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November 20, 2013

Afro-Colombian Women refuse to continued being unnamed victims

“Violence is rooted on discrimination fueled by stereotypes” CEDAW Committee

Angela Arboleda, sofocated and stabled; Claudia Patricia, her throat cut; Dalila Quiñonez killed along with her partner; Maria Luisa Espinoza, killed; Marley Yuliza Ramirez, killed; Maria Nerida Holguin, killed with a machete; Yenny Edith Belalcazar, shut to dead; Estella Cortes, sofocated and her throat cut; Epifania Mondragon killed by her partner.

We named some, many might never be identified, reported or found. Their names and faces will persist only in the memory and heart of those who loved and care for them.

Those names, and many others silenced by fear, apathy and incompetence, represent the violence and brutality that faced Afro-Colombian women in the port-city of Buenaventura between January and October of this year. “The human rights crisis facing Afro-Colombian women in Buenaventura is an ongoing story of violence fueled by the internal armed conflict, the militarization of Colombian Society and official an unofficial indefference when it comes to the plight of women,” according to Charo Mina-Rojas, coordinating of the Afro-Colombian Women’s Human Rights Defenders Project.

The lack of attention to this crisis and the indifference from governmental authorities is the reason that women in Buenaventura have organized themselves to demand justice and an end to the sexism and patriarchal system that devalues the lives of Afro-Colombian women.

Women will rally in Buenaventura Thursday November 21st at 2:00 pm in front of the Attorney General’s office to demand justice and protection. Many women in other cities will be rallying at the same time in support of Buenaventuras women’s demands and courage.

Background:

On October 2nd, 2013 the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), called the Colombian government’s attention on the egregious high levels of impunity and conclude that the Colombian State must “ensure that the protection of the Afro-Colombian and indigenous rights prevail over the profit interests of third parties”. Are those third party interests settled on Free Trade Agreements that maintain silent and ineffective the authorities in Buenaventura with the blessing of the national government.

The **Afro-Colombian Women Human Rights Defenders Project** continues demanding recognition of paramilitary groups mainly responsible for these crimes, investigation, prosecution and protection of women victims, and insists on a recommendation endorsed by the CEDAW Committee to “establish a standard system for the regular collection of statistical

data on violence against women, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, type of violence and the circumstances in which the violence was committed, including the perpetrator and victim and whether they were related to each other” (recommendation 16.e), so no other women who fall victim of violence remind unnamed.

Women in Colombia are claiming “Not one more!”

ACWHRD exhorts all women in Colombia and beyond to strike back against violence rejecting these crimes by mobilizing on November 21 at 2:00 pm with Afro-Colombian women

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