

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 324 5208 <b>Sr. Amylkar Acosta</b> Minister of Mines and Energy of Colombia
---	---

October, 25, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are deeply distressed at the assassination of **Adelinda Gómez Gaviria**, a mining resistance activist, and the shooting of her son, **Wilson Pipicano**, in the Cortaderas area of Almaguer municipality in Cauca Department. On September 30 at 8:30pm two unknown gunmen approached Adelinda as she was returning from a meeting, opened fire, killing her and seriously wounding her 16-year-old son. A month ago Adelinda Gómez had received a telephoned death threat: "stop [messing] around with this mining stuff, that is risky and you're going to get yourself killed."

Adelinda Gómez Gaviria, a 36-year old mother of three, was a human rights defender and leader of Process of Women of the Colombian Massif, which is part of the non-governmental Integration Committee of the Colombian Massif (CIMA). She was active in opposing the development of gold mining by both multinational companies (including AngloGold Ashanti of South Africa) and small private mining ventures. She denounced the threats that mining projects pose to the environment and peasants' livelihoods. In February 1,500 peasant farmers and members of indigenous communities attended a public forum on mining and the environment that she had helped organize.

The mining resistance movement in Colombia is formidable. AngloGold Ashanti is also facing opposition to its La Colosa mine in Tolima Department, the largest open pit gold mining project in the northern Andes. In July voters in the region held a plebiscite and voted overwhelmingly to shut down the mine.

The killing of Adelinda Gómez Gaviria highlights the difficulties for women working in Cauca to defend human rights. The Human Rights and International Human Rights Observatory of the Cauca Network for Life and Human Rights has registered the murders of fourteen women human rights defenders in Cauca so far this year, primarily from rural areas. They have also reported twelve death threats against human rights defenders, five of them against women.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- ⤴ carry out a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Adelinda Gómez Gaviria and the wounding of her son, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- ⤴ ensure protection measures for all members of CIMA in strict accordance with their wishes; and
- ⤴ fulfill your obligations to ensure human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

Copies: FUNDECIMA ~ via US mail  
 First Secretary for Human Rights and Minorities, Embassy of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Andrew Bowen, Interim Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600  
 Mary Brett Rogers-Springs, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628  
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 278/13\_Colombia

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**