

<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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December 25, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are extremely concerned about the continuing threats from the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the paramilitary Gaitanistas Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) to the **indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the municipality of Bojayá, Chocó Department.**

The Colombian Office of the Ombudsman, several ethnic-territorial organizations in Chocó, and the Catholic Diocese of Quibdó have reported that ELN and AGC armed groups operating in Bojayá, are causing at least 2,250 people to live under forced confinement and life-threatening risk. Hostile actions include deployed landmines in the few areas with telephone coverage, which is restricting communities' access to healthcare, food, water, and communication.


Since 2002, when there was a mass killing known as the "Bojayá Massacre," there have been thousands of victims of serious human rights violations, including forced displacement and mass killings by paramilitary groups and the army.

The response of the Colombian Government has so far been focused only on a military response, which effectively deepens the vulnerability of these communities (cf our 2017 letters of Mar 22, Mar 25, May 23, Aug 21, Dec 23 and Feb 13 2018).

We **strongly urge** that you

- immediately put into effect a comprehensive plan, with the participation and agreement of the affected communities, that gives effective and urgent access to basic services and guarantees the communities' protection against any attacks from armed groups.
- take immediate action to break up paramilitary groups, in accordance with the commitments made by the government and recommendations from international organizations.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


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
Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Antonia Urrejoa, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, 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: