

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 Fabio Espitia Garzón Attorney General of Colombia
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November 13, 2019

Dear Sirs:

We are shocked at the violent attacks on several indigenous people in less than a week in the Nasa Tacueyo reservation in Corinto, Cauca Department. Twelve were murdered, an assassination attempt on another, and others injured.

October 29 - indigenous governor **Cristina Bautista**, the highest authority and spiritual leader of the reservation, was murdered together with four indigenous guards: **Asdrubal Capayu**, **Elildoro Finscue**, **José Gerardo Soto** and **James Wilfredo Soto**. The volunteer guards who work to protect the indigenous communities do not carry firearms; they assert their authority with a traditional wooden staff adorned with the multicolored ribbons representing their tribe.

Cristina Bautista the four guards were patrolling their territory in armored SUVs when they were ambushed and killed by a car of gunmen belonging to a faction of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) that has not recognized the November 2016 Peace Accords. The gunmen continued to fire at an ambulance tending to the injured. As a result, five more people were injured: **José Norman Montano**, **Matías Montano**, **Cresencio Peteche**, **Dora Rut Mesa** and **Roguelio Taquinas**.

October 31 - three engineers: **Carlos Mario López**, an agricultural engineer at the National University; **Diego Hernán Rodríguez Torres**; **Diego Alejandro Cerquera Picón**; and their driver, **Roosebelt Saavedra**, were killed in attacks in Corinto. They were conducting topography research with drones to document landscapes in a zone where there is high production of illegal crops. The same day, another man was found dead, with signs of torture, in Caloto municipality in Cauca.

November 2 - Nasa indigenous teenager **Alex Vitonás**, age 18, was killed.


November 3 - armed men shot and killed indigenous activist **Jesús Mestizo** in front of his family in the Toribío zone. Less than an hour earlier, indigenous activist, **Arbey Noscué**, survived an assassination attempt nearby. The killings have forced a number of indigenous families to flee the zone.

Despite the signing of the peace accords in 2016, Cauca continues to suffer extremely high levels of violence. According to the United Nations, 52 indigenous community members have been murdered in north Cauca this year. The National Indigenous Organizations of Colombia (ONIC) reports that 121 indigenous guards and activists have been murdered since August 2018. Paramilitary and other armed groups compete for territorial control which brings them into direct conflict with indigenous and rural communities who are trying to maintain autonomy over their ancestral lands.

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate and complete investigation into the murders and attacks listed above, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take all measures necessary to address the endemic violence by fully implementing the 2016 peace agreement
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Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

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
 Christine Russell, Desk Officer 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: