

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</p>
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August 26, 2022

Dear Sirs:

We are terribly disturbed by the continued violence targeting Afro-descendant and Indigenous community leaders in Nariño Department. We demand investigations into the assassinations of **María Piedad Aguirre** and **María Verónica Pai Cabeza** who became the 104th and 109th social leaders assassinated in Colombia this year.

María Piedad Aguirre was a local leader of Caminos de Mujer (CCM) and Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN), recognized for her work as a connoisseur of ancestral culture and defender of the rights of black communities. On July 19, she was assassinated in her home in the neighborhood of Los Angeles California in Tumaco, Nariño Department.

On August 1, **María Verónica Pai Cabeza** of the Piguambi Palangala Indigenous Awá reservation in Nariño was killed with five shots in the village of Llorenete, Tumaco municaplity. The assassins abandoned her body on a public road in the village of Vaquerío. She was six months pregnant, leaving two children orphaned. In a statement rejecting the crime, traditional Awá authorities of the reservation denounced the physical and cultural extermination to which they are subjected by illegal armed groups disputing the territory. On several occasions they have requested governmental support to contain the murders, massacres, forced disappearances, displacements, confinement, and mobility restrictions.

State presence has been historically low in Nariño where there is a prevalence of illegal armed groups such as Frente Oliver Sinisterra (FOS), Bloque Occidental Alfonso Cano, Urías Rondón Mobile Column, and Los Contadores.

We urge that you

- conduct thorough and transparent investigations into the killings of **María Piedad Aguirre** and **María Verónica Pai Cabeza**, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- protect Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities from outside armed groups through state presence, abiding by parameters set by the communities
- construct comprehensive and inclusive measures to implement the Peace Agreement, with approaches that focus on gender, territorial, and ethnic groups

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Luis Gilberto Murillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Alfonso Prada Gil, Minister of the Interior ~ via email
Joel Hernández García, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and Against Racial Discrimination (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim); Kristen Farrell (human rights); 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, Brown, 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: