

<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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March 24, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are quite disturbed to learn of the assassinations of four social leaders that have occurred in recent days. **Ivo Humberto Bracamonte Quiroz, Marco Rivadeneira** and **Angel Ovidio Quintero Gonzalez** were killed on March 19. Embera indigenous leaders, **Omar and Ernesto Guasiruma**, were assassinated in their home today.

Ivo Humberto Bracamonte Quiroz, a councilor from Puerto Santander and director of the online news program NPS, was killed while exercising in Puerto Santander's Beltranía neighborhood in Norte de Santander Department.

Marco Rivadeneira was killed by three armed men who dragged him out of a campesino meeting in the Nueva Granada neighborhood of Puerto Asís, Putumayo Department. He was a campesino leader and member of the Mesa Nacional de Garantías, which is a network of human rights defenders, social and community leaders, and state institutions—accompanied by international organizations—to advance human rights through preventive, protection and investigative actions.

Angel Ovidio Quintero Gonzalez, a social leader and President of the City Council of San Francisco in Antioquia Department, was the victim of a shooting. Although he escaped from it, the San Francisco mayor reported that his body was found in a river hours later.


Today, the Regional Indigenous Organization of Valle del Cauca (ORIVAC) reported that two Embera indigenous leaders, Omar and Ernesto Guasiruma, who were complying with the government quarantine at their home, were killed this morning in the Naranjal rural area of Bolívar municipality, Valle del Cauca Department. Two members of the same family were injured in the attack.

Colombia is one of the world's most lethal countries for social leaders and human rights defenders. In the context of COVID-19, they now face even greater risks: 1- attackers know that public security forces are focusing on issues related to the pandemic, 2-social leaders cannot flee danger because they are subject to restrictions imposed to contain the pandemic, and 3- state protection measures have been weakened.

We strongly urge that you

- carry out an immediate and complete investigation into the killings of Ivo Humberto Bracamonte Quiroz, Marco Rivadeneira, Angel Ovidio Quintero Gonzalez, Omar Guasiruma and Ernesto Guasiruma, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice
- refrain from using the COVID-19 response measures as an excuse for weakening or withdrawing protection for human rights defenders and social leaders

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordínators


Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email
Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email
Antonia Urrejoa, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
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: