

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co	Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
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October 21, 2024

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We write to you with deep concern over the multiple assaults against Indigenous people from the Wiwa Community of El Limón Carrizal in La Guajira Department that have occurred over recent weeks. Between September 4-28, the young men **Luis Elias Nieves Mendoza, Deivi Gomez, Eduardo Enrique Joño Calvo, and Luis Eduardo Mojica** were all stopped by armed men of the paramilitary organization Self-Defense Forces of the Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN) at illegal checkpoints, where they were assaulted and detained for several hours or even multiple days.

On September 4, Luis Eduardo Mojica, an Indigenous man from the Wiwa community, was taken away arbitrarily by heavily armed men from the ACSN. The community started a search for him and confirmed that he was being held by the ACSN. The illegal armed group had kidnapped him and did not release him until September 28.


On September 11, two other members of the Wiwa community, Luis Elias Nieves Mendoza and Deivi Gómez, were on their motorcycles when they were forced to stop by armed men of the ACSN at an illegal checkpoint just outside the community. They were held for more than an hour, during which they were insulted and severely beaten. Upon their release, they received verbal threats against their well-being and that of the Wiwa community. Just one day later, on September 12, Eduardo Enrique Joño Calvo was detained at that same checkpoint, where he was physically assaulted as well.

These incidents are intolerable acts of violence against the Wiwa Indigenous community of El Limón Carrizal, which has been forcibly moved from their home land multiple times in recent years due to dangerous clashes between illegal armed groups such as the ACSN. At this present moment, neither the safety nor the freedom of the Wiwa community is guaranteed, as control of the region by aggressive armed groups prevails and community members are living in extreme fear of their personal security.

We strictly condemn this violence against innocent Indigenous communities such as the Wiwa in El Limón Carrizal due to armed conflicts and strongly urge you to:

- ensure the protection and integrity of the Wiwa community and end the restrictions on mobility and communication they have to endure by placing state and national government entities in the territory
- immediately adopt strong measures to control the violence of illegal armed groups in the territories of Indigenous communities and remove them from the villages
- actively work to address the humanitarian crisis that prevails in rural areas where Indigenous communities are most impacted

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Daniel García-Peña, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
José Luis Caballero Ochoa, Rapporteur for Colombia . Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
Arif Bulkan , Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
CIJP: Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz / Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace
US Embassy: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance ~ via email
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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