

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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March 2, 2024

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned for the safety of the residents of the **Wounaan indigenous community of Puerto Pizarío** in the Bajo San Juan region of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department. The Indigenous Reserve (resguardo) consists of the small towns of Puerto Pizarío, Unión San Juan and Puerto Guadalito.


At 12:00 noon on February 1, two individuals dressed in civilian clothes with pistols entered the Puerto Pizarío Wounaan Indigenous Reserve. These two men initially arrived on a boat at the community of Unión San Juan, taking the route from Docordó. They intimidated community residents and forced another boat that was transporting soccer players to take them to Puerto Pizarío. The two men walked the main street of Puerto Pizarío, entering stores. They asked for markers, which they then used to write the logo of the ELN (National Liberation Army) on some homes in the town. At 1:00 pm, the boat in which they arrived at Unión San Juan picked them up at the Puerto Pizarío pier.

The Wounaan Reserve and other Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the region, which are united through the Somos Génesis Network, have made public their proposal for a Global Humanitarian Agreement and Global Territorial Peace, which they have sent to the government and all armed actors. Several of these communities have declared themselves as Peace Facilitating Territories. Despite their intentions to stay out of any involvement with armed groups, their communities were placed in a state of confinement in February 2023 due to the intensification of armed actions by the ELN rebels and the AGC paramilitaries (Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces). The incursion into their community on February 1 of this year intensifies their fears.

We urge that the government of Colombia:

- investigate the incursion of the armed actors into the Wounaan Reserve on February 1
- prioritize the Bajo San Juan region as a no-conflict zone
- update local residents on the cycles of peace negotiations between the government and the ELN, and how those agreements will be upheld

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Luis Fernando Velasco Chaves, Minister of Interior ~ via email
Luis Gilberto Murillo Urrutia, 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
Arif Bulkan, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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
Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz / Inter-Church Justice & Peace Commission ~ via email
Somos Génesis ~ 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

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

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