

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 266 1003 <b>Sr. Juan Carlos Pinzón</b> Defense Minister of Colombia
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July 2, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged by the killing of civilians **Deivi López Ortega, José Antonio Acanamejoy, Brayan Yatacue Secue** and **José Yiner Esterilla** by troops from the VI Division of the Colombian Army in the village of Alto Amarradero, Ipiales Municipality, Nariño Department, on May 17, 2014.

The community where the four victims lived is affiliated with FUNDAPROGRESO, the local affiliate of FENSUAGRO, the national agricultural workers' union. This deadly attack took place just one month after the detention of 17 FENSUAGRO members in Leiva, Nariño (cf our letter of May 12, 2014). The detention was apparently in retaliation against farmers who participated in the recent National Agrarian and Popular Strike.

At about 4am on May 17, Colombian soldiers forcibly entered the home of Leonardo Obando. He and his family awoke to the sounds of an explosion and a hail of gunshots. His children began crying and the family dropped to the floor to seek protection. Soldiers gave Obando the choice of turning the house over to them as a base of operations or being taken prisoner. As Obando and his family were leaving the house, he saw four dead bodies and recognized them as his overnight guests: Deivi López Ortega, José Antonio Acanamejoy, Brayan Yatacue Secue and José Yiner Esterilla. Each had been unarmed; each was slain by the soldiers' bullets. They had spent the night after a long day of preparations for a community Mother's Day festival.

We are concerned that a statement released by the VI Division of the Army falsely states that the four people killed were members of the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC). These men were not members of any armed revolutionary group. Deivi Lopez Ortega (age 15) and José Antonio Acanamejoy were part of the Community Action Council. Brayan Yatacue Secue, an indigenous Nasa, was a farmer. José Yiner Esterilla, a member of the local Afro-Colombian community, was the father of a four-year-old daughter and member of the New Hope Community Council. All four had all been members of FUNDAPROGRESO.

These killings occur amidst ongoing repression against FENSUAGRO. During the first weeks of May, Alirio Garcia, Executive Secretary of FENSUAGRO, and his wife Rosalba Gaviria, also a FENSUAGRO leader, were followed and threatened on several occasions. The entire national leadership of FENSUAGRO has received death threats from the Rastrojos paramilitary group. During its 37 years of existence, more than 1,500 FENSUAGRO members have been murdered, and the federation has suffered increased political arrests and forced displacement. Almost two-thirds of Colombia's forcibly displaced persons are from rural areas such as those represented by the union.

We strongly urge you to investigate the killing of these four civilians, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission / Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz ~ via fax  
 Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600  
 Olivia Franken, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628  
 José de Jesus Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

May 22 AFGJ\_Colombia

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