

Afro-Colombian Solidarity Network (ACSN)* Statement
November 5, 2013

Black Communities in Cauca Peacefully Occupy Government Offices
Colombian Government Must Respect Agreements with Black Communities

The ACSN is monitoring the peaceful occupation of the Colombian Institute of Rural Development (INCODER) in Popayan, Cauca. Black community councils, social movements, and grass roots organizations organized under the Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group decided to occupy the INCODER offices after the government failed to comply with agreements established at a meeting on October 8. The agreements with the government were intended to resolve long-standing land titling issues in Cauca.

The Working Group has presented a seven-point list of demands that includes issues related to territory; mining in Afro-descendant territories; the speedy purchase of prioritized and collectively titled lands; the implementation of Constitutional Court Order 005; and the development and implementation of a “good life” plan (*plan de buen vivir*) for Afro-Caucan communities. The Working Group’s first two statements regarding the peaceful occupation are included below.

ACSN believes that the government must comply with the October 8 agreements and ensure the safety of those participating in the peaceful protest. In order to do so, Viceminister Anibal Fernandez de Soto and other representatives of the Public Ministry listed in the statements below should participate in the dialogues with the Working Group in the INCODER offices of Popayan.

Please take action by contacting Viceminister Anibal Fernandez de Soto at anibal.fernandezdesoto@minagricultura.gov.co or on twitter at @anibalfds and @IncoderColombia with the following message:

“We are following the peaceful occupation of the INCODER installations in Cauca. We hope that you will personally participate in the dialogues with the Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group in order to ensure the participants’ security and that the agreements are implemented.”

For more information, please contact:

Charo Mina Rojas (charominarojas@gmail.com) or Anthony Dest (colombialand@gmail.com)

*The Afro-Colombian Solidarity Network (ACSN) includes TransAfrica Forum (TAF), Global Rights, Chicago Religious Leadership Network (CRLN), the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), U.S. Office on Colombia (USOC), International Working

Group of PCN, Colombia Land Rights Monitor, and activists and scholars Joseph Jordan, Eunice Escobar, Naila Rosario, Tianna Paschel and Arturo Escobar. Peace Brigades International (PBI) serves as an international observer.

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Statement to the National and International Community

Popayan, Colombia
November 1, 2013

On October 31, 2013, the Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group (*La Mesa de Desarrollo Territorial Afrocaucana*) peacefully occupied the installations of INCODER (the Colombian Institute of Rural Development) in Popayan, Cauca. The Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group is made up of black community councils, social movements, and grass roots organizations. Its antecedents lie in another group founded in 2005 to cover issues related to land. A year and a half ago, the Working Group initiated a new dialogue regarding the acquisition of land and the treatment of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural conflicts in the black communities of northern, southern, central, and eastern Cauca.

Since its foundation, the Working Group expressed the need to discuss serious problems facing black communities in Cauca such as: the granting of mining titles within ancestral and collective land titles of black communities; collective land titling in the territories of the inter-Andean valleys; the violation of the right to free, prior, and informed consultation and consent; the systematic violation of Human Rights; the development model; and the armed conflict. The Afro-Caucan Working Group presented all of these issues to the previous director of INCODER Miriam Villegas.

After evaluating if the government complied with the established agreements and concluding that there was systematic noncompliance on behalf of the government, the spokesperson of the Afro-Caucan Working Group decided to declare a state of permanent assembly. We demand that our list seven-point list of demands is implemented. The list of demands includes issues related to territory; mining in our territories; the speedy purchase of prioritized and collectively titled lands; the implementation of Constitutional Court Order 005; and the development and implementation of a “good life” plan (*plan de buen vivir*) for Afro-Caucan communities.

We are open to dialogue and we have made an autonomous decision as Afro-Colombian communities in Cauca to remain assembled until officials with decision-making power from the national government are present.

Therefore:

We demand that the national government responds to the peaceful plea of Afro communities in Cauca.

We require the accompaniment of the Public Ministry in order to guarantee our physical safety and compliance with the agreements that we will reach with the national government.

We convene all of the local, regional, national, and international organizations to support and be in solidarity with this action in defense of the ethno-territorial rights of the black communities of Cauca.

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Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group Statement

Popayan, Cauca
October 31, 2013

In response to the national government's noncompliance with the agreements established during several meetings with the Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group, we are obligated to take action in order to be heard and for the agreements to be implemented. We will indefinitely occupy the installations of INCODER (the Colombian Rural Development Institute) in Popayan and declare the following:

1. We reject the systematic buying of black communities' ancestral lands by INCODER in order to turn the lands over to indigenous communities without the consent of the Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group;
2. The National Government, through INCODER, is at fault for causing inter-ethnic conflict as a result of the aforementioned point;
3. We demand that the government quickly buy lands for black communities that were already designated, agreed upon, and selected;
4. We demand that the Hacienda el Madroñal be cleared by the *Dirrección Nacional de Estupefacientes* and the *Consejo Nacional de Estupefacientes* and turned over to the Community Council of Campesino Palenque Monte Oscuro in the municipality of Puerto Tejada, Cauca;
5. We demand compliance with the agreements between the Working Group and the Assistant Director of INCODER established on October 8, 2013;
6. We demand respect for the physical safety of those of us who are exercising our right to peaceful protest;
7. We demand a space for dialogue with members of the national government in order to discuss the agreements established on October 8—including the following entities:
 - A. Minister of Interior
 - B. Minister of Finance
 - C. Department of National Planning

- D. Minister of Agriculture
- E. Minister of Justice
- F. National Mining Agency
- G. Director of the DNE, María Mercedes Perry
- H. National Director of INCODER, Aníbal Fernández de Soto
- I. Inspector General
- J. Human Rights Ombudsman
- K. International Human Rights Commission
- L. Director of the Land Restitution Unit, Ricardo Savogal Urrego
- M. Director of the National Protection Unit, Andrés Villamizar Pachón

Afro-Caucan Territorial Development Working Group
Popayán, Cauca