

via email: <a href="mailto:contacto@presidencia.gov.co">contacto@presidencia.gov.co</a> <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: <a href="mailto:servicioalciudadano@mininterior.gov.co">servicioalciudadano@mininterior.gov.co</a> <b>Sra. Ministra Alicia Arango Olmos</b> Minister of the Interior of Colombia
via email: <a href="mailto:director@unp.gov.co">director@unp.gov.co</a> <b>Sr. Alfonso Campos Martínez</b> Director of the National Protection Unit	via email: <a href="mailto:despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co">despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</a> <b>Sr. Francisco Barbosa Delgado</b> Attorney General of Colombia

July 23, 2020

Dear President Duque, Minister Arango, Director Campos, and Attorney General Barbosa:

We are deeply concerned about continued intimidation, surveillance, and death threats against **Jani Rita Silva**, a defender of the environment and human rights in Putumayo Department.

Jani Silva is the legal representative of the Association for the Integral and Sustainable Development of the Amazon Pearl (ADISPA). She has been a vocal leader in Putumayo for full implementation of the Peace Agreement of 2016, promoting reforestation initiatives, and denouncing the socio-environmental effects of oil extraction operations, including those of Amerisur, a hydrocarbon exploitation company operating mainly in the Putumayo River basin. The multinational company has partners from India, Canada, Netherlands, Colombia, and the United States (Occidental Petroleum, headquartered in Houston, Texas). In the past she has received threats for her vocal opposition to Amerisur's activities there.

As we stated in our letter to you on May 26, Jani Silva has good reason to fear for her life. On March 26, the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) announced that an anonymous source told them of a plan to assassinate her. After an investigative visit to the Amazon Pearl Peasant Reserve Zone in May, representatives of CIJP reported that the military was conducting illegal surveillance on her. On July 2, CIJP received confidential information about an ongoing plan to assassinate Jani Silva. The plan is being run by an armed group called "La Mafia," which, according to community organizations in Putumayo, is behind the killings of 14 persons in the region since the COVID-19 lockdown started.

It is presumed that "La Mafia" is planning to assassinate Jani Silva because she is promoting the National Comprehensive Plan to Replace Crops for illicit use (PNIS), a crucial program that provides a path for farming families who currently grow coca to gradually and voluntarily transition to other crops. But there is heavy pressure on farmers from organized criminal groups to grow coca for the cocaine trade. More than 50 members of COCCAM (National Coordinator of Cultivators of Coca, Poppy, and Marijuana), one of the leading organizations of farmers active in the program, have been killed since the Peace Accords were signed in 2016 (cf our letters of July 1 and July 26 2019; Jan 26, May 25, and June 22, 2020).

We strongly urge that you

- carry out a transparent and thorough investigation into ongoing acts of surveillance, intimidation, and death threats against Jani Rita Silva, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- investigate any connections between Amerisur and armed groups in the area
- provide protection measures to Jani Rita Silva that she is requesting, including an armored vehicle for her transportation, access to a protected boat to ensure her transportation back and forth from the Peasant Reservation Area of the Amazon Pearl, change her bodyguards, and ensure there is police protection while she is at her home.

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email  
 Kristen Farrell, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email  
 Mariel Chatman, Vulnerable Populations Specialist, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email  
 Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email  
 Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail  
 CONPAZ: Red Comunidades Construyendo Paz en Colombia ~ via email  
 CIJP: Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz ~ via email  
 Justice for Colombia ~ via email  
 Amnesty International ~ via email  
 Melissa E. Schoeb, Vice President for Corporate Affairs, Occidental Petroleum ~ via email and US mail  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

08 July 20\_UA67/20update\_Colombia

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