

via fax: 011 571 596 0631 <b>Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b> Attorney General of Colombia
via email: correspondencia@unp.gov.co <b>Sr. Director Diego Fernando Mora</b> Director of the National Protection Unit	via email: asuntosdefensor@defensoria.gov.co <b>Sr. Defensor Carlos Alfonso Negret</b> Defensor del Pueblo/National Ombudsman of Colombia

May 23, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply troubled to learn that residents of the **hamlet Puerto Lleras in the Jiguamiandó collective territory** in the department of Chocó, report continued **threats and raids from paramilitaries** near the Humanitarian Zone of Pueblo Nuevo, putting all the inhabitants at risk.

On April 15 the human rights NGO Interchurch Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) reported that an unidentified number of paramilitaries from the group Gaitanista Self Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC) entered Puerto Lleras, rounded up the community, told them they were going to take control over the zones previously occupied by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and that they would not allow the National Liberation Army (ELN) into the territory.

The paramilitaries offered 800,000 Colombian pesos (approximately 280 USD) to anyone who wanted to join them, and ordered the community to farm coca crops on their territory. They also announced that they were waiting for 100 additional men who were coming to join them from Pavarandó, and then heading for the hamlet of Pueblo Nuevo, which is a Humanitarian Zone. According to CIJP there has been no concrete action on the part of the military stationed around these zones. The paramilitary groups have been able to move freely in and out of the territory.

Despite the fact that the Humanitarian Zones of the Uradá Jiguamiandó reservation, Pueblo Nuevo, and Nueva Esperanza have been granted protectionary measures by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Constitutional Court of Colombia, raids from paramilitary groups persist and have worsened since the beginning of March (cf our letter of March 25). Since March 5 the murders of two community leaders, the expansion and strengthening of the ELN into zones previously controlled by the FARC, and an increase in the number of AGC paramilitaries have been recorded. In an interview with local media on April 17, Ombudsman Carlos Alfonso Negret Mosquera warned that the conflict in Chocó has worsened recently, leaving in its wake over 2,000 people affected, one abduction every day, and that 20 of the 30 municipalities in Chocó are at risk due to the struggle for territorial control between armed parties.

We **strongly urge you to**:

- respect Humanitarian Zone boundaries and ensure the safety of the leaders, in compliance with the provisions established in relation to victims in the Peace Agreement with the FARC;
- ensure that acts of violence are not repeated in their communities;
- take immediate action to break up paramilitary groups, in accordance with the commitments made by the government and recommendations from international bodies.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email  
 Colombia Desk, US State Department (attention: Ian Arzeni and Gail Morgado) ~ via email  
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia and Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650  
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Afro-Descendants, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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