December 5, 2023

**Killings of Indigenous Leaders in Colombia Must Be Halted**

Our organizations strongly condemn the assassination of Nasa Kwesx Kiwe Indigenous governor, Phanor Guazaquillo Peña. On December 3, sicarios shot and killed Mr. Peña in broad daylight during the funeral of fellow indigenous leader Manuel Carlosama at a cemetery in Puerto Asis, Putumayo. Mr. Peña served as a delegate for the High Instance for Ethnic Peoples (IEANPE), the mechanism set up by the 2016 peace agreement to advance the implementation of the Ethnic Chapter. Mr. Peña's death signifies a serious blow to the Nasa people and all ethnic communities in the country.

In the conflict observatory of the Institute for Development and Peace (INDEPAZ), Mr. Peña is recorded as the 155th social leader killed in 2023. Colombia has suffered 90 massacres so far this year.

Civil society organizations denounce the grave security situation facing Colombia’s social leaders that particularly targets Indigenous persons. We urge all of Colombia’s illegal armed groups, structures, and criminal entities to cease targeting civil society and civilians. Our message to those groups engaged in peace dialogues or talks with the Colombian government is that: by killing ethnic minority leaders and members of these communities you are greatly undermining any possibility of gaining global support for your peace efforts and/or incentives to demobilize your illegal structures.

We strongly urge the Attorney General's office to immediately investigate, sanction, and bring to justice the perpetrators of this crime. Both the Ministries of Justice and Interior
must take action to guarantee the safety and security of social leaders. While we appreciate the U.S. Embassy in Bogota's tweet condemning this murder, we strongly urge that the U.S. government encourage Colombia to take bold steps to prevent further murders of Indigenous leaders from taking place and to implement the security aspects of the 2016 peace accords that protect ethnic minorities.

The Washington Office on Latin America
Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective
The Latin American Working Group Education Fund
National Lawyers Guild S.F. Bay Area Chapter
Institute for Race, Equality and Human Rights
Global Witness
Fundación Ficamazonía
Equipo Claretiano ante la ONU
Colombia Human Rights Network
Colombia Human Rights Committee
Colombia Acuerdo de Paz NGO
Ciclo de Conferencias de Estudios Africanos y de la Diáspora Africana
Amazon Watch