

<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>
---	--

September 22, 2023

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply saddened to learn of the assassination of environmental defender **Johan Ferney Aguilar González**, the son of Wilder Antonio Aguilar Rodríguez, who is a social leader and environmental defender in the neighborhood of Santa Filomena, municipality of Falan, Tolima Department.

Johan Ferney Aguilar González was killed on September 3, just hours after a public hearing of the National Mining Agency (Agencia Nacional de Minería, or ANM), where both he and his father were present, among 700 others. In the public hearing his father made a public complaint about death threats he had received prior related to the resistance against the mining project of Miranda Gold.

The public hearing resulted from a legal action filed against ANM by 70 community residents, demanding guarantees of environmental protections. A judicial ruling issued by the First Court of the Honda Circuit ordered the ANM to suspend the execution of 13 concession contracts that involve the exploration and exploitation of minerals. The mining area in Tolima covers 5,000 where several mining companies hope to extract natural asphalt, gold, copper, silver, and platinum: Sociedad Falan Gold S.A.S. (1 concession), Miranda Gold Colombia (4 concessions), Activos Mineros de Colombia S.A.S. (5), Mineras Vetas (1) and Eaton Gold SAS (2). Community residents and social organizations had demanded this Public Hearing to learn the details of the proposed mining projects and express their concerns.

This tragic event is a direct attack on those who have fought tirelessly to defend their rights and their land against the interests of companies operating in the region. This act is a threat to defenders of territory and human rights and a warning to all those who oppose the interests of corporate powers.

We urge that you:

- conduct an impartial, transparent investigation into the assassination of Johan Ferney Aguilar González, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- instruct the environmental authorities, especially the National Mining Agency, to sanction all mining activities until guarantees of peace and protection are given to the entire community.
- consult with local environmental defenders to provide security measures for their safety, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Luis Álvaro Pardo Becerra, Presidente de la ANM (Agencia Nacional de Minería) ~ via email
Luis Gilberto Murillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Joel Hernández García, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
CADV: Comité en Defensa de la Vida de Tolima / Committee in Defense of Life of Tolima ~ via email
US Embassy: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim); Adam Levy (Human Rights Unit Chief) ~ via email
US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
Outcrop Silver & Gold (British Columbia, Canada) ~ via email US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

08 SEP 2023_ResumenLatinoamericano_Colombia

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