

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 Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia
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February 14, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about continuing threats being sent to **Maria Eugenia Mosquera Riascos**, the legal representative of CONPAZCOL (Association of Communities Building Peace in Colombia) and member of *Mesa de Acceso a la Justicia, Víctimas, Protección y Memoria* (Roundtable for Access to Justice, Victims, Protection and Memory), which participates in the *Comité del Paro Cívico de Buenaventura* (Buenaventura Civic Strike Committee).

María Eugenia Mosquera has been accompanying peace-building efforts for more than ten years in the Pacific region of Colombia. Toward the end of 2020, she helped to facilitate community activities in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department, for the restitution process of collective territory for the La Esperanza Community Council. With leaders of the Community Council for the Afro-Colombian communities on the Naya River, she has documented testimonies for the Truth Commission about the impacts of the armed conflict in ethnic communities. She has also monitored and documented cases of forced recruitment by armed structures in the urban area of Buenaventura.

On the afternoon of January 7, María Eugenia Mosquera received a series of threatening WhatsApp messages to her cell phone from a person who identified himself as part of “the group that is in the area.” The messages said: “We are the guys who are going to look for you...do not get caught...you went and talked; that is unforgivable.” They finally told her that, “you have three guys watching you.”


On January 29 and January 30 she again received threats via Whatsapp from a different cell number while she was in Buenaventura with representatives from the NGOs Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) Peace Presence, Fellowship of Reconciliation Austria, and Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective. On January 29 the assailant wrote: “Look, we need to talk with you...,” and later saying, “We are the ones who kill informant toads of those other people.” María Eugenia Mosquera immediately contacted the national police and the Public Prosecutor’s office. Four hours later she received more texts: “...you’re giving my number to other people, so you want a problem with us.” The assailant then switched to extortion: “we need a million pesos...or your family has a problem; don’t mess this up...”

The phone threats are part of a larger context of illegal armed groups intimidating members of the Buenaventura Civic Strike. These armed groups, responsible for forced recruitment of youth, are trying to impose their control in the city through fear, various extortionist tactics, and advertising what they call a “social cleansing” in the city.

We **strongly urge** that you

- transfer the investigation of the threats against Maria Eugenia Mosquera Riascos from Buenaventura to Bogotá (to ensure impartiality), publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- instruct the Ministry of the Interior and Justice, the National Protection Unit (UNP) and the Committee for Risk Assessment and Recommendation of Measures (CERREM) to evaluate protection measures currently available to María Eugenia Mosquera Riascos and adjust them, in strict accordance with her wishes

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Alfonso Campo Martínez, Director de la Unidad Nacional de Protección ~ via email
 Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
 IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, 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
 CONPAZCOL(Comunidades Construyendo Paz en Colombia) and CENPAZ (Coordinación Étnica Nacional de Paz) ~ via email
 FOR Peace Presence and 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: