

# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS YUKPA PEOPLE FACE EVICTION

**Yukpa indigenous people that crossed to Colombia are facing eviction and threat of being sent back to Venezuela violating their rights as a binational population. The Colombian State is denying their right to remain in the country and their rights as Indigenous Peoples.**

**Yukpa people's settlements** in El Escobal sector and under the Santander International Bridge boarder crossing in the city of Cúcuta, east Colombia, face eviction from their settlements following their cross-over to Colombia. According to information provided by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), on 15 March, police forces initiated the eviction of these communities, where approximately 500 people live. The Yukpa people belong to a binational tribe that lives on both sides of the border. Most Yukpa people do not possess identity papers and it is hard for them to prove their binationality inherent to their ethnic identity. Given that there are no guarantees for them to return to Venezuela, they keep going back to Colombia.

The Yukpa people settled in Cucuta have been evicted twice since 1 October 2017 following the city mayor's directive. They were forced back to Venezuela under the excuse they had returned voluntarily, thus assigning them the category of "foreign citizens". They are currently living in highly precarious conditions lacking basic services such as drinking water, food and access to health or education.

The Colombian constitution recognizes cross-bordering indigenous peoples as entitled to be treated as citizens. Their institutional treatment should therefore be the one foreseen for any Colombian indigenous community affected by a crisis in its territory. In 2009, the Constitutional Court ordered the formulation and implementation of safeguard plans to respond to the critical situation experienced by 34 indigenous peoples of Colombia affected by the armed conflict and forced displacement including the Yukpa people.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:**

- Urging the authorities to stop the eviction and return of Yukpa people;
- Urging the Colombian government to provide comprehensive assistance with cultural relevance to guarantee the right to life, health, food and shelter of Yukpa communities in Cucuta and other bordering cities;
- Calling on them to implement the ethnic safeguards plans of the Yukpa Indigenous People, taking into account direct consultation with the Yukpa people who have crossed to Colombia from Venezuela and their community based organizations.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 APRIL 2018 TO:**

#### President

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

**Salutation: Dear President Santos /  
 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

#### Minister of Foreign Affairs

Señora María Ángela Holguín  
 Canciller de la República  
 Palacio de San Carlos: Calle 10 # 5-51  
 Bogotá D.C., Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 381 4747  
 Email: contactenos@cancilleria.gov.co

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimada  
 Sra. Ministra**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Presidential Advisor on Human Rights

Señora Paula Gaviria  
 Carrera 8 No.7-26  
 Bogotá D. C., Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 566 2064 / 344 1817  
 Email: paulagaviria@presidencia.gov.co

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR NESTOR OSORIO, Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent SW1X 0LN, 020 7589 9177 / 020 7589 5037, Fax 020 7581 1829, egranbretana@cancilleria.gov.co, [www.colombianembassy.co.uk](http://www.colombianembassy.co.uk), Salutation: Your Excellency

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Yukpa are Indigenous People located on both sides of the border between Colombia and Venezuela. In Colombia the 2005 census accounted for 4,761 Yukpas, and in Venezuela, the 2011 census accounted for 10,640. Their notion of ancestral territory is pre-existing to said border and according to ethnographic data there are multiple forms of exchange between groups and families on both sides, configuring a unit that transcends countries.

It is estimated that in Latin America there would be around 108 transnational indigenous peoples, and that in Colombia 35% of indigenous groups are in different international borders (DNP, 2010).

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