an increasing number of death threats received by its members and leadership. An assassination attempt on one of its leaders and multiple letters from the Black Eagles (*Aguilas Negras*) paramilitary organization have frightened COCOCAUCA leaders and their families. Many have been declared "military targets" unless they leave their homes and communities.

These are no idle threats. In another region of Colombia (Antioquia) on August 18 hired gunmen assassinated **Luis Alberto Rivas Gómez**, who worked with the Afro-Colombian Traditional Authorities (ANAFRO) and the Black Communities Process (PCN), two groups that form part of the Afro-Colombian Peace Council (CONPA).

These threats against Afro-descendant organizations, their members, and their leaders involved in the peace process are part of a pattern of heightened insecurity in the Southwest of Colombia, where 50 social leaders were assassinated in the first six months of 2018. Therefore, we strongly urge that you

- order a thorough investigation into the death threat against ACONC members and leaders Luis Alfredo Bonilla, Gary Escobar, and Roassana Mejía Caicedo, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- order an investigation into the assassination attempt on the leader of COCOCAUCA, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- provide protection to Afro-descendant organizations and their leaders in the Southwest of Colombia, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators


 Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Camilo Reyes, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643 and email
 Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
 Ryan Reid and Christine Russell, Desk Officers for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, 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: