

# URGENT ACTION

## PEASANT FARMER COMMUNITIES RISK DISPLACEMENT

**Miguel Briceño, a leader of the peasant farmer community El Porvenir in central Colombia, has been threatened as attempts to forcibly displace the community intensify.**

On 16 August **Miguel Briceño**, a community leader of **El Porvenir**, Puerto Gaitán Municipality, Meta Department, received a threatening phone call from a man who identified himself as a commander of the paramilitary "Los Urabeños". The caller told Miguel Briceño: "when I have you tied up or I have one of your relatives, tears of blood will be spilt...". This is only the latest of a series of threats against Miguel Briceño. He has reported this threat to the authorities. Currently, the only physical security measure the authorities have provided him is a mobile phone.

The peasant farmers of El Porvenir have been grazing their cattle on this savannah for about half a century. In the 1990s the state institution charged with allocating state-owned land to landless peasant farmers illegally adjudicated the land to Víctor Carranza, who until his death in 2013 was one of the country's most powerful emerald entrepreneurs, and who was long suspected of having strong links to paramilitary groups. In July 2014, following requests from Colombian human rights organizations, the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural, INCODER) issued a resolution revoking the illegal land titles. President Juan Manuel Santos stated in April 2015 that Carranza's heirs had returned the land to the state, but the community is yet to receive legal ownership over it, while the threats against them continue.

Leaders of the peasant farmer community of nearby **Matarraton** and the **Indigenous Cubeo-Sikuani community** settled in the El Porvenir area have also been repeatedly threatened over the last few months in efforts to forcibly displace them.

### Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Miguel Briceño, other members of the peasant farmer communities of El Porvenir and Matarraton, and the Indigenous Cubeo-Sikuani community, which may lead to their forced displacement, and urging the authorities to provide effective protection for them in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into threats against Miguel Briceño, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break the links between them and the security forces;
- Urging them to take urgent action to ensure that the community of El Porvenir secures legal ownership over their lands.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO:

#### President

Juan Manuel Santos  
 Presidente de la República  
 Casa de Nariño  
 Calle 7. No 6-54.  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631  
**Salutation: Dear President Santos/  
 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

#### Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development  
 Aurelio Iragorri Valencia  
 Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo  
 Rural  
 Avenida Jiménez No 7-1765, Piso 3  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Email:  
 despachoministro@minagricultura.gov.co  
**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado  
 Sr. Ministro**

#### And copies to:

NGO  
 Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez  
 Bello  
 Carrera 15 No 10-41, piso 3  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Email: corpoclaretiananpb@gmail.com

### 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](mailto:elondres@cancilleria.gov.uk)

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

This is the second update of UA 82/15. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/1930/2015/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/1930/2015/en/)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the long-running armed conflict in Colombia, human rights defenders, as well as Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant farmer communities, have endured the brunt of the conflict. All the warring parties – the security forces and paramilitary groups, acting alone or in collusion with each other, and guerrilla forces – have been responsible for human rights abuses and violations, including killings, enforced disappearances or abductions, torture, crimes of sexual violence and forced displacement. Over the course of the conflict about eight million hectares of land have been abandoned or dispossessed.

Leaders of displaced communities and those seeking the return of stolen lands have been killed or threatened, especially since the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448) was approved in June 2011 and came into force at the beginning of 2012. Law 1448 has provided for reparations, including land restitution, for many survivors of human rights abuses and violations, including those perpetrated by state agents. However, many other victims of the conflict have been excluded from making claims for reparation, while significant areas of stolen land have still not be returned to their rightful owners. For more information about the land restitution process and its obstacles, see the report: *A land title is not enough: Ensuring sustainable land restitution in Colombia* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/031/2014/en/>).

The peasant farmers of El Porvenir have been trying to get legal ownership over the land they have been living on for half a century through INCODER, which adjudicates state-owned land under Law 160. Action from INCODER has been necessary so that the people from El Porvenir, and in many other cases related to state-owned lands, can obtain a land title. For more information about the El Porvenir case, see *Powerless: the fight for land in Porvenir* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/02/powerless-the-fight-for-land-in-porvenir/>).

As a result of this struggle, members of the El Porvenir community, as well as the nearby peasant farmer community of Matarraton, and the Indigenous Cubeo-Sikuani community that has settled in the El Porvenir area, have been subjected to repeated death threats. On 21 June 2016, the president of the Matarraton community council (Junta de Acción Comunal) received a mobile call in which the caller, who identified himself as a member of the “Los Urabeños”, told him he was on a death list of 350 people, including 15 from Matarraton, who would have to leave their communities or be killed. On 15 June 2016, a leader from the Cubeo-Sikuani Indigenous community received a phone call in which the caller offered him money to buy each house in the Cubeo-Sikuani community and that he had to attend a meeting to discuss the deal. The caller said that failure to attend the meeting would put the whole community at risk.