

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co	Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
--	---

October 26, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned about threats to and attacks on indigenous Awá and Nasa community members and leaders in Nariño and Cauca Departments, including the attempted assassination of Nasa community leader **Oveimar Tenorio**. We are writing out of the necessity for their protection and well-being.

Nariño Department: Awá territory

On October 2, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) published a statement denouncing threats of forced eviction made to Awá women indigenous leaders in Barbaçoas municipality. At least three Awá leaders received threatening phone calls: **Aura Melba López García**, minister of economy and production of the Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá (UNIPA); **Yurani López Moreano**, governor of Nunalbí Alto Ulbí Reservation; and an unnamed member of the Granja el Maíz Production Association. In addition, the families of the Alto Guelmambí community inside the Nunalbí Alto Ulbí Reservation were also threatened by a caller: "[we] demand the eviction and cessation of leadership activities in the territory and warn that if they refuse to do so, the community will be declared a military target." UNIPA noted that an armed group that operates in the region has made similar intimidations in the past and that "these recurring threats have materialized in events such as massacres and mass displacements."

Cauca Department: Nasa territory

On October 1, the Cauca Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC) denounced the attempted assassination of **Oveimar Tenorio**, area coordinator of the Kiwe Thenas of Cxhab Wala Kiwe. He was shot repeatedly at his home at the Nasa reservation of San Francisco de Toribío. He and his family had received threats September 12-13.

On October 3, Nasa human rights defender Eduin Mauricio Capaz Lectamo in Caloto municipality (33 km from Toribío) reported that **four Nasa community members** were kidnapped, gagged and threatened with death by armed men. One of the community members was Capaz's father; another was a local indigenous authority. Gun shots were fired against members of the Indigenous Guard as they made a successful rescue of the four people at the town hall in Caloto. Eduin Capaz cited the nearby presence of a military unit and questioned whether paramilitaries were responsible for the kidnapping.

We strongly urge that you

- conduct a transparent investigation into the threats made against members of the Awá Nunalbí Alto Ulbí Reservation in Nariño, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- conduct a transparent investigation into the gun attack on Oveimar Tenorio and the kidnapping of the four Nasa community members in Cauca, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take necessary measures to safeguard the Nasa Indigenous Guard in Cauca so that they can continue to defend their communal territories, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
 Daniel Palacios Martínez, Minister of the Interior ~ via email
 IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia and 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
 ONIC: Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia ~ via email
 C.R.I.C: Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca ~ 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 ~ via email
 US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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