



Friends of
the Earth
International



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Mssrs.

President of the Republic of Colombia
Vicepresident of the Republic of Colombia
Minister of the Interior and Justice
Attorney General
General Supervisor of the Republic
Ombudsman
International Diplomatic Body

Bogota D,C

We would hereby like to express our concern and raise our voice in protest and dissatisfaction with the situation that is taking place in Cauca department, where the public authority, with the excuse of keeping public order, is taking actions that violate Human Rights and the Constitution, thus affecting indigenous communities like Paeces and Guambianos. These communities are met in Resguardo de Maria, in Piendamó. They insist in starting talks with the government to find a solution to put an end to the hunger and extreme poverty the indigenous peoples have suffered in the country and to reclaim the cultural rights and the rights over land, which have been historically violated.

In these days of protests there have been aggressions and human rights abuses by the public force, who ordered to send helicopters to the community and have opened fire against the demonstrators, leaving three indigenous dead, six missing and over eighty injured. In the morning of October 17, the army began to shoot at indigenous and peasant community members in several parts of Cauca, besides using violence and beating up under aged indigenous who are kicked out of the public means of transport. This situation increases the number of injured by the minute.

The incidents that make this already difficult situation of indigenous peoples even worse, are the violent incidents perpetrated by gunmen who, in the past six years have murdered 1,253 indigenous, have violently displaced at least 53,885 indigenous and have stripped 450,000 of the right to land.

On October 6, for example, in Caldas department, paramilitary group "Black Eagles" murdered three Embera Chami indigenous (Luz Marina Morales, Mauricio Largo Bañol, Cesar Largo Alarcón), injured 70 year-old María Angélica Alarcón from Resguardo Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria de la Montaña. The traditional indigenous authorities told the local authorities about the presence of the paramilitary group, who had issued death threats against over 60 people including indigenous and mestizo. However, they did not carry out any protection or prevention actions.

On October 14th, in Resguardo la María, in the municipality of Piendamó, the public force shot and injured several people (Hermes Arbey Díaz, Mauricio Meza, Benjamin Ramos, Mauricio Dizú, Engi Ulcué, Jhon Fredy Piñacue and an indigenous whose name has not been confirmed yet). From October 10 to 14, 2 indigenous were murdered (Nasa indigenous Nicolás Valencia Lemus and Celestino Rivera), 3 people have been detained and two are missing (Leonardo Chocue and Eduardo Cotoina).

We want to raise our voice in protest to this situation and we urge whom it may concern to take action to cease the aggressions immediately. To start the talks the peoples have always claimed and to enforce human rights enshrined in the Colombian constitution and the International Human Rights treaties signed and ratified by Colombia.

We also call for a public positioning on the above situation.

Yours sincerely,