



Dear all:

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

Suspected ‘Social Cleansing’ Operation Takes Place in Argelia (Cauca)

On June 26, the Inter-Ecclesial Commission for Justice and Peace (*Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz*) sent out an SOS stating that a new armed group calling themselves the Popular Cleansing Command (*Commando Popular de Limpieza, CPL*) was threatening to kill anyone considered “bad” in Argelia, Cauca. “Bad” allegedly means persons suspected of involvement in drug trade, to be drug consumers or stealing and selling stolen goods, among other reasons including for being “gossips”. The CPL distributed these ‘social cleansing’ pamphlets throughout the town. These warned that anyone new or unknown to locals must have a local family member vouch for them or they will be killed as well.

On July 2, the bodies of seven persons containing multiple gunshot wounds were found on the road that connects the hamlets of El Mango and Sinai. The multiple homicide is under investigation. We ask U.S. authorities to urge Colombia to guarantee the protection of the residents of this area and to swiftly investigate and bring to justice those responsible for these killings. It is also recommended that Colombian authorities not make unsubstantiated speculative claims of the victims (as is reported in the press) until an independent investigation takes place.

Four Community Leaders Murdered Less Than 48 Hours (Santander)

On June 23, the United Nations condemned the rising violence targeting Colombian social leaders after police discovered the bodies of two missing activists in Santander. The remains of Bellavista’s 37-year old president of the Community Action Board Isaac Navarro Mora, and Hector Santiago Anteliz, 52, were found riddled with bullets abandoned by the side of a road in Teorama. That same day, 37 year-old Janer Alberto Correa Arboleda and 25 year-old Anderson Ortiz Pérez, both local leaders in their JAC, were shot and killed by hitmen.

Two COCCAM Leaders Killed (Cauca and Antioquia)

On June 25, José Abraham García Oquendo, president of the Pascuitá Community Action Board and member of the National Coordinator of Coca, Poppy, and Marijuana Cultivators (*Coordinadora Nacional de Cultivadores de Coca, Amapola y Marihuana, COCCAM*), was assassinated by hitmen in the Ituango region in Pascuitá, Antioquia. José was an outspoken advocate on violence against human rights defenders, rural and coca farmers. According to the

Colombian news outlet *Caracol*, unknown men killed James Alberto Hidrobo Navia three days later. Mr. Navia was a former councilman and leader with COCCAM, who coordinated coca substitution projects in Cauca.

Community Leader Assassinated in his Sleep (Cordoba)

On June 29, the Association of Rural Farmers in Southern Cordoba (*Asociación de Campesinos del Sur de Córdoba*, ANZORC) condemned the assassination of local leader Ivan Lazaro. Unknown men broke into his house and killed him while he slept. A Community Action Board, (*Junta de Acción Comunal*, JAC) leader in Puerto Libertador municipality, he was known for his cultural, sports, and educational efforts.

Two More Hidroituango Project Activists Assassinated (Antioquia)

The Rios Vivos Movement reported the killing of two more persons opposed to the Hidroituango project. 35 year-old Luis Alberto Torres Montoya and his 20 year-old brother Duvian Andrés Correa Sanchez were both murdered on May 8. The Rios Vivos Movement is opposed to the Hidroituango hydroelectric dam because it has displaced hundreds of families. The flooding of the river is will disrupt the livelihoods of fishermen and miners and could jeopardize the identification of victims buried in mass graves. These murders took place 6 days after the killing of another Rios Vivos activist- Hugo Albeiro George Pérez.

ONIC Condemns Murder of Indigenous Saliba Indigenous Leader (Vichada)

On June 19, the ONIC condemned the murder of Arnulfo Catimay Blanca, a Saliba indigenous leader, by a member of the Colombian National Police. Catimay Blanca was reportedly shot to death while the police tried to control an altercation with a third party.

Two Nasa Embera Chamí Tortured in La Delfina Reservation (Valle del Cauca)

On June 25, the ONIC reported the kidnapping and torture of José Gustavo Parra Gutiérrez and Sebastián Parra Gutiérrez, both indigenous guards in La Delfina reservation in Buenaventura municipality. The two men were kidnapped, hung to a tree, and lynched. The Nasa indigenous community's freedom of movement remains restricted as illegal armed groups are obstructing their mobilization. An estimated 250 members of the Nasa community became displaced and are currently residing in an educational institution in Buenaventura.

Son of Land Restitution Leader Assassinated in Curvaradó (Chocó)

On June 23, the Inter-Ecclesial Commission for Justice and Peace (*Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz*) reported that 33 year-old Adrián Pérez, son of a land restitution leader Emiliano Perez, was assassinated. Witnesses state that four members of the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces (*Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, AGC) shot him when he tried to escape. Mr. Perez, a demobilized FARC member, joined his father Emiliano in his peaceful land restitution

efforts two years ago. The Perez family was displaced by Urapalma and paramilitary forces in 1996, and then again in 1997. Since then, they have advocated for restitution of their lands with little avail from the government.

Union Leader Threatened (Atlántico)

On June 21, Eric Amador, treasurer of the Health Workers National Union of Colombia (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Salud de Colombia, Sintrasaludcol*), received a death threat from the AGC. The AGC gave him 72 hours to resign and leave the city. The death threat is in retaliation to charges he brought up against health insurer SaludCoop for unjustified firings of union leaders and deteriorating labor conditions faced by workers.

Terror and Threats in Ancestral Bari Territory (Norte de Santander)

On June 20, ONIC rebuked the violence taking place in the ancestral Bari territory near Tibu city, Northern Santander. According to ONIC, indigenous communities face confinement and possible displacement due to combat between the National National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional, ELN*) and Popular Liberation Army (*Ejército Popular de Liberación, EPL*). Fighting over control of illicit crops and drug routes in the Bari territory have dramatically increased in recent months.

Embera Persons Stuck in Nuqui (Chocó)

On June 25, ONIC and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 1,548 Embera indigenous peoples were “confined” in their territory. The AGC is engaging in violent activities and restricting the indigenous’ freedom of movement. The situation is likely to lead to the mass displacement of six indigenous communities. Currently, civilians have little to no access to food or humanitarian assistance.

Communities in the Middle Atrato Region Face Increasing Violence by ELN (Chocó)

On June 22, several organizations (Indigenous, rural farmers and religious) located in the middle Atrato River region of Chocó, reported that the ELN’s regional commander alias “La Mona” was generating violence and abuses. These leaders fear that thousands of families will become displaced due to the ELN’s practice of forced recruitment, sexual violence, robberies, and selective killings.

Indigenous Allege the Army of Invading School in the Awa Reservation (Nariño)

On June 18, ONIC and the Indigenous People’s Commission on Human Rights (*Comisión nacional de derechos humanos de pueblos indígenas, CDDHHPI*) denounced that members of the Army had positioned themselves within the Pianlupí School in the Piguambí Palangala Reservation located in Tumaco, Nariño. The ONIC reports that Jungle Battalion #35 Gualtal of Tumaco is using the school as an operations base. Contrary to international humanitarian law,

the soldiers are using the school for lodging and place whereby to launch their counter-insurgency efforts. These actions are a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions. They are placing civilians in particular children in harm's way.

Human Rights Organizations Receive Death Threats in Bogota (Cundinamarca)

On May 30, human rights lawyer Jose Humberto Gomez reported that the Black Eagles (Aguilas Negras) paramilitary group is targeting the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), Somos Defensores, and Association for Normalization, Verification, and Peace (*Asociación para la Normalización, Verificación, ASOPAZ*) in death threat pamphlets. The Black Eagles states that these human rights groups are their "military targets".

Paramilitary Group Threaten Supporters of Presidential Candidate Gustavo Petro (Guajira)

On June 20, the Sintrabiofilm Workers Union denounced that the Black Eagles were threatening to kill supporters of leftist presidential candidate Gustavo Petro. Among those targeted by the paramilitaries are lawyers and doctors in the southern Guajira region. The later were given 48 hours to "disappear from the map" or risk becoming "military targets."

Afro-Colombian Activists Remain Unjustly Imprisoned 60 Days after Their Arrest (Valle del Cauca)

In a sweep of mass arrests on April 20-22, Colombian authorities arbitrarily detained dozens of elected community leaders and rights defenders in Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and Nariño. The detained are accused of having links with the ELN. Among the detained are Black Communities' Process (*Proceso de Comunidades Negras, PCN*) activists Sara Quiñonez and Tulia Maris Valencia. Sixty days later, the two activists remain imprisoned in a maximum security prison. Efforts to get them released have not prevailed. WOLA and PCN believe that these arrests are politically motivated. The two women were targeted in order to obstruct their work defending Afro-Colombian land rights. U.S. authorities should intervene to guarantee their release.

Indigenous Authorities Request Presence of Police (Guajira)

On June 28, the Indigenous Authorities of Colombia (*Autoridades Indigenas de Colombia, AIC*) requested that Colombia's national police be present in the Akajalirrawa territory in Maicao from July 24-31. During this time, they expected the land titling authorities to visit. Police presence is requested because there are armed groups in the area. The AIC fears that they could harm the civil servants planning to visit their territory.

Explosives Target Businessman and Injure Indigenous Leader (Cauca)

On June 22, an explosive artifact placed by an unknown individual impacted business owner Ivan Sarria. This attack had the consequence of injuring, Wilson Arbey Osnas Nene, Secretary

General of the la Laguna reservation. According to *El Tampon*, authorities believe the attack was carried out by organized crime in retaliation for Sarria's refusal to pay extortion money.

Union Begins Hunger Strike (Bolivar)

On July 26, members of the Workers of Tenaris Tubes Caribe Union (*Sindicato de Trabajadores de Tenaris Tubos del Caribe*, SINTRATUCAR), chained themselves outside of the Tenaris Tube factory to protest poor labor standards at the multinationals' headquarters in Colombia. Tenaris has a manufacturing center in Colombia, TuboCaribe, which has a production capacity of 250,000 tons per year of steel pipe for the oil and gas industry. Two protesters have been suspended for 210 days without pay for attempting to organize.

Labor Coalition Protest at General Motor Annual Shareholders' Meeting

On June 12, members of the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights (MCHR), United Automobile Workers (UAW), and community and labor advocates confronted GM CEO Mary Barra at the Annual Shareholders' meeting over workers' rights violations in Colombia. Activist read a summary of a letter detailing findings from a delegation to Colombia and demanded a fair settlement with Colombian injured workers.

We thank you in advance for your attention to these important matters. Please contact us for further details if needed.

Sincerely,
Gimena Sanchez
Director for the Andes

July 3, 2018