

Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo
Minister of Health and Social Protection
Carrera 13 No. 32
Bogotá, Colombia

October 12, 2025

We are writing to express our concern about the health situation of the **Bari Indigenous People in the Catatumbo region** of Norte de Santander Department, particularly in the settlement of Bridikayra, municipality of Convención. Regional organizations such as the Comité de Integración Social del Catatumbo (CISCA) and national organizations such as Asociación Minga have publicly warned that since late August, the Bari people have been facing a health outbreak that is endangering the lives of community members, while their access to healthcare remains unguaranteed.

According to these organizations, dozens of people are suffering from fever, pain, and hemorrhages; on August 26, a child died after presenting these symptoms. The Bari live in the Perijá mountains and near the Catatumbo-Bari National Natural Park in the northern part of the region and on both sides of the border between Colombia and Venezuela. The Bari settlements are located far from municipal urban centers where health facilities exist, forcing the community to travel long distances to places such as Convención or Ocaña. Without the resources for transport and lodging, these journeys further endanger their health. Being a bi-national Indigenous community, some members of the Bari people don't have Colombian government issued identification documents, causing unjustified barriers for their access to health.

We urge that authorities in Colombia

- (1) take immediate and effective action to protect the Bari people's rights to life and health, including access to medical services and prevention, treatment, and control of epidemics
- (2) establish adequately equipped medical facilities in Bari settlements so they do not have to risk their lives traveling for hours to access healthcare
- (3) consult with Bari settlements to ensure that any measures adopted are with informed and prior consent given by the Bari people.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: President Gustavo Petro Urrego, President of Colombia
Luz Adriana Camargo, Attorney General of Colombia
Daniel García-Peña Jaramillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email
José Luis Caballero Ochoa, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email
Arif Bulkan, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email
UN: Scott Campbell, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy: John McNamara (Chargé d'Affaires); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Husted and Moreno ~ via email
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes ~ via email

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