

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 Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia
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May 25, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are quite disturbed by the Colombian army's ongoing forced eradication of coca plantations; it is resulting in numerous deaths of farmers involved in substitution programs agreed to in the 2016 peace agreement.

Since March, the army has been conducting forced eradication operations in the Catatumbo region of Norte de Santander Department. On May 18 they opened fire on unarmed rural workers who were protesting these activities, killing **Emerito Digno Buendía Martínez**, age 44, and injuring **Miguel Hernández León, Juan José Orozco**, and **Jimmy Alberto González**. Emerito Buendía Martínez was the father of six children. He was on the Community Council in the zone of Tutumito and was a member of COCCAM (National Coordinator of Cultivators of Coca, Poppy, and Marijuana).


The murder of Emerito Buendía Martínez comes just weeks after Colombian security forces in the Catatumbo region killed **Alejandro Carvajal**, age 20, in his home on March 26. Alejandro was the nephew of a well-known community leader and had been working in crop substitution programs to replace illegal crops with traditional alternatives.

The voluntary substitution program, mandated by the Peace Accords of November 2016, provides a path for farming families who currently grow coca to gradually and voluntarily transition to other crops. To date, over 99,000 families have enrolled. Despite its overwhelming success, the program is being actively undermined by Colombia governmental funding that provides millions of dollars in training and equipment to carry out gross human rights violations against the civilian population, including massacres, torture and extrajudicial killings in the name of the "War on Drugs." More than 50 members of COCCAM have been killed since the Peace Accords were signed in 2016 (cf our letters of Jan 26 2020, July 26 2019, July 1 2019).

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the attacks that resulted in the murders of Emerito Buendía Martínez and Alejandro Carvajal, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- put an immediate end to forced crop eradication and allow the voluntary substitution program to proceed according to the Peace Accords of 2016.

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
Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Justice for Colombia ~ via email
Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

May 20_WtF_Colombia

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