

<p>via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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June 22, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are extremely disturbed by the recent assassinations of three social leaders of the Awa indigenous community in Nariño Department: **Leidy Jacqueline Burgos Pai, Rocío García Pai, and Robert Dionisio García Bisbicús.**

The leaders received threats on WhatsApp during the Awa annual general assembly on June 4 and 5 commemorating the 29th anniversary of the creation of the Indigenous Unity of the Awa People (UNIPA). One text message, which came from a criminal organization known as the Oliver Sinisterra Front, threatened the lives of several other Awa leaders.

Leidy Jacqueline Burgos Pai, age 18, was an 11th grade student at the Awa Bilingual Agro-Environmental Technical Education Institution. She participated in the indigenous guard and belonged to the indigenous reservation Resguardo Honda Rio Guiza in the municipality of Barbacoas in Nariño Department. She disappeared the morning of June 6; she was found dead, the victim of three gunshots, next to her house in the rural area between Ricaurte and Tumaco municipalities.

Rocío García Pai, a mother of two and member of the Awa reservation Hojal la Turbia de Tumaco, had been missing since June 4. Her body was found on June 7 at the banks of the Nulpe River. She had been beaten and also received three gunshots.

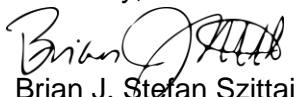
Robert Dionisio García Bisbicús, age 21, belonged to the Awa Indigenous Reservation of Gran Rosario in the municipality of Tumaco. He was killed on June 7 when two unknown men arrived on a motorcycle and shot him at his house at 8:00 a.m. His wife and young daughter mourn his loss.

The majority of the Awa population in Colombia lives in the rural areas of Tumaco, a port city on the Pacific Ocean near the border of Ecuador. The Oliver Sinisterra Front, a dissident group that broke off from the FARC (the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia) controls drug trafficking in this region where coca production is high. According to UNIPA, pamphlets from multiple armed groups had appeared during the past month directly threatening the lives of 73 Awa social leaders. Since August 2016, 29 Awa persons have been murdered.

In light of these attacks on Awa indigenous community members and leaders, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the murders of the Awa persons listed above, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take effective measures to protect the rights of the Awa Indigenous Community, their leaders, and relatives of the victims, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

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, US mail
Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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