

# URGENT ACTION

## THREATS AGAINST COMMUNITY LEADERS

On 18 November, the presidents of the communal associations of El Porvenir and Matarratón, in Puerto Gaitán (Meta), received WhatsApp messages from the same telephone number requesting meetings and information about community members, accompanied by a video showing the murder and dismemberment of a person. The sender's profile photo depicted a member of a Colombian non-State armed group. These peasant's communities are victims of land dispossession and forced displacement, and they have faced threats and attacks for demanding their territorial rights. We urge the Attorney General's Office to conduct robust and effective investigations to bring those responsible to justice.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

Attorney General  
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Dear Mrs. Attorney General,

*I am writing to express my deep concern about the serious risks to the life, safety, and security of the peasant communities of Matarratón and El Porvenir, and in particular to the presidents of their communal action boards (Juntas de Acción Comunal), in the municipality of Puerto Gaitán, Meta, on the banks of the Meta River.*

*The Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello publicly reported that on 18 November both presidents received WhatsApp messages from the same telephone number, reported to the Attorney General in the respective formal denounces, requesting meetings and information about community members. The messages included a video showing the murder and dismemberment of an unknown person. The sender's profile photo depicted a member of a Colombian non-State armed group.*

*These peasant communities are beneficiaries of Constitutional Court ruling SU-456 of 2016, which recognised their rights to land and territory after they were dispossessed of the lands they had occupied for generations by individuals who later made false ownership claims and even sold parts of them. The ruling ordered the Government to clarify and secure these communities' property rights. However, nearly a decade later, this high court ruling remains unimplemented, and the communities have faced serious threats and attacks, including the enforced disappearance and killing of Luz Marina Arteaga, a prominent defender of their rights, whose body was found in the municipality of Orocué, also near the Meta River, in January 2022.*

***I urge you, as head of the Attorney General's Office, to carry out a robust and effective investigation aimed to identify those responsible for these and previous threats and attacks against the Matarratón and El Porvenir communities, considering the ongoing violations of their land and territorial rights. I also ask that you ensure those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials, to prevent further attacks against land and territorial rights defenders in the Meta River region.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Orinoquian plains comprise vast territories with abundant water resources, enormous agricultural and livestock potential, and significant oil reserves. Far from Colombia's main urban centres, these lands, traditionally inhabited by Indigenous peoples, have for decades been subjected to violent occupation by actors seeking to seize the land, formalise ownership through fraudulent means, and then sell it to those interested in developing agro-industrial or oil projects.

At the same time, Indigenous communities and peasant communities, often created by people forcibly displaced from other parts of Colombia, have built settlements and maintained peasant practices that frequently clash with the interests of those who have seized the lands, or even those who have purchased it alleging good faith and the search for economic development. The State has long had the responsibility of clarifying land ownership, taking into account the rights of victims of dispossession and forced displacement. Despite the existence of a Land Restitution System and efforts to advance a rural reform, many conflicts remain, and peasant and Indigenous communities continue to face threats and attacks for defending their land and territorial rights.

El Porvenir and Matarratón are peasant communities that preserve traditional peasant (campesino) cultural practices in the Colombian Orinoquian plains, on the banks of the Meta River in the municipality of Puerto Gaitán, Meta department, near the border with Casanare and Vichada departments. In the late 1980s, the inhabitants of these communities were threatened by armed groups and forced to abandon their lands, which were then illegally occupied and sold. Since then, they have fought to recover their territory amid ongoing threats and risks, as documented by Amnesty International in its 2014 report *A land title is not enough: Ensuring sustainable land restitution in Colombia* ([AMR 23/031/2014](#)). In 2016, Constitutional Court ruling SU-426 ordered the National Lands Agency to allocate the territory to its "historical inhabitants", but almost a decade later the orders remain unimplemented.

Amnesty International has previously warned of threats against leaders from these peasant communities, issuing urgent actions in [2015](#) and [2019](#). The latter concerned Luz Marina Arteaga, a historic leader and spokesperson for the land restitution process in Matarratón and El Porvenir, who faced numerous threats for her work, and was forcibly disappeared in January 2022. Her body was found later on the banks of the Meta River in Orocué, Casanare department.

Neighbouring communities have joined El Porvenir and Matarratón in their struggle for the recognition of land rights, including the Indigenous community of ASEINPOME, which has also been subjected to threats for its territorial claims, as publicly denounced by [Amnesty International](#). Despite these efforts, threats and attacks, often in impunity despite denounces, continue to undermine access to land and territorial rights for communities across the Colombian Orinoquian plains, as this recent threat against the communal board presidents of Matarratón and El Porvenir, that was [publicly denounced by the Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello](#).

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 10 March 2026.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME:** Peasant communities of El Porvenir and Matarratón [they / them]

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** N/A

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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