



Dear All,

Today we write you to ask that you intervene in the following human rights situations:

Organizations Express Concern over Wave of Assassinations and Threats (Antioquia)

On January 20, the Antioquia's Alliance for Peace, a coalition of Antioquian human rights organizations, voiced concern over recent attacks against social leaders in Colombia. They report that 129 leaders of the Marcha Patriótica political movement were killed in the past five years and that at least five prominent activists were murdered this year. They highlight that the Colombia-Europe-U.S. Coordination, reports that twelve defenders were killed in Antioquia in 2016-2017.

Land Restitution Leader Assassinated (Antioquia)

On January 29, the body of land restitution leader Porfirio Jaramillo Bogallo was found near Turbo, Antioquia. Mr. Bogallo was abducted by four men who tricked him into believing that they were part of the National Protection Unit and part of his new security detail. *El Tiempo* reports that these men proceeded to kill and decapitate him. Mr. Bogallo suffered displacement in 1997 from the Uraba region and since then worked to defend land rights.

Indigenous Human Rights Defender Assassinated (Cesar)

On January 27, *El Heraldo*, a Barranquilla based newspaper, reported the death of indigenous human rights defender Yoryanis Isabel Bernal Varela. Ms. Bernal, of the Wiwa indigenous community was found dead 15 days after she disappeared. According to witnesses, armed gunmen in motorcycles approached Ms. Bernal and shot her in the head. Her community formed part of Communities Constructing Peace in the Territories (CONPAZ).

Indigenous Leaders Suffer Assassination Attempts (Cauca)

The Association of Indigenous Reservations of Northern Cauca (ACIN) reported that two of their leaders had suffered assassination attempts. Aldemar Diaz Zuñiga's vehicle was shot at on January 25 while he was in the Lomitas municipality Cauca. Fortunately, the occupants were unharmed. On January 24, Nilsa UI Zape and Nelson Ramirez Paz also suffered assassination attempts while traveling between Caloto and Morales municipalities. Ms. Zape's bodyguard was shot in the shoulder. He received medical attention in a nearby

hospital. Ms. Zape is a member of the Nasa Indigenous Community. She was a candidate for the municipal council of Caloto in the 2015 elections. In 2016, she was elected as vice-president of the community action board of Morales municipality.

Afro-Colombian Leader Attacked in Buga (Valle del Cauca)

On January 25, Ángel Murillo Mosquera, manager of the National Afro-Colombian Front, escaped an assassination attempt in Buga, Valle del Cauca. Colombia's TV station *Caracol* reported that a group of gunmen on motorcycles fired five shots at Mr. Murillo Mosquera's car while it was parked outside of a restaurant. At that moment, Mr. Mosquera was meeting with civic leaders from Valle del Cauca inside the restaurant to discuss Afro-Colombian previous consultation efforts.

Wayuu Indigenous Leaders Targeted by Death Threats (la Guajira)

The Wayuu indigenous authorities of Uribia, Manuare, Rioacha, Albania, Hatonuevo, Distraccion, Maicao and indigenous organizations are facing numerous challenges. After the many publicized deaths of indigenous children due to malnutrition/dehydration and humanitarian crisis in their region, they are advocating cleaning up corruption and mismanagement of funds by Colombia's Child Welfare Agency (ICBF). Also they are denouncing environmental damage caused by the Cerrejon coal mine in Wayuu areas. This has led to tensions with governmental institutions that unfortunately have yet to properly resolve these issues. In January these leaders have gotten text and written death threats due to their work. The threats state that they "have gone too far" and that as a result they will be killed along with their family members. We strongly urge the Colombian authorities to take every step needed to protect these leaders, their families and to work with these communities to resolve their justified complaints.

COCOCAUCA Expressed Concern over Deaths in Guapi (Cauca)

On January 21, the Coordination of Community Councils of Cauca (COCOCAUCA) reported the murders of Mónica Carvajal and Jhon Piedrahita who were killed on December 1 and 5, 2016. Ms. Carvajal was murdered in her home after unknown individuals entered her residence. Mr. Piedrahita, a member of the Afro-Colombian San Francisco Community Council, was fatally gunned down by men in the street. Similarly, COCOCAUCA expressed their condolences for the death of a mine worker who died on December 2 and January 11 due to a work-related accident.

Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces Increase their Presence in El Bagre (Antioquia)

On February 1, HERAMIGUA, a grouping of agro-ecological and mine workers in Guamocó, Antioquia, reported the presence of about 15 members of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces near the municipality of El Bagre, Antioquia. The men wore military uniforms and carried high caliber weapons as they threatened the civilian population.

HERAMIGUA states that their presence led to the displacement of several families, who out of fear have chosen to flee the rural area.

Witnesses in Displacement Case are Intimidated (Cauca)

On January 27, the Association of Rural Workers of Buenos Aires, Cauca expressed their concern over intimidation of key witnesses who had testified to the Prosecutor's Office about a forced displacement case in 2003. Copies of the private statements made by witnesses were placed in public areas in Buenos Aires, placing at risk those who had anonymously stepped forward to discuss details of the case.

Armed Men Threaten Livelihood of People in Ciénaga de Opón (Santander)

On January 25, the Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights (CREDHOS) indicated that rural farmers in the Ciénaga de Opón near Barrancabermeja are facing constant threats and harassment by armed actors, particularly gang members of the *comuna uno*. Insecurity in the region has increased due to the presence of these groups.

Threats against a Human Rights Defender (Cauca)

On January 19, the Human Rights Network Francisco Isaías Cifuentes denounced that Jonathan Enrique Centeno Muñoz, a community activist, received death threats. An envelope containing photos and written threats saved in a CD falsely accused him of promoting narco-trafficking and coca cultivation was received by the Cadena Radial Radio Mil40 station.

Threats against Human Rights Leader (Cauca)

On January 18, the Human Rights Network of Southwestern Colombia and the political movement Marcha Patriótica condemned threats made against Arley Guzman, President of the Community Action Board of El Recreo Municipality, treasurer of ASOCOMUNAL, and member of the *Campesino* Process of the La Vega Municipality. According to the organizations, Mr. Guzman received a text to his private cell phone demanding that he "get lost" and stop his community activism. This incident occurred two days after the *Campesino* Process of the La Vega Municipality conducted the march for life and water in the village of Albania, Cauca.

Death Threats by the ELN against Community Leaders (Cauca)

On January 10, the Human Rights Network of Southwestern Colombia and the political movement Marcha Patriótica expressed concern over threats by possible ELN members to social leaders in Cauca. According to the organizations, Oscar Albeiro Boyocue Pavi, president of the Vichiqui Municipality's community action board, received a call to his cellphone by a man identifying himself as Commander Antonio, member of the National Liberation Army (ELN). "Antonio" demanded that Mr. Boyocue Pavi and the communities

collaborate with the ELN and threatened that if he did not cooperate, he would either be forced to flee or would be killed.

Threats against COCOCAUCA Activist (Cauca)

In December 2016, COCOCAUCA informed that a prominent activist received threatening calls that described his whereabouts and movements in Cauca. On December 30, 2016, the same leader received a similar intimidating call. These menacing messages and calls have continued throughout January and are believed to originate from paramilitaries in Buenaventura.

Councilman Reports Deaths and Suspicious Activity (Putumayo)

On December 21, 2016, councilman and social leader Ramiro Humberto Palma filed a formal complaint to the Ombudsman's Office. In this, he states that paramilitary groups are threatening the lives of social leaders and human rights defenders. While Mr. Palma has not received immediate threats, he has been followed over the last few months. Such forms of intimidation in the past forced him to remain in hiding for one year.

Spanish Union Express Concern over Safety Situation for Colombian Labor Leaders (Guajira)

On February 2, the Basque union Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (LAB) condemned the security situation faced by union leaders near the Drummond mine in northeast Colombia. Augusto Almeida, Secretary General of SINTRAMIENERGETICA El Paso, a union representing mine workers in El Paso, Guajira was attacked by hitmen as he was heading off work at the Drummond mine. LAB's expressed serious concerns since Mr. Almeida received death threats on January 18. This year, SINTRAMIENERGETICA already suffered the first death of a union member after Aldemar Parra Garcia was assassinated by a hitman on January 7.

Possible Paramilitary Presence in Cajibia (Cauca)

On January 16, members of the community of Finca la Colonia reported that two men armed with military rifles and vests dressed in civilian clothes were crossing their territories towards the mountains. The increased presence of such persons is generating fear in these rural communities.

Peace Community of San José de Apartadó Continues to Face Harassment (Antioquia)

On January 21, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó demanded that the Colombian address the presence of heavily armed members of the Gaitanista Self Defense Forces (AGC) paramilitaries in their region. On January 15, the AGC arrived in the municipalities of La Unión, Buenos Aires, and Arenas Altas gathered residents and warned that they did not collaborate; they must either leave the region or face death. On January

17 the paramilitaries warned community members that the end of the peace community was near. Worse, on January 20 the group tried to enter the home of community leader Reinaldo Areiza in La Esperanza municipality.

Increased and Visible Paramilitary Presence in Cacarica (Chocó)

On January 24, the Inter-Ecclesial Commission for Justice and Peace (Justicia y Paz) reported that paramilitaries are present in the Cacarica river basin. Members of the Afro-Colombian Community Council of Bijao Cacarica fled to the Nueva Esperanza en Dios Humanitarian Zone due fear generated by the AGC paramilitaries. Residents report that 200 armed men arrived near the community of Bijao. WOLA reported an increase in paramilitary presence in the same location in its last emergency report. It is extremely concerning to see increased presence of these individuals in the Cacarica river basin.

Paramilitaries Also Present in Other Areas of the Chocó

Sources on the ground indicate that paramilitaries are also present in the collective Afro-Colombian territories of Curvaradó, Jiguamiandó, Pedguita and Mancilla river basins. This is especially concerning given that these are situated not far from the 54th Jungle Battalion. These men have stated that they plan to stay and marked houses with the slogan “the ACG is Present.” On January 19, paramilitaries dressed in civilian clothing were looking for community leaders Sergio Diaz and Guillermo Diaz. Guillermo is the brother of Argenito Diaz, a land rights activist who was murdered in January 2010.

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Armed Actors Threaten and Extort Locals (Cauca)

On January 22, COCOCAUCA concern over increased extortion rackets by armed groups in López de Micay, Timbiquí, and Guapi. Vendors in those cities are being forced to pay exorbitant sums of money to various groups that seek to exert their influence in areas that were once controlled by FARC.

Harassment of Social Leaders by Members of the Army (Cauca)

On January 12, Marcha Patriótica reported that human rights defenders Cristobal Guamanga and Hector Marino and their security details were stopped by an Army patrol in Marilópez municipality, Cauca. They were detained for an hour and a half without just cause. Five days later, Mr. Guamanga along with William Becerra, and Diana Martínez, of March Patriótica and leaders of FENSUAGRO – CUT, were stopped by the military on

their way back from a meeting with rural workers. These social leaders' bodyguard's guns were confiscated when an additional search was made. The Sergeant in charge of the search refused to provide his name to Mr. Guamanga or his security detail. As WOLA reported in its last security update, Mr. Guamanga is in danger. He was followed by a motorcycle on December 24.

Arrest of Social Leader' Partner under Confusing Circumstances (Cauca)

On January 24, Judith Marcela Suarez Lozada was arrested on charges of rebellion, coercion, and recruitment of minors. According to Ms. Lozada and the Center for Colombian Amazonian Thought the charges are fabricated. She is being targeted for her and her husband's advocacy including that includes denouncing corruption.

Community Child Care Providers are Left without Formal Contracts

Despite a ruling by Colombia's Constitutional Court demanding that the Colombian government formalize community mothers' labor practices, president Santos refused to sign into law a bill that would not only provide health services to community childcare workers but also would formalize their jobs. Although the President argues that the bill would place a fiscal burden on the country, the independent organization National Labor School highlighted that the total cost would be about 0.4 percent of the GDP. The community mothers have been involved in a long labor dispute with the state to demand formalization of their work, which many have carried out for more than 27 years.

We look forward to your actions on these important matters.

Sincerely,

Gimena Sanchez

We look forward to your actions on these important matters. For further information, please contact Gimena Sanchez-Garzoli at gsanchez@wola.org or (202) 797-2171.

February 3, 2017