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October 21, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the murders of two men affiliated with the environmental defense organization Ríos Vivos Movement of Antioquia (MRVA): **Julián de Jesús Areiza Moreno**, age 20, and the **son of Juan de Dios Ramírez**.

On September 22 two unidentified men shot Julián de Jesús Areiza Moreno in Briceño municipality as he was returning from a sports event. His assailants were waiting for him, took him off his motorcycle, and shot him in the head. Another man was injured in the attack. Rubén Areiza, the uncle of Julián Areiz and a member of the MRVA, called police to ask for personal protection while his family visited the crime scene. Authorities refused, stating their own fear of the situation. Nevertheless, Ruben Areiza and his family proceeded to the crime scene without protection. They remained by his nephew's body until the police, accompanied by the National Army, arrived several hours later.


On the same day, the son of Juan de Díos Ramírez, a former member of MRVA, was killed with a sharp object in Valdivia municipality in northern Antioquia Department. Juan de Díos had recently presented his letter of resignation to MRVA because of pressure being put on people linked to MRVA. Several officials from Empresa Públicas de Medellín (Public Enterprises of Medellín, or EPM) and the local public administration have stated that people who are affiliated with MRVA would not receive any reparation or compensation for recent damages and losses caused by the Hidroituango hydroelectric project, under construction by EPM.

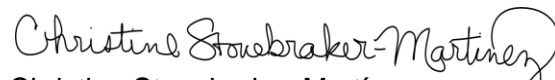
MRVA is composed of 15 associations and families in the West, North and Lower-Cauca sub-regions in Antioquia. It has been denouncing for the past 10 years the negative environmental and human rights impacts of the Hidroituango project, which impacts more than 26,000 hectares of land in 19 municipalities. MRVA members and their families have suffered multiple violations of their rights, including death threats, smear campaigns, intimidations, and killings (cf our letters of May 11 and May 26). Since September 2017, the MRVA has reported five cases in which relatives of its leaders were attacked.

We fear further violence against MRVA members because of smear campaigns and insults made against them by public officials and because of the lack of proper investigation of the cases reported to the authorities. Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the people killed, taking into account their membership in MRVA and their relationship to MRVA members / former members, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately fully implement the collective Prevention and Protection Plan for MRVA members;
- take immediate steps to overcome the structural causes behind the threats, killings and attacks faced by human rights defenders in the context of the Hidroituango hydroelectric project.

Sincerely,

  
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 Co-Coordinator

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

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 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, 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:**

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