

via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b> Attorney General of Colombia
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August 2, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply disturbed by your government's failure to stop the paramilitary violence being waged in the port city of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department. We are concerned that local security forces are complicit in allowing paramilitaries to take control over several districts of Buenaventura. The ongoing violence in Buenaventura is a clear example of how impunity for paramilitary actors threatens the true possibility of peace.

Here are some of the incidents of violence over the past several weeks:

June 19: At 9:00 am, four paramilitaries on motorcycles without license plates entered the Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space (Buenaventura District 4), parked for 30 minutes in front of the homes of social leaders **Yampier Valencia, Orlando Castillo** and **Norha Isabel Castillo**, all active with CONPAZ (Comunidades Construyendo Paz en los Territorios)

July 1: **Luis Yasmani Grueso**, an Afro-descendant civic leader and co-manager of the Puente Nayero Humanitarian Space, experienced the threatening presence of ten masked armed paramilitaries stationed in front of his home in the Comuna 3 district.

July 1: **David Vivas Ramírez**, 20, was shot and killed in the Lleras neighborhood (Comuna 3), caught in crossfire between fighting paramilitary groups Urabeños and Bustamante

July 2: 74 families of Comuna 3 were displaced due to a shootout between paramilitary groups

July 3: clashes between paramilitaries displaced 200 families from their homes in the Lleras neighborhood


July 7: Residents of the Santa Rosa de Guayacán Humanitarian and Biodiverse Reserve witnessed heavily armed and hooded men forcing an Afro-descendant woman off a boat on the Lower Calima River. Her lifeless body appeared on the river banks the next day.

July 26: **Carlos A. Tobar**, an Afro-descendant civic leader and coordinator of Access to Justice Table, was shot six times in his home, rushed to the hospital in critical condition. (As of today, we have no news whether he has survived the attack.)

We **strongly urge** that you immediately

- investigate the attacks on the Afro-descendant woman on the Lower Calima River (July 7) and Carlos Tobar (July 26) and bring those responsible to justice
- consult with CONPAZ and other community organizations to devise a comprehensive state presence in Buenaventura, in compliance with the ruling of Constitutional Court Order 004 of 2009, to guarantee the security of residents, especially ethnic indigenous and Afro-descendant, in areas at risk due to the presence of armed groups

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  
 Christine Russell, Desk Officer 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 mail  
 Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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