

**Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego**

President of the Republic of Colombia  
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**Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado**

Attorney General of Colombia  
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January 26, 2024

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned for the safety of **members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó** in Antioquia Department. Paramilitaries are building control centers; one is next to a school. Members of the internal council and residents have received death threats. Some of the threatening actions of the paramilitaries are taking place in areas with a military presence, confirming for residents a routine practice of camouflaging relations between the military and paramilitaries.

Dec 2, 2023: camouflaged paramilitaries were seen traveling along the river in the Mulatos village.

Dec 3, 2023: Peace Community members were informed that the army would be patrolling at night in three of their villages

Dec 5, 2023: residents noticed that paramilitaries were building houses for territorial control

Dec 8, 2023: paramilitaries in camouflage uniforms were seen at the “La Cañada de Pulgarín” section of Mulatos village.

Dec 12, 2023: resident heard of paramilitaries’ intent to eliminate two members of the Internal Council of San José de Apartadó—the legal representative and the settlement coordinator in La Resbalosa, where the army and paramilitaries have been coordinating attacks against peasant communities

Dec 12, 2023: former Peace Community member **Eimer Emilio Gómez David**, who had disappeared a few days earlier, was found dead with signs of cruel torture.

Dec 22, 2023: paramilitaries threatened several women in the village of La Union


Jan 4, 2024: the Peace Community accepted a request for protection from **Ovidio Torres Areiza**, a former paramilitary militant, due to imminent death threats from the paramilitaries, who tortured his eldest son to coerce him into telling where his father was

Jan 6, 2024: paramilitaries gathered residents of La Unión village to enforce territorial control with threats

Jan 8, 2024: a group of heavily armed military personnel arrived very early in the town of La Unión, supposedly searching the civilian population for information about the paramilitaries. But residents say that the military and the police know where the paramilitaries are because they live with them.

Members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó know that the threats from paramilitaries are real because more than 200 of their members have been murdered since the Peace Community was established in 1997. We therefore urge that you investigate and dismantle any collaboration between the illegal paramilitary groups and the Colombian security forces and judicial apparatus.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordiñators

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Luis Gilberto Murillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail  
José Luis Caballero Ochoa, 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  
FOR Peace Presence ~ via email  
US Embassy: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d’Affaires, ad interim); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email  
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email  
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance ~ via email  
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

10 JAN 2024\_FOR Peace Presence\_Colombia

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