

<p>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</p>	<p>via email: <a href="mailto:despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co">despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</a>  <b>Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado</b>          Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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January 12, 2021

Dear President Duque and Attorney General Barbosa:

We are concerned about threats to social leader **Leider Valencia Tumbo** in Miranda municipality, Cauca Department. On January 2 at 7:30p.m., two men got off a motorcycle, forcibly stopped a young man, pointed a gun at him, and asked him “if he was Leider.” When he responded “no,” the man with the gun asked the second man from the motorcycle, “Is it him?” When the second man responded “no,” they let the young man go.

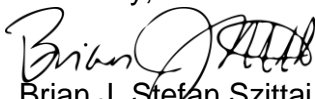
Leider Valencia Tumbo is a well-known social leader in Southwestern Colombia. He serves as a municipal delegate for various social organizations, including: FENSUAGRO-CUT (National Federation of Agricultural Trade Unions-Central Union of Workers), PUPSOC (Process for Popular Unity of Southwestern Colombia), the Patriotic March, and notably COCCAM (National Organization of Cultivators of Coca, Poppy, and Marijuana). COCCAM functions as the Territorial Advisory Council for the implementation of the national Program for the Voluntary Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS).

PNIS is popular with farming families, providing them a way to transition from growing coca to other income-generating crops. But they experience heavy pressure from organized criminal groups to continue growing coca for the lucrative cocaine trade. Pressure sometimes translates into assassination: More than 50 members of COCCAM 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). Human rights abuses are also being committed by military personnel who are deployed to rural areas to forcibly eradicate coca.

Spending millions of dollars on the militarization of the “War on Drugs” is actually undermining PNIS. Heavily militarized drug eradication efforts—together with the general presence of military forces in rural farming areas—creates a hostile environment for social leaders such as **Leider Valencia Tumbo** who live under constant threat by armed groups. Because we believe that he is in serious danger, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a transparent and thorough investigation into ongoing acts of surveillance, intimidation, and any death threats against Leider Valencia Tumbo, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- take immediate steps to guarantee the physical safety and psychological integrity of Leider Valencia Tumbo, in strict accordance with his wishes

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinators

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail  
 IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia & for the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail  
 UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email  
 Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective-Colombia ~ via email  
 US Embassy: Kristen Farrell (human rights) and Mariel Chatman (vulnerable populations) ~ via email  
 US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email  
 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:**