

<p>via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b> Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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October 24, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about **threatening pamphlets against indigenous rights organizations** that were found on the streets and railroad tracks in Uribia municipality in La Guajira Department.

These pamphlets, found on October 10, were directed against representatives of the following indigenous organizations of La Guajira: Wayúu Nation, Wayúu Araurayu, Wayúu Women's Force Observatory and the National Indigenous Organizations of Colombia (ONIC). They stated that organizations defending human rights in La Guajira "hinder the development of the country" and threatened that they will be attacked. These indigenous organizations have previously received several threats as they constantly denounce the lack of guarantees to the right to life, health, education, clean water, territory, land and a healthy environment in the region. In its public statement, ONIC accused the paramilitary group Black Eagles (Águilas Negras), of which the local armed group in the region is known as Bloque Capital, to have issued the pamphlets.


Although La Guajira is wealthy in natural resources (coal, gas, salt) and wind energy farms, Wayúu communities suffer from food insecurity, scarce drinking water, and weak public service infrastructure. In 2017, the Constitutional Court of Colombia issued a report ("Unconstitutional State of Affairs," or ECI), followed by court ruling T-302, citing the massive and systematic violations of human rights of Wayúu Indigenous People in La Guajira, and the weak institutional response in terms of assistance. The dispersal of the threatening pamphlet on October occurred just a few days before a scheduled follow-up hearing between the Constitutional Court and the Attorney General's Office to evaluate Colombia's government compliance with Ruling T-302.

In a report published in November 2017, Amnesty International reiterated the need to strengthen collective protection mechanisms and to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders, especially those working in rural areas to defend the land, territory and the environment, based on consultation with the communities at risk.

In light of these facts, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the threats against these indigenous human rights organizations, and bring those responsible to justice;
- fully and immediately implement the collective Prevention and Protection Plan for the these indigenous organizations, taking into account the previous consultation about the measures;
- take immediate steps to overcome the structural causes behind the threats and attacks faced by human rights defenders in the context of their work in defense of human rights for Wayuu indigenous people in La Guajira.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
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copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, 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  
Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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:**

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