

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
--	---

October 22, 2024

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are greatly concerned for the safety of Nasa Indigenous leader **Luis Carlos Coicué** and his wife in Villagarzón, Putumayo Department. Luis Carlos Coicué serves as governor of the Nasa Reservation Jerusalén San Luis Alto Picudito, which has consistently denounced violence committed by all armed actors—guerrillas, paramilitaries and the Colombian National Army alike. Despite this, Nasa leaders have been falsely attacked on social networks, unfoundedly accused of protecting “some border commandos.” This slander has placed leaders like Luis Carlos Coicué at particular risk.

The level of danger was heightened in March when an armed man with his face covered delivered a written warning. The unsigned document, which named leaders and community members from the reservation, stated: “Every collaborator becomes a military objective of our block.” The notice came during a period of weeks when paramilitary organizations were occupying schools and churches; community residents were confined due to minefields and other unexploded ordnance. Because of imminent threats, community members held an assembly for 12 days straight as a strategy to safeguard their reservation.

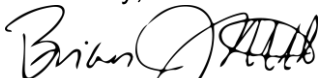
Last month, on September 4, Governor Coicué's wife received a Whatsapp message: “Listen, we need Carlos's number, and if not, tell him yourself to get lost, not cause problems, and stop being a jerk...We've been following you for a day... Otherwise, we'll blow your head off.” Fifteen minutes later, the following message was sent from the same number to the governor's phone: “Hello Cucho, we need you to get out of here, we already know where you are.”

Twelve days later, the National Protection Unit (UNP) sent to Governor Coicué a resolution (DGRP 009396 of 2024) from the Risk Assessment Committee and Recommendation of Measures (CERREM) validating the risk level to Coicué as “extraordinary.”

We strongly urge that your government:

- investigate the threats made to Governor Luis Carlos Coicué and his family, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- modify the protective measures recommended by CERREM (one armored vest and one means of communication) according to the needs and wishes of Governor Luis Carlos Coicué and his family

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Augusto Rodríguez Ballesteros, Director of the National Protection Unit (UNP) ~ via email
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: