

URGENT ACTION

CONFINED COMMUNITIES IN RIOSUCIO, CHOCÓ

Several Embera Indigenous communities and the Afro-descendent community of Taparal in the department of Chocó, Colombia, find themselves confined and terrified due to the presence of the Gaitanistas Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, AGC), and due to the possibility of them clashing with the National Liberation Army (Ejército De Liberación Nacional, ELN) in their communities.

The Dialogue and Consultation Roundtable of the Indigenous Peoples of Chocó (Mesa de Diálogo y Concertación de los Pueblos Indígenas del Chocó) reported to Amnesty International that on 2 December, more than 100 members of the paramilitary group known as the Gaitanistas Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC) made an incursion into the Pichindé Indigenous community of the Embera peoples. This community is located on the Taparal river, which flows off of the Chintadó river, in the municipality of Riosucio, Chocó. The Pichindé community is made up of 260 inhabitants, from 54 families, who find themselves confined after being intimidated by the armed group.

There are two other Indigenous communities on the Chintadó river: Marcial, with 308 inhabitants from 75 families, and Jagual, with around 460 inhabitants from 100 families. The Afro-descendent community of Taparal is also located close to there and has around 380 inhabitants from approximately 50 families. These communities are currently confined and are fearful that clashes between the AGC and the National Liberation Army, whose presence in the territory has been increasing, could possibly occur. This situation has already been reported to the competent authorities, and it is urgent that they activate security and support mechanisms for the communities at risk. They must also take concrete actions to protect and support communities in light of the possible displacement of these rivers' inhabitants.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Demanding a comprehensive State presence responsible for guaranteeing the rights to life, integrity and security of Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples in at-risk areas in Chocó due to the presence of armed groups;
- Calling for immediate collective protection measures for these communities, which guarantee the life and integrity of Indigenous and Afro-descendent leaders and community members, based on consultation with these individuals and in accordance with their wishes;
- Requesting a comprehensive State response in order to execute prevention and protection plans for displaced Indigenous communities, or those at risk of forced displacement, in compliance with Decree 004 from 2009 of the Constitutional Court.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JANUARY 2018 TO:

President

Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co

**Salutation: Dear Mr. President/
 Estimado Señor Presidente**

Director of Unit for Attention and

Reparation of Victims
 Yolanda Pinto
 Calle 16 # 6-66. Edificio Avianca Piso 19
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 4261111

**Salutation: Dear Mrs. Director/
 Estimada Señora Directora**

And copies to:

Ombudsperson
 Mr. Carlos Alfonso Negret
 Carrera 9 Núm.16 - 21
 Bogotá D. C., Colombia
 Email:
Asuntosdefensor@defensoria.gov.co

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Excellency My Nestor Osorio, Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0LN, Tel 0207 5899777, elondres@cancilleria.gov.uk

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 178/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/es/documents/amr23/7356/2017/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been publicly condemning the increase in displacement and confinement of ethnic communities in Chocó. These continued violations of human rights underscore one of the main obstacles to implementing the peace process: the protection of communities that live in the areas most affected by the armed conflict and the need to guarantee that these deplorable acts do not go unpunished (more information at <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2017/11/la-encrucijada-colombiana-a-un-ano-de-la-paz/> - only available in Spanish).

On 22 November, Amnesty International published a report on the human rights situation and guarantees of non-repetition in the department of Chocó, which is called *The Years of Solitude Continue: The Peace Agreement and Guarantees of Non-Repetition in Chocó* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/7425/2017/en/>), and it launched a petition to the President of Colombia requesting that he provide individual and collective protection to the Indigenous and Afro-descendent communities of Chocó who are at risk (see the petition at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/protect-ethnic-communities-from-violence-and-abuse-in-colombia/>).

In the first half of 2017, the Indigenous Peoples of Chocó denounced at least two paramilitary incursions in their territories. The first took place on 6 March and caused massive displacement of families and the confinement of communities nearby in Peña Azul (more information at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/5826/2017/en/>). The second took place on 18 April in the collective territory of Jiguamiandó, close to the Humanitarian Zone of Pueblo Nuevo (more information at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/6082/2017/en/>).

In the department of Chocó, crimes under international law and violations of human rights persist, including the targeted killings of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian community members, forced collective displacement, confinement of communities, and forced recruitment of children.

The Indigenous Peoples of Chocó live with continuous threats and acts of violence on the parts of armed groups and paramilitaries; for this reason, in 2009, the Constitutional Court of Colombia issued Decree 004, in which it urged the Colombian government to take measures, focused on ethnicity, in order to design and develop a public policy on forced displacement, aimed at protecting life, freedom and cultural diversity, among other rights.