

URGENT ACTION

PROTECTION FOR COMMUNITY NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

Fears for the safety of members of the indigenous Awá community in Colombia have intensified after unidentified gunmen killed 12 community members, including 4 children.

On 26 August unidentified gunmen entered the Indigenous reservation (*Resguardo*) of Gran Rosario, Tumaco Municipality, in the south-western department of Nariño, Colombia, and killed 12 people thought to be members of the same family. Amongst the dead are four children.

One of those killed is Tulia García who had received a series of death threats after the killing of her husband Gonzalo Rodríguez Guanga on 23 May 2009. She had denounced the killing saying that the Colombian Army was responsible. Information received indicates that all the victims were members of her family.

Since September 2008 over 50 members of the Awá community in Nariño have been killed; guerrilla forces, members of the security forces and their paramilitary allies are thought to be responsible for these killings. In February 2009, Amnesty International issued a statement condemning the massacre of 27 Awá indigenous people in two separate attacks on 4 and 11 February. According to the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) were responsible for both these attacks.

The latest killings highlight the failure by the Colombian authorities to guarantee the safety of Awá communities in the department of Nariño and whilst Amnesty International welcomes the announcement made by the Colombian Government on 26 August committing State investigative bodies to advance criminal investigations into the killings, it is not clear what action the Colombian Government is going to take to protect the community.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to take decisive action, deemed appropriate by the Awá communities themselves to guarantee their safety;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the killings of 26 August, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 08 October TO:

President

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República, Palacio de
Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26, Bogotá,
Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890

Salutation: Dear President

Uribe/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Minister of Interior and Justice

Sr. Fabio Valencia Cossio
Ministerio Del Interior y De Justicia
Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, D.C. – Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 560 4630/599 8961

Salutation: Dear Minister/Sr.
Ministro

And copies to:

National Indigenous Organization:
Organización nacional indígena de
Colombia (ONIC)
Calle 13, N°4-38

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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