

<p>via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b> Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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November 12, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed at the threatening message directed to **Genaro de Jesus Graciano** and **Isabel Cristina Zuleta**, co-founders and active members of the Ríos Vivos Movement Antioquia (MRVA) in Ituango, northern Antioquia Department.

On October 25, an unidentified man, wearing a motorcycle taxi vest, approached a young member of MRVA in Ituango to deliver the threatening message. The unidentified man said that all members should refrain from their activism and that no additional persons should join the movement. He used expressions such as “people who do not mess with the dam don’t get in trouble.” He also said that the protection measures that the National Protection Unit (UNP) has granted to Isabel Cristina Zuleta were well known and would not protect her if she came back to Ituango.


On October 26, members of MRVA became aware of a new pamphlet distributed by the paramilitary organization Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC). It named MRVA as one of several organizations that are “a military target.”

MRVA is composed of 15 associations and families in the West, North and Lower-Cauca sub-regions in Antioquia. For the past 10 years, it has been denouncing the negative environmental and human rights impacts of the Hidroituango hydroelectric 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, May 26 and Oct 21). The Governor of Antioquia has also made a number of public statements against MRVA.

Because of our concern for increasing violence resulting from lack of proper investigation of the attacks and the ongoing stigmatization of the MRVA described above, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the multiple attacks on MRVA members, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately take all necessary measures to guarantee the integrity and security of the members of MRVA, in coordination with the human rights defenders concerned;
- implement the political and material measures agreed in the collective Prevention and Protection Plan of MRVA;
- refrain from stigmatizing the work of human rights defenders;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643 and email  
Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email  
Ryan Reid and Christine Russell, Desk Officers for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email  
Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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