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| via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez President of the Republic of Colombia | via fax: 011 57 1 570 2017 Dr. Mario German Iguaran Arana Attorney General of Colombia |
| via fax: 011 57 1 266 0351 General Freddy Padilla de Leon Minister of Defense and Commander of the Armed Forces of Colombia | |

May 26, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are saddened and outraged at the May 18 assassination of **Robert de Jesús Guacheta**, Vice-Governor of the Honduras Council of Nasa Indigenous Peoples in the Municipality of Morales, Cauca Department, and member of the Political Commission of the Regional Advisory Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC). He had received various death threats, which he had made known to the Risk Evaluation Committee of the Interior Ministry of Colombia and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR).

In September 2008 the IACHR requested protection measures from the Interior Ministry on behalf of 20 indigenous leaders because of the serious situation which they were facing, including the assassination attempts in June 2008 on **José Goyes Santa Cruz**, the previous Vice-Governor; **Antonino Guacheta**, the ex-Governor and member of the Elders Council; and **Luis Eider Zambrano**, indigenous leader and member of the Municipal Administration of Morales

After this request from IACHR, there were various meetings with the Interior Ministry but they did not provide sufficient protection for Robert Guacheta nor for other vulnerable indigenous leaders and their families in the eastern zone who receive multiple threats, in the form of text messages, leaflets and phone calls.

This recent assassination is further evidence of the repression against indigenous communities and their leaders. In our letter of May 24 we urged protection for **Aida Quilcue**, a CRIC leader whose husband, Edwin Legarda, was killed by Colombia soldiers in December 2008 (see our letter of January 22, 2009).

We therefore **strongly urge that you**

- immediately investigate, prosecute and bring to justice those responsible for the death of Robert de Jesús Guacheta;
- provide full and effective protection measures for José Goyes Santa Cruz, Antonino Guacheta, Luis Eider Zambrano and all 20 indigenous leaders in the eastern zone of Cauca Department, as cited in the IACHR formal request;
- respect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association of indigenous organizations, and respect the right to peaceful protest.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197
 Nan N. Fife, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
 Javier Hernández Valencia, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571. 658-3300
 Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 Colombia Solidarity Campaign UK ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email
 5/17/09ColombiaSolidarity Campaign UK

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