

**January to June 2017**  
**Information System on Attacks against**  
**Human Rights Defenders - ISAAHRD**

look out



**THEY ARE KILLING US!**



**PROGRAMA**  
**SOMOS DEFENSORES**

PROGRAMA NO GUBERNAMENTAL DE PROTECCIÓN A  
DEFENSORES DE DERECHOS HUMANOS



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**The Non-Governmental Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders - Somos Defensores, is a protection area that seeks to develop a comprehensive proposal to prevent aggression and protect the lives of people at risk due to their work as human rights defenders, when they protect the interests of social groups and communities affected by violence in Colombia. The Somos Defensores program is formed by:**



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# LOOK OUT!

## They're Killing Us

The Peace agreement was finally signed. The start of 2017 was marked by the same trend towards the end of 2016: Polarization, skepticism, historical decline in violence in the context of confrontation between the State and the FARC, illegal armed groups inhabiting former FARC areas and a government cornered by the Corruption, extreme right-wing opposition to The Havana agreements and an increasingly marked focus on violence against leaders, which does not seem to stop.

What in 2016 seemed like a bad premonition, today is a serious reality: there is an important increase of homicides and attacks against the life and physical integrity of the defenders of the Human rights in Colombia. And it is not new violence. As it has been documented, at least since the start of the Somos Defensores (We Are Defenders) Program, attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders have been a historical reality in the context of sociopolitical violence and now with the silence of the FARC rifles, this violence is even more focused on this type of activists.

For this reason, this report aims to raise a voice of warning to the country's human rights defenders, given the lack of effective political protection by the State, especially in rural areas, in an increasingly polarized and difficult

environment for the defense of all kinds of rights and activists behind these social struggles, despite the context of «peace». «Agúzate» (Look out!) as seen in the title of this report (taken from the famous homonymous song by salsa singers Richie Ray and Bobbie Cruz), is a call for self-protection between defenders, to assist in mutual care amongst activists before a passive state protection, a null prevention of such violence and a minimum advance in the investigations of these crimes by the Attorney General of the Nation

Given the historical moment that the Country is currently living and the importance it has for the peace process, the work of social leaders, it is necessary to advance in processes of political self-protection and mutual care, because the lack of real results of protection, we insist, especially in rural areas, by the Colombian Government and the Colombian State to guarantee the exercise of the defense of human rights, is evident.

There is a lot of information, diagnoses, initiatives, boards of analysis, warnings of risks, both of civil society and Ombudsman's Office, and many official pronouncements on the enormous efforts made by the National Government in this respect; however, the killings and attacks against the lives of these activists for peace, democracy and human rights, do not stop. This year there

is already a 30% increase in homicides compared to the same period in 2016.

“Agúzate” (Look out!) is a call not to lose the hope that achieving peace in Colombia is possible (also being a historic commitment of the human rights movement), but not at the cost of the activists lives. The warning also includes the coming electoral situation, since in previous years there has been evidence of higher levels of territorial violence in elective periods and that, hopefully, on this occasion, the trend will disappear.

“Agúzate” (Look Out!) is also a lively message from the Colombian social and human rights movement, which continues to support the implementation of the peace agreements with the FARC, recognizes the impact of the silence of the rifles and continues to contribute to the peace conversations between the National Government and the ELN; but is also being affected by the death of so many social leaders in the country. A message addressed to the entities of the Government and Colombian State to, without delay, take substantive policies, aimed to generating the necessary guarantees for the exercise of social leadership and the defense of human rights. For example, to stimulate and strengthen to the National Security Guarantees Commission, created to design the public policy related to the dismantling of paramilitarism and similar groups, or to the Attorney General’s Office to investigate in depth all the cases, and not only the easiest ones.

This report is also developed in order to contribute, in some way, to the debate and provide diagnosis elements to the institutions responsible for the policy, for the decisions that they must continue to make before this phenomenon. In it you will find, first of all, a brief profile of the assassinated leaders between January and June of 2017, as a manner of tribute for their dedication and legacy, especially to the 7 women who lost their lives. Subsequently, a brief political analysis of the context faced by these activists. In a third part and as usual, a breakdown of the statistics on aggressions processed from the Information System.

We appreciate the technical support provided to SIADDHH by CINEP; as well as the support of the platform of human rights Coordination Colombia Europe United States, CCEEU, the Movement of Victims of State Crimes, MOVICE, to Colombia Diversa, to Patriotic March, to the Congress of Peoples, to Agrarian Summit, Ethnic Peasant and Popular and the Indigenous Organization of Colombia, ONIC, for the information that nourishes our report. Special thanks to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia - OACNUDH. Also a special recognition for the political and financial support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Colombia and the international cooperation agencies DIAKONIA, MISEREOR and Terre des Hommes - Schweiz, as their support was fundamental for the accomplishment of this Report.

We are sure that the desire of these 51 human rights defenders killed during the first half of 2017, was also to live in a peaceful country. We remember their names and offer a brief overview of the events that led to their deaths, and we expect, like their families and social organizations, justice for their murderers

## IN MEMORY OF THE MURDERED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

January 1, 2017

**Carlos Jesús Báez Torres  
(Karla)**

LGTBI Community of Cúcuta  
Cúcuta - Norte de Santander

Carlos de Jesús Báez Torres, known as “Karla”, was killed by subjects driving a van and called her by her nickname; after having a conversation with these strangers they shot him on the chin and the left side of his chest, after which they fled the place. This fact took place in the early morning of January 1, 2017 at the corner of 7th street and 2nd avenue of the Latino neighborhood in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander. The police transported “Karla” to La Merced Clinic, where he arrived dead.

“Karla” was a 31-year-old trans woman, member and leader of the LGTBI community in Cúcuta, well known by several such groups in the capital of Norte de Santander as well as LGBTI organizations at a national level, for his activism work on the Rights of other transgender women. Colonel Hermel Díaz Echeverry, Cúcuta police commander, said it could be a case of



intolerance since there was a previous dialogue between the victim and the attackers, but he did not rule out that it could be related to current investigations for theft and personal injury that the victim had reported in previous months. The high police command requested to find out by the security cameras of the sector and the fact is still under investigation.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: LGTBI Community of Cúcuta**

January 7, 2017  
**Aldemar Parra García**  
Apicultural Association of El  
Hatillo  
El Paso - César

In the El Hatillo small town, in the jurisdiction of the El Paso municipality in Cesar, 30-year-old Aldemar Parra García, well known leader of that community, was murdered. The incident occurred around 3:00 PM, when Parra was riding his motorcycle from the El Hatillo village to the rural area of the Loma de Calenturas small town when two gunmen riding on a motorcycle repeatedly shot him in the head, immediately causing his death.

The community was distressed to find, lying on the road, the lifeless body of their community leader Aldemar, president of the Apicultural Association of El Hatillo and relative of other community leaders who had been threatened in previous months by critical positions on proposals for resettlement of the Village due to the environmental contamination that generates the coal exploitation in the area. Some witnesses point out that the motorcycle carrying the hit men had already been seen hovering around the house of the community leaders a couple days before the murder.

The Grupo Prodeco company, a mining company, stated that “by the end of



2016, after identifying certain security risks, Prodeco procured the support of the Cesar Development and Peace Program (PDPC) for the adoption and implementation of prevention and protection measures for the community of El Hatillo”. This homicide has the aggravating fact that the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman’s Office, on November 28, 2016, warned of the risk in which the leaders of this specific community were, by means of the Risk Report No. 040-16. To this date, the measures taken by the authorities in response to this warning, which took the life of an important leader of the area, remain unknown.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Apicultural Association of El Hatillo**





January 10, 2017  
**José Yimer Cartagena Úsuga**  
 Peasant Association of Alto  
 Sinú (Asodecas)  
 Carepa - Antioquia

José Yimer Cartagena Úsuga was abducted on the night of Tuesday, January 10th, by unknown subjects who were onboard a van on the road between El Cerro Village and the town of Carepa, at a point known as La Petrolera, forcing him to get off the public vehicle he was riding and warning passengers not to give notice to the Police. His body was found hours later on the road that leads from the Saisa Village, in the department of Córdoba, to the municipality of Carepa in the department of Antioquia, with 32 stab wounds and signs of torture as they pulled out the tongue and pulled out the nails. This form of murder denotes mechanisms of torture and violence very similar to the ones performed in times of the partisan violence of the 50s with the so-called “tie-cut”, which had remain so far unseen.

The 30-year-old peasant leader, Patriotic March activist and vice-president of the Peasant Association of Alto Sinú (Asodecas), was recognized for his support to the Peace Process and led activities in Córdoba seeking reconciliation between the parties of the conflict. Asodecas, peasant organization to which Cartagena belonged, works through different Human Rights adjustment mechanisms. Within its range of action is the Gallo village, of the settlement



of Crucito, place chosen as ZVTN, 5 kilometers apart from where by that time members of the front 58 of the Farc-Ep were grouped.

Cartagena had received threats from ultra-right unlawful groups for the work he had been developing. The community has denounced the presence of criminal gangs of paramilitary origin in the area, ASCSUCOR issued a public complaint in which the grave risk that the leaders of peasants, social leaders, human rights defenders in southern Córdoba was exposed and the System Of Early Warning also issued an alert on November 23, 2016 through their Imminence Risk Report No. 037-16, which notified of the risk and possible mourning against the activists of ASODECAS. The competent authorities did not react before that either.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Peasant Association of Alto Sinú (Asodecas)**

January 12, 2017  
**Edmiro León Alzate Londoño**  
Movement for the Life and  
Defense on the East Antioquia  
territory (MOVETE)  
Sonsón - Antioquia

During the morning of Thursday, January 12th, Edmiro León Alzate Londoño was riding his horse towards the Llano Cañaveral village, about an hour and a half away from the town and then disappeared. On Friday, January 13th, Edmiro's horse was found on a field. His family began the search since he had not been answering his cell phone from the day before; only until Saturday January 14th Edmiro was found dead on the road, covered with blood and with signs of forceful strokes; also the authorities indicated that wounds, product of white weapon, were found on his body.

Edmiro was leading the encouragement of peasants' rights, he was also concerned about the use of waters, river basins and development for the community through his work with the Movement for the Life and Defense on the East Antioquia territory (MOVETE). There was no information regarding threats received, but he had been subjected to criticism due to his constant opposition to hydroelectric projects in the zone.



MOVETE pointed out that because of the negotiation of the land for the Hidroarma energy project, which will be carried out on several small towns that belong to the municipalities of Sonsón (Antioquia) and Aguadas (Caldas), there have been endless difficulties and problems with the authorities and Companies that are present in the territories. MOVETE has denounced the socio-environmental consequences, the effects on the territory and the relation with the violation of Human Rights in the region caused by hydroelectric projects.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Movement for the Life and Defense on the East Antioquia territory (MOVETE)**





January 12, 2017  
**Emilse Manyoma Mosquera**  
 Community Network Building  
 Peace in the Territories –  
 CONPAZ  
 Buenaventura - Valle del Cauca

Apparently Emilse Mayoma and her partner Joe Javier Rodallega were forced into a taxi by strangers in the Villa Linda neighborhood on Saturday, January 14th, at night time. Three days later the bodies of the leader and her partner were found during the early hours of January 17th in the neighborhood of El Progreso, commune 10 of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca. The official report indicates that the cause of death was due to a deep cut on their throat. They also showed hits and wounds with firearm and white weapon.

Emilse was a member of the Victims Network, CONPAZ, Bajo Calima Community Council, and since 2005 she assumed the leadership of the youth process and the CONPAZ Network in their community; she accompanied the return of the Santa Rosa de Guayacán shelter and the construction of the Humanitarian Space Puente Nayero. The organization that she was a part of, harshly denounced the facts carried out by criminal gangs, especially the drug traffic that afflicts El Calima neighborhood, one of the most dangerous in Buenaventura.

Soon after, Emilse's brother Marco Antonio Manyoma, aka "Camilo Ro-



bledo", a deserter of the FARC, who left the ranks of the guerrilla front in 2016, carrying along firearms and other goods that he would later use to commit the crimes of his sister and brother-in-law. Just days before the murder of the leader, he was seen in the Guadual village, district of San Isidro, in the municipality of Buenaventura, doing business and drinking liquor, a situation that generated Emilse's claims for his behavior to which he responded with death threats. Marco Antonio and another man were captured for the alleged murder of the leader and her partner. However, the facts remain a matter of investigation since there is a hypothesis that Emilse would have made several complaints about actions of unlawful groups in the region.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Community Networks**  
**Building Peace in the Territories – CONPAZ**



January 25, de 2017  
**Hernando Murillo Armijo**  
Community of the Agüita village  
Pueblo Rico - Risaralda

In the village of Agüita, in the municipality of Pueblo Rico - Risaralda, the leader Hernando Murillo Armijo was assassinated. On January 25, late at night, three hooded and armed men arrived to the leader's house, exaltedly asking for gold and silver items that the leader could have; Hernando's son did not know what to answer and the subjects shot him in the leg. Then the hooded men chased Hernando to the roof of the house where he was shot dead.

Murillo was the president of the Communal Action Board of the Agüita village during the period of 2012-2016 and although he did not hold this position this year, he continued to support community work in this sector far from Pueblo Rico. According to the community, he had a great performance as president of the JAC, supported his community, always attended the meetings in



Pueblo Rico and achieved benefits for the inhabitants and leaders of afro processes in the locality, even being outside of the board a few Minutes from Santa Cecilia (Risaralda), an area in dispute between armed actors such as the ELN and paramilitary groups, which fight over control of the illegal but lucrative mining business in this border area between Chocó and Risaralda.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Community of the Agüita village**



January 26, 2017

**Yoryanis Isabel Bernal Varela**

Wiwa Golkucho Organization of  
the Kowi, Malayo and Arhuaco  
Shelters  
Valledupar - Cesar

Yoryanis Isabel Bernal Varela, 43 years old, was murdered on January 26, 2017 in Valledupar, Cesar. The leader of the Wiwa indigenous community was walking near the Lorenzo neighborhood in the Cesar capital city, when two people on board a motorcycle approached, intimidated and shot her in the head causing her immediate death.

Yoryanis Isabel was a member of the Wiwa indigenous community and an advocate for women's rights in that community. She looked after the processes of the ethnic group working with natives in Santa Marta and a Wiwa delegation located in Riohacha. The Wiwa indigenous organization also noted that communities have been subjected to threats and intimidation. Jose de los Santos Sauna, Arhuaco, Kogui and Wiwa Governor, expressed: "A great leader was taken away from us and when something like that happens, our culture falls, because there are not enough brave people left to face our problems of public order, that are always dangerous."



The investigation of this crime rested the responsibility on the Prosecutor's Office CTI, however, the second commander of the Police in the Cesar state, colonel Mauricio Bonilla, indicated that "in February of 2004 she had been captured by the National Police for the crime of favoring to the smuggling of hydrocarbons in Santa Marta. We are supporting the CTI in the investigation of this murder". This accusation is false since the Prosecutor General of the Nation themselves later pointed out that the leader had no criminal record, which makes the position of the National Police in this case, troublesome.

**Had he reported threats: No**

**Alleged Culpit: Unknown**

**Social and/or human rights process affected: Wiwa Golkucho Organization of the Kowi, Malayo and Arhuaco Shelters**



January 27, 2017  
**Leonidas González Pérez**  
Board of Human Rights  
of Medellín and Antioquia  
Journalists – MESDHUPERA  
Bello - Antioquia

Journalist Leonidas González Pérez, 50 years old, was killed by unknown people. His body was found in a rural area of the municipality of Bello, in the Niquía sector, near the house he inhabited. His skull had multiple fractures with a blunt weapon and his body was dragged several meters down the side of the road where he was finally left.

González Pérez was, for more than 20 years, a member of the Association of Sports Commentators of Antioquia, Acord. He was a reporter in radio stations of Medellín, Urabá and Quibdó. He was an amateur soccer, baseball and boxing commentator. He worked as a reporter in several radio stations in Medellín and Urabá. According to the statements of the president of the Human Rights Bureau of the Medellín and Antioquia journalists (MESDHUPERA), Juan David Betancour, González was the coordinator of the Afro Descending



chapter of their Human Rights Bureau. Authorities said that in the same area, a teacher and a leader of the taxi guild were assassinated weeks prior to the murder of Leonidas.

Leonidas González Pérez was the father of four. He studied journalism at the Antioquia University and he was already studying the last subjects to graduate.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Board of Human Rights of Medellín and Antioquia Journalists – MESDHUPERA**



February 2nd, 2017  
**Miguel Ángel Hoyos**  
 Departmental Committee  
 of Coffee Growers of Valle.  
 Association of Coffee Growers  
 of Northern Valle  
 Cartago – Valle del Cauca



Miguel Ángel was startled by several armed men while having lunch at a restaurant in the Cartago Lineal Park, by northern Valle del Cauca, on February 2nd, 2017. The victim died after receiving multiple gunshots that were fired by unknown persons who entered the restaurant and who, without explanation, shot him.

Hoyos was leader of the Northern Valley Coffee Growers Committee and a member of the National Coffee Growers Federation. Carlos Ocampo, a spokesman for coffee farmers in the region, expressed grief about his passing and said that Hoyos was an advocate of the guild's foundations: "He was an agricultural leader at a departmental and national level, he was a fighter for the truth and justice and the reason for those who work

for this cause. Miguel owned lands in a very conflictive region", said the spokesman.

It is important to remember that Miguel Angel had been the victim of a hit man attack in 2016, from which he came out unharmed.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Departmental Committee of Coffee Growers of Valle. Association of Coffee Growers of Northern Valle**



February 4, 2017

**Edilberto Cantillo Meza**

Communal Action Board of the  
Entrerrios – El Copey village.

Village Association of the El  
Copey Victims (ASVERVIC).

Cesar Peasant Assembly for  
the Restitution of Lands and  
Well Living.

El Copey – Cesar



Edilberto Cantillo Meza, 55 years old, a native of the municipality of Fundación - Magdalena, for several years lived in the mentioned village of El Copey, where there are around 20 families. He was murdered on February 4th at 7 pm, when two hooded men riding on a motorcycle shot him three times and killed him instantly.

Cantillo Meza was the president of the Entrerrios village Communal Action Board and member of ASVERVIC. Deyis Carmona Tejada, leader of victims of the municipality of El Copey and member of the Transitional Justice Committee of the Victims' Board, pointed out that Edilberto Cantillo Meza was part of the Village Association of Victims, which works on issues of land restitution: "We are working on a process of collective reparation and with these actions it now comes clear to us that there is no guarantee for us as peasants, as victims. The government is talking about peace, but it is not guaranteeing the victims lives", Carmona said.

The Cesar Police commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mauricio Bonilla Mén-

dez, said that there is a person captured for this homicide, someone in possession of a firearm and who was tried before a judge with a warranty control function in the municipality of Bosconia. The Cesar Land Restitution Unit prioritized the entire municipality of El Copey, due to the fact that the deprivation and abandonment of land caused by instigation from armed groups was happening in three of their small towns (Chimila, Caracolicito and San Francisco de Asís) and in their 71 villages. Although no sentence of restitution has yet been delivered, the leaders continue their struggle amidst the hope and fear they feel because of the threats they receive and how unprotected they are.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of the Entrerrios – El Copey village. Village Association of the El Copey Victims (ASVERVIC). Cesar Peasant Assembly for the Restitution of Lands and Well Living.**



February 12, 2017

**Deiner Alexander Méndez Berrío (Danna Méndez)**Chaparral Diverse LGBTI Association  
Chaparral - Tolima

The last time 'Danna Méndez' (Deiner Alexander Méndez Berrío) was seen alive was on Saturday, February 11th, during night time, when she was celebrating with some friends in the main park of the town. However, since that day they lost track of her and only until Wednesday 15th February was her body found on a field, lifeless, in an advanced state of decomposition and with preliminary signs of rape.

"Since she went to school she wanted to develop her sexual identity, but her rights were violated so she deserted education", said William Álvarez Osorio, legal representative of the Chaparral Diverse LGBTI Association, of which Danna also was a member. She led the defense of the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals in the municipality. "She was a transsexual gal, for five years she belonged to the organization that has been working for seven years against



homophobia and for the recognition of the other members of the LGTIB (sic) community in Chaparral", said Álvarez Osorio. Besides being a great leader, 'Danna' also trained two years ago with the Sena in the hairdressing area and worked as a hair stylist at the 'Camila' beauty salon, where she put her knowledge into practice. She lived with his family in the Tuluní neighborhood of Chaparral

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Chaparral Diverse LGBTI Association**



February 16, 2017

**Eberto Julio Gómez Mora**Communal Action Board of San  
José del Mane Village  
Cáceres - Antioquia

On Thursday, February 16, in the rural area of La Quebradona village, in the municipality of Cáceres, 52-year-old



president of the Communal Action Board, Quiñonez opposed the actions of the Gulf Clan in the area.

39 year-old José Gregorio Medina González a.k.a. 'Lázaro' and 28-year-old Mario Alberto Bustamante Martínez a.k.a. 'Yeison', urban leaders of the Gulf Clan in the sub-region of Bajo Cauca (Antioquia), where they were responsible for perpetrating selective homicides, may have been the authors of the murder of this

leader and were captured in June 2017. It is noteworthy that a.k.a. "Yeison" is also being investigated for the execution of at least eight homicides in the municipality of Tarazá between 2016 and 2017 so far.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Paramilitary**  
**Social and/or human rights process**  
**affected: Communal Action Board of**  
**San José del Mane Village**

February 18, 2017  
**Faiver Cerón Gómez**  
Communal Action Board of the  
Esmeraldas District  
Mercaderes - Cauca

Human rights defenders in Cauca denounced the murder of Faiver Cerón Gómez, president of the Communal Action Board of the Esmeraldas district in the jurisdiction of the Mercaderes municipality, located in southern Cauca. According to the Colombian South-Western Human Rights Network, the leader was attacked by unknown men with multiple gunshots in events that occurred 10 minutes away from the administrative authorities Office of the Sajandinga sector, when he was riding his motorcycle back home.

It was also indicated that during the morning, the leader had participated in a Government Community Council with officials of the Municipal Mayor's Office and of the Cauca Governor's Office. The communities have



organized since 2016 in rejection of the illegal mining that ended with the Sambingo river, and a march against the eradication of coca cultivation was carried out on the 7th of February, reasons for which dialogue forums were established with the National government. The inhabitants do not rule out that what happened may be related with the subjects mentioned above.

The situation took place precisely when the President of the Republic, Juan Manuel Santos, announced his visit to Cauca that week, since he would be launching what would be

the beginning of a public policy to face threats and attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders, matters that he considered to be very disturbing.

**Had he reported threats:** No  
**Alleged Culprit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Communal Action Board of the Esmeraldas District



February 20, 2017  
**Wilfredy González Noreña**  
 Usme Board of Human Rights  
 Bogotá D.C.

On Monday, February 20, 32-year-old Wilfredy Gonzalez he was killed by 7 bullet wounds. The crime occurred in front of his house located in the Compostela neighborhood of the Usme locality, where he was arriving after finishing his work day.



According to Edgar Juandias and Arley Estupiñan, also leaders of the area, González had been working at the human rights board, quite successfully among the community. Some of the hypotheses indicate that González was assassinated because of the work that he was performing with the community of Usme in a case of intolerance and the presence of illegal armed actors. It is worth to remember that several weeks ago some spokespersons of the social leaders of Usme, a sector located south-east of the capital of the country, reported that several leaflets were left lying around the sector, depicting death threats against leaders of the area from the so-called 'Black Eagles'.

Although Wilfredy's name did not appear in any of these pamphlets, it is not ruled out that these may have a connection with his death. Several leaders of the area expressed their fear caused by the recurrent cases of violence in the area against their leadership, such as the threats and attacks against them and the incident occurred in January this year, when their houses were attacked with by firearm projectiles.

**Had he reported threats:** Yes  
**Alleged Culprit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Usme Board of Human Rights



February 22, 2017  
**César Augusto Parra**  
Motorcycle-Taxi Riders  
Collective in La Dorada  
La Dorada - Caldas

César Augusto Parra was called for a meeting in the Victoria Real neighborhood with his colleagues and with the presence of Mayor Diego Pineda and the transit secretary Mauricio Rodríguez, according to the information provided by these informal drivers. It was in the best interest of Parra to arrive to the meeting on time because he wanted the situation with his colleagues to be mended so they could reach an agreement. Before arriving to the place where the meeting would be held, Parra stopped to call another leader who was joining them, but his mate said to him: “Diablito, you get there, I got a flat tire but I won’t take long”. Relevant information indicates that this leader was saved by his flat tire because he was also a target, according to a Motorcycle-Taxi rider who asked his identity not to be published.

Minutes later, César Parra was on the stairs of the Sports Center of the Victoria Real Neighborhood, waiting for the arrival of the Mayor’s Office representatives, who probably agreed to meet the Motorcycle-Taxi Rider guild in that location and date.

However, the leader and his colleagues grew tired of waiting, when a man known as “El Mocho” showed



up, aggressively asking “Who is ‘El Diablo’?” César then doubtlessly answered “I am!”. He said it loud and clear. So the hit man shot him at short range, with no mercy, thus ending his life.

His friends reacted immediately by picking up the wounded body of their leader off the floor and embarking him on a taxi. Afterwards, an ambulance from the Flavio Clinic speed up to them and he was then taken care of by them. On his way to the clinic, with his last breath and a broken voice, the leader repeatedly said to his companion: “My man, my man, those bandits killed me, they killed me... Be very careful, my man, watch out, they killed me, I love you very much”. Five minutes later, he passed away.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Motorcycle-Taxi Riders Collective in La Dorada**

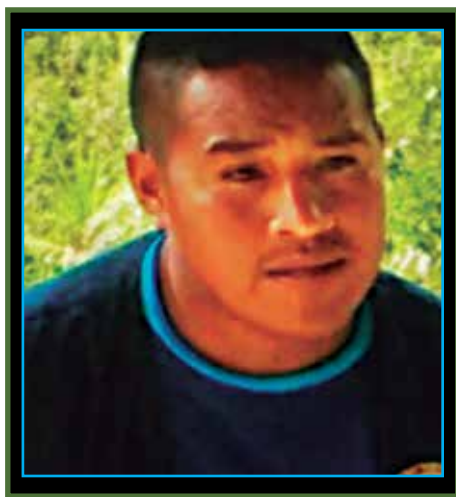


February 26, 2017  
**Éder Cuetia Conda**  
 Peasant Reserves of Corinto  
 Corinto - Cauca

On Sunday, February 26, 2017 in a commercial place called “El Tablazo” (which refers to a punch from a thick wooden piece), in La Paz neighborhood of the municipality of Corinto in Cauca, the social leader Éder Cuetia Conda was murdered. The homicide was perpetrated at night time, when a hooded man shot him twice and then fled on a motorcycle.

According to declarations, Éder Cuetia Conda was approached by an armed man who was wearing shorts and a dark jacket with a hood that covered his face. After shooting him, the hit man walked away and was picked up by a man who was waiting for him on a motorcycle. According to the police report, the social leader was hit in the head by two projectiles of a caliber 38 revolver.

Éder Cuetia Conda was born on the indigenous reserve of López Adentro, which is now part of the peasant movement and the communal action board of the Siberia village. He also coordinated peasant security in the Andes district of the Corinto municipality, position which he was assigned to due to his more than 15 years of experience with community work.



The “Peasant Security” is an initiative of self-protection born on the peasant community which, faced with the frequent violation of their human rights, felt forced to develop a defense method. This self-protection mechanism started to exercise its own vigilance since last October 2016.

“What the peasant communities have done is to generate a protection mechanism by guarding the street corners that have been agreed upon to watch, they make rounds by foot or on motorcycles, providing security to the inhabitants and helping to preserve their lives”, said the Human Rights Network Francisco Isaías Cifuentes – FIC Network

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Peasant Movement of Corinto – Cauca**



March 2, 2017  
**Fabián Antonio Rivera**  
**Arroyave**  
Communal Action Board of  
Rosalpi  
Bello - Antioquia

Fabián Antonio Rivera Arroyave was murdered by dawn on March 2nd 2017, in the municipality of Bello, Antioquia, near the cemetery. The incident occurred when the communal leader was riding a motorcycle through the neighborhood of Niquía Camacol, on the 61st avenue with 49th street near the San Andrés cemetery, and was approached by unknown persons who shot him several times with a firearm causing him to die immediately.

Fabian was the president of the Communal Action Board of the Rosalpi neighborhood in Bello, Antioquia. On April 24, 2016, he won the elections in his community with 450 votes out of 482. For Fabián Antonio Rivera (father of the victim), this victory is justified by the community work that his son had been performing for years: "If anyone suffered an accident, he visited them and procured a way to help; If he learned about a family with financial problems, he was there. He saw the need for a speed breaker so he bought the materials himself and built it with the help of the people in the neighborhood. In December, he



used to give out presents to children in villages and peripheral neighborhoods".

According to information gathered, the relatives said that Fabian had not received any life threats and they completely ignore what the motives for the murder might have been. On the other hand, Prosecutor Claudia Carrasquilla, director of the Medellín Sectional District Attorney's Office, said it may have been a crime of passion and broke the connections of the case with his community leadership. This pronouncements by the authorities have become common when aggressions against social or communal leaders occur.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of Rosalpi**





March 2nd, 2017  
**Ruth Alicia López Guisao**  
 Agro Ecological, Interethnic  
 and Intercultural Association  
 ASOKINCHAS  
 Medellín - Antioquia

Ruth Alicia López Guisao, a peasant leader and human rights defender, member of the Agro Ecological, Interethnic and Intercultural Association ASOKINCHAS, an organization member of the National Agrarian and People's Congress Coordinator, was assassinated on March 2nd, 2017 in the city of Medellín, Antioquia.

The incident happened in the Olaya Herrera neighborhood, 13th Commune of Medellín, while she was visiting her brother, who lives in that area. According to the accusations, the victim had been in the neighborhood for about a week when two subjects entered the house where she was and shot her repeatedly, causing her to die immediately.

Ruth Alicia was the promoter of an Agrarian Summit Project for the strengthening of food sovereignty with twelve indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the municipalities of Medio San Juan and Sipí in the department of Chocó. This project is financed by the Ministry of Agriculture

Ruth Alicia and her family have been recognized community leaders, survivors of the Patriotic Union, who have stood out for their spirit of social service and solidarity in the different places where they have been forced to inhabit. For



this reason, they have repeatedly been threatened, persecuted and displaced by paramilitary groups. At first they were banished from the Urabá region, which is why they arrived to the 13th Commune of Medellín, specifically to the Olaya Herrera neighborhood (the place where she was murdered), where the family led community health and education projects until 2002, when they were again threatened and exiled during the development of the Orion Operation. By the time of her murder, Alicia lived in the department of Chocó where she performed the community work mentioned above.

The District Attorney's Office responded quickly, but not as expected. Claudia Carrasquilla, responsible for the Medellín Sectional, – praised by the media after unveiling an alleged plan to kill her – told the local media: "Regarding the death of this person, it was possible to conclude that she was a leader who had a couple of Afro-descendant and indigenous people centers in Medellín, in addition it was possible to determine that in the past, there belonged to illegal military

groups and armed commandos". In her public statements, the District Attorney forgot to mention that both Ruth and her family are victims of what is known as "The Red Ball", a joint operation between the State, Paramilitary and Businessmen against the political formation Patriotic Union.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Paramilitary**  
**Social and/or human rights process**  
**affected: Agro Ecological, Interethnic**  
**and Intercultural Association**  
**ASOKINCHAS**

March 19, 2017  
**Edenis Barrera Benavides**  
El Porvenir Neighborhood  
Community and Civil Defense  
in Aguazul  
Aguazul – Casanare

Edenis Barrera Benavides, 32, was brutally murdered and her body found in an inhospitable area, near the road leading from Aguazul to San José del Bubuy (Casanare). In the morning of March 19, 2017, cyclists found the Body of Edenis Barrera, in the rural area of the municipality of Aguazul, on the road that leads to San José de Bubuy Casanare. Apparently, the female's homicide materialized due to multiple wounds caused by a short stabbing weapon. In addition, according to official sources, the victim was sexually abused.

On Saturday, March 18, after six o'clock in the afternoon, according to her Civil Defense colleagues, Edenis said goodbye to them after finishing a training activity and her destination was set to go meet her children at home. Her house was located in El Porvenir neighborhood, but it is presumed that she was intercepted and kidnapped by a couple men, at some point during her route. Her body was found with signs



of torture by the above mentioned cyclists, almost 12 hours after her friends last saw her.

The leader, apart from being an important community leader in Aguazul, also was president of the Civil Defense in the municipality. Actually, just hours before the crime, Barrera Benavides participated in an activity of the Relief Agency. With her death, Edenis Barrera Benavides, a 32-year-old single mother, leaves two children, whose ages are 16 and 10.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process**  
**affected: El Porvenir Neighborhood**  
**Community and Civil Defense in**  
**Aguazul**

March 22, 2017  
**Javier Oteca Pilcue**  
 Indigenous Reserve of Corinto  
 Corinto – Cauca

Being 1:40 pm of March 22nd, 2017 the liberator of Mother Earth (according to their tradition, their existence was produced by Mother Earth, and that is the term they use when referring to a territory), 44-year-old Javier Oteca Pilcue, was killed at the Miraflores Quebrada Seca Ranch. The Indigenous Chapter of Corinto attributes the crime to the private security company hired by the sugar factory INCAUCA, in complicity with the public forces, since just a few meters away from the place where the leader was assassinated, there is control a point of the army and the police, exactly as it happened during the Gualanday massacre in 2002, where 13 community members and Indigenous Guard lost their life.

The community declares that the Army soldiers camouflage with the outfits and characteristic elements that the sugar cane cutters from the sugar mills use, in order to perform intelligence work against the community members and that, on several occasions, they have threatened and assaulted the communities, firing at them indiscriminately.

Motivated by the murder of Javier Oteca Pilcue, the community decided, in its autonomy and in the search for the alleged responsible for what happened, to keep captive 6 workers of the INCAUCA sugar mill who were present in the place of the facts. Subsequently, the Chapter, in the exercise of the Special Indigenous Jurisdiction, took the persons mentioned into custody and protection of their integrity, under



the internal legal process according to customs and traditions.

The Corinto Traditional Authority requested the presence of a delegation of Human Rights, United Nations and Ombudsman, who attended as guarantors of respect for Human Rights and of the due process, and performed the verification exercise of the well-being status of the people being held in custody, at 7:30 pm, on March 22.

Subsequently, at approximately 12:00 pm people were transferred to the facilities of the National Police Station in the Corinto municipality, to facilitate the technical investigation of the CTI and to allow direct contact with their relatives.

The next day, the Indigenous Chapter of Corinto held a Public Hearing in the Central Park of Corinto, with the participation of the communities of northern Cauca and indigenous and non-indigenous authorities, in order to denounce the murder of Javier Oteca and to hand the 6 detainees over to the corresponding human rights entities.

**Had he reported threats:** No  
**Alleged Culpit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Indigenous Reserve of Corinto

March 27, 2017

**Albenio Isaías Roseo**

Communal Action Board of El  
Afilador District  
Valle del Guamuez – Putumayo



On Monday, March 27, at approximately 1:00 am, Albenio Isaías Roseo, president of the Community Action Board of La Unión, in the same municipality, was assassinated in the village of Valle del Guamuez. Firemen from La Dorada received a call where they were tipped off about a person who had been injured with a white weapon and whose condition was critical. The rescuers attended the call but when they managed to reach Albenio Roseo, he had already passed away. Relatives filed the accusation before the judicial police so to find the motives for the murder.

Although there is no solid hypothesis about the death of this leader, the truth is that there is no clear presence of local, regional or national government in this area of the Putumayo and according to reports of the Ombudsman's Office (IR 010-17) or the Paz y Reconciliación organization, the Valle del Guamuez municipality is amongst the ones pronounced at risk for social leaders and defenders of human rights.

This area, as in other cases of murders against communal leaders, belonged to the areas of influence of the FARC that, since November 2016, began to be left under the responsibility of the State.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of El Afilador District**



March 31 de 2017

**Jairo Arturo Muñoz**

Community of La Ceja District  
Corinto – Cauca



On March 31, 2017, in the Sucre municipality, southern of the department of Cauca, the teacher and community leader Jairo Arturo Muñoz was assassinated. According to official reports, the teacher's lifeless body was found in the middle of a coffee crop, with wounds produced by a machete-type white weapon.

The facts allegedly took place on Friday, March 31st, but his body was found by peasants on Saturday, April 1st, during morning hours. "The relatives indicated that they did not know about any problems that the teacher may have had with other people", the police said in a report to the media.

Jairo Arturo Chilito Muñoz was 45 years old, he was a community leader of the La Ceja sector and he also worked in the school of El Paraiso sector, in the rural area of Sucre. Chilito is

remembered by his community as an educator committed to his work and a very active teacher with his students in topics of conservation of the territory; also in his community he was a great leader, locally recognized for his support to the neighbors before all the problems of the area and the presence of illegal armed actors.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Community of La Ceja District**

April 2nd, 2017  
**Eliver Buitrago**  
 Communal Action Board of the  
 Buenos Aires District  
 Mesetas – Meta

In the district of Buenos Aires of the municipality of Mesetas, Meta department, Eliver Buitrago, who was the President of that District's Board, was murdered. Unknown men entered the place where he worked and shot 3 bullets at him.

"The community remembers him as a peasant, someone devoted to his work, a leader. No political affiliation nor religious creed, dedicated to his duties and always working for the community. For that reason the population feels in total uncertainty and expects a commitment with the existing need to start an investigation as soon as possible", said Alfonso Camacho human rights secretary of Sintragrim.

This area of the Meta department



has been in dispute between the FFMM, paramilitaries and the FARC throughout history, and recently it has increased the presence of public forces in the face of constant threats by paramilitary groups to return to areas abandoned by the FARC.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of the Buenos Aires District**



April 5, 2017

**Camilo Pinzón**

Communal Action Board of the  
Fundo Nuevo District  
San Martín – Meta

Camilo Pinzón, vice president of the Communal Action Board of Fundo Nuevo, municipality of San Martín, was brutally murdered on April 5, 2017. According to official information, the authorities suggest that the communal leader was approached on his farm by individuals on motorcycles and killed thereafter, said the commander of the Police of Meta colonel Nicolás Alejandro Zapata.

Pinzón's death has risen an environment of fear among the inhabitants, who rumor about different hypotheses about the murder. The authorities, on the other hand, are executing the respective investigations.

The people close to the communal leader remember him as a person



who fought for the well-being of the population in San Martín. Among his latest performances is a request to the Mayor of the municipality of San Martín and the Hocol Company, demanding the construction of a bridge on the District.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of the Fundo Nuevo District**



April 6, 2017

**Luis Gerardo Ochoa Sánchez**

Pitalito Community  
Pitalito – Huila

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2017, the defending attorney of Human Rights Luis Gerardo Ochoa Sánchez was murdered. He was killed with a gunshot to the head inside his office, a few meters from a branch of the District Attorney's Office.





After the removal of the corpse, units of the Technical Investigation Organization (CTI) and the police started investigations to establish the causes of the murder. Luis Ochoa was a recognized defender of human rights and he was carrying out investigations on corruption cases in the municipality of Pitalito.

In addition to his leadership as a human rights lawyer, Luis Gerardo was a spokesperson and then an ex-

candidate of the past elections to the Mayor's Office of Pitalito, Huila. This case would have a direct connection with the crime of the journalist and also defender Flor Alba Nuñez in 2015, who investigated several of the corruption cases that Ochoa carried on with.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Pitalito Community**

April 18 de 2017  
**Rubiela Sánchez**  
 Cruces District Community  
 San Vicente Ferrer, Antioquia

On Tuesday, April 18, the community leader Rubiela Sánchez took four bullet wounds in Las Cruces District, municipality of San Vicente Ferrer, Antioquia. The body was found lifeless at 8:00 a.m. in the area. According to the report given by the Mayor of the municipality, Roberto Jaramillo Marín, "it is believed that several subjects shot Mrs. Sánchez."

According to official reports the competent authorities are carrying out the necessary investigations, however, the reasons for the murder have not yet been clarified, nor have the subjects involved been identified. "We are sad and astonished by what is happening with women in this country, and we acknowledge Rubiela as a peasant leader in the sector," said Gloria Quintero, president of the San Vicente Ferrer Women's Association.



Being a Community and Women leader of the Cruces District, 49 years old, she aspired to the council of her municipality and devoted herself to working for the community, in addition to caring for her six minor children.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Cruces District Community**

April 19, 2017

**Gerson Acosta**

Kitek Kiwe Indigenous Reserve  
Timbío - Cauca

On April 19, 2017, the indigenous leader and authority Gerson Acosta was assassinated. The events occurred around 4:45 pm, in the indigenous territory of Kitek Kiwe, municipality of Timbío Cauca, when just moments after Gerson Acosta left a meeting with his community, a person shot him repeatedly. The community immediately tried to help by taking him to the emergency room of the nearest hospital, where he arrived with no vital signs.

In addition to being a traditional authority, Gerson Acosta was a human rights defender and representative of the victims of the Naya massacre, committed by paramilitary groups in 2001 in the Naya region, western of Cauca. Gerson Acosta and most of the victims moved to the town of Santander de Quilichao and later relocated in the municipality of Timbío, on a property that is now in demand to become an indigenous Reserve.



Gerson leaves two children aged 1 and 12. The older one was with him when his murder was committed. Given his status as a traditional authority and representative of the victims of the Naya massacre, Gerson Acosta had protection measures, but the persons assigned to his protection were not with him at the time of the incident. The death of Nej Wesx Gerson Acosta is the continuance of a series of murders that have been perpetrated in the context of peacebuilding in the country and that the National Government has denied.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Kitek Kiwe Indigenous Reserve**



April 22, 2017

**Severino Grueso Caicedo**  
Community Action Board of El  
Prado Neighborhood  
El Cerrito - Valle del Cauca

Severino Grueso Caicedo, president of the Communal Action Board (JAC) of El Prado neighborhood in El Cerrito, Valle del Cauca, was assassinated on April 22, 2017. Severino was in a corner of this sector of northern El Cerrito, Municipality of the southern Valle del Cauca, when he was attacked by a man, who shot him three times in the back and caused his death. According to media reports, "He fell on the ground and after the events, we helped him up and with his daughter-in-law, we took him to the hospital but when we arrived there, he was already dead," said a friend of the victim.

The 69-year-old man was recognized for his social work in the sector where he resided. Although the motives for the crime have not yet been established, the authorities said the killing could be linked to threats that the



victim might have received, caused by accusations he had made about micro-trafficking in the area.

"The District Attorney's Office had already been informed about that. He had already set the precedent of the possibility of someone harming his physical integrity. It seems that he was denouncing the hallucinogenic vendors in his neighborhood", said Severo Reyes, Mayor of El Cerrito.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Community Action Board (JAC) of El Prado Neighborhood**



April 22, 2017

**Diego Fernando Rodríguez Montenegro**  
Ganaplata and Caney  
Community Council  
Mercaderes - Cauca

During the morning of Thursday, April 27, 2017, in the Ganaplata District, jurisdiction of the municipality of Mercaderes, bordering between Cau-



ca and Nariño, the dead body of the social leader and human rights defender of that locality, was found. Diego Fernando Rodríguez Montenegro, who served as legal representative of the Community Council Ganaplata and Caney, and was also part of the Palenque La Torre and the Board of Communal Action in Mercaderes.

“The events occurred inside his house, apparently he was murdered with a white weapon”, said Deivin Hurtado, a spokesman for the ‘Francisco Isaías

Cifuentes’ Human Rights Network of southwestern Colombia. The death of this leader joins that of several men and women who also defended the Human Rights of the vulnerable communities in this area of the Cauca and that already add 10 deaths between 2016 and 2017.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Ganaplata and Caney Community Council**

May 3rd, 2017  
**Nelson Fabra Díaz**  
Arboletes Community  
Los Córdoba - Córdoba

On May 3rd, 2017, during nighttime, Nelson Fabra, a community leader and front-runner of the Radical Change Movement of that locality, was assassinated in the municipality of Los Córdoba, a coastal area of Córdoba, and who was twice a candidate for Mayor’s Office in the neighboring municipality of Arboletes, Antioquia, as confirmed by the commander of the Córdoba Police Department, Colonel Engelbert Grijalba: “There is still no clarity about the crime, we are investigating, what we know is that Fabra was a communal leader and was part of the Radical Change Movement, with which endorsement he had been a candidate for the Arboletes Mayor’s Office”, said the official.

The assassination occurred in the Villa Luz invasion, when Fabra was walking



down one of the alleys, through the darkness. Some versions indicate that the leader noticed two men on a motorcycle following him so he decided to enter a friend’s house. However, he believed that the subjects had left the sector and when he went out to spend the night in another house, he was approached by one of them, who then shot him several times.

Fabra worked for the communities of the municipality of Arboletes in different ways, demanding improvements

in the public services and in the guarantee of security for these communities, especially those of the rural zone of Arboletes, which led him to run a campaign for Mayor of the locality.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Arboletes Community**



May 4, 2017  
**Jorge Arbey Chantré Achipiz**  
 Indigenous Chapter of Pueblo  
 Nuevo  
 Jamundí - Valle del Cauca

Jorge Arbey Chantré Achipiz, indigenous leader of the Nasa chapter of Pueblo Nuevo in Jamundí Valle del Cauca, was murdered in the rural area of that municipality. The homicide occurred in the Pueblo Nuevo Town Hall, bordering the area of El Naya, where the native leader was shot to death by several individuals when he was performing rural areas tasks. Chantré Achipiz was operating as the president of the Indigenous Alternative and Social Movement, and General Secretary of the Pueblo Nuevo Chapter.

Born in Pueblo Nasa, Tierra Dentro, an indigenous reserve of Cuetando in the San Luis small town, one more of the victims of the conflict, Cantré moved about 10 years ago to the Meseta village, ancestral territory of Pueblo Nuevo in the Jamundí municipality, in order to avoid being listed in the armed groups.

He finished studies at the Indigenous Intercultural University UAIIN, by the time he was murdered, he was writing



his degree monograph on the life plan of the Ancestral Territory of Pueblo Nuevo. Another of the occupations that he developed for the indigenous, afro and peasants communities of the Municipality of Jamundí, he performed through the Mais Movement as their representative.

He was also promoting, together with the current governor, a project that intended a massive planting of trees alongside water sprouts, in the ancestral territory of Pueblo Nuevo.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Cabildo Indígena de Pueblo Nuevo**



May 6, 2017

**Jáider Jiménez Cardona**  
Communal Action Board of  
Decepaz.  
Cali, Valle del Cauca

Jáider Jiménez Cardona was assassinated on May 6, 2017, in a store located eastern of Cali in Valle del Cauca. The victim was a 48-year-old man recognized amongst the community for engaging in conciliatory activities with the Community Action Board.

The communal leader arrived to the store, located in the Decepaz neighborhood, where some young adults and a minor intended to commit a robbery. When witnessing the fact, according to spectators, Jaider intended to mediate and used his experience in his role as conciliator, but the minor shot and killed him.

“Jáider was a person who resolved all kinds of problems. Sadly, he wanted



to mediate in a robbery intended for a commercial establishment but it was not possible; the person did not cope with Jáider and, unfortunately, they shot him”, said Julián Alberto Núñez, president of the Community Action Board.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Junta de Acción Comunal Decepaz**



May 9, 2017

**Daniel Felipe Castro Basto**  
Corinto Indigenous Reserve  
Corinto - Cauca

The indigenous authorities of the Indigenous Chapters Association of Northern Cauca ACIN-Cxhab Wala Kiwe, denounced the murder of the community member and liberator of Mother Earth, Daniel Felipe Castro Basto, at the hands of the Colombian Public Force.





According to the allegations, the events took place on May 9, 2017, at approximately 10:20 am, when members of the Anti-Riot Mobile Squad ESMAD violently irrupted in the Miraflores Ranch (in Corinto, Cauca), where the community was doing agricultural work within the framework of the Minga of Mother Earth Liberation, convened for May 8th and 9th, 2017. ESMAD members deliberately threw tear gas grenades against the community, but since the intention of the community was not that of seeking confrontation with the police, they started retreating towards the top of the Ranch. This action of cornering and abuse was supported by members of the National Army who were stationed at the entrance of the Miraflores Ranch's house.

At 11:20 AM after about 55 minutes of repression by the National Police, a group of community members and liberators of Mother Earth, set a location near the entrance of the hacienda, to elude the attack from

the ESMAD tank, but at that moment, a group of the National Police, who were mobilized in three different truck-type vehicles on the road that leads from Miranda to Corinto - Cauca, indiscriminately shot with firearms against the people who were in that place. As a result, the liberator of Corinto's Mother Earth Daniel Felipe Castro Basto, and the independent journalist Pedro García Leal came out injured. Additionally, the National Army that was in the high part of the Ranch, near the house of the property, shot repeatedly against the community that was in the low part.

17 year-old Daniel Felipe Castro, an indigenous youth leader and land liberator survived by his pregnant wife, was born in the village of San Pedro, Corinto Indigenous Reserve.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Public Force**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Corinto Indigenous Reserve**



May 13, 2017  
**Mario Andrés Calle Correa**  
 Association of Peasant  
 Workers of Valle del Cauca,  
 ASTRACAVA  
 Guacarí - Valle del Cauca

Mario Andrés Calle Correa, aged 40, was assassinated on May 13, 2017, in a rural area of Guacarí, Valle del Cauca. Mario Andrés was the president of the sub-directorate of the Associa-



tion of Peasant Workers of Valle del Cauca, ASTRACAVA, and he was also related to the Peasant Coordination of Valle del Cauca. He was attacked by unknown subjects when he was in Santa Rosa de Tapias district, in the Pomares de Guacarí small town. The peasant leader was shot three firearm projectiles which ultimately led to his decease.

According to information from the witnesses, there was no time to offer any help or assistance to save his life. The wounds, according to the technicians and experts, were mortal. Mario Andrés Calle was a leader of the area,

he worked in agriculture and was also an agro-ecological producer. He lived with his mother and brothers and he was the father of an 18-month old child. He was also characterized, according to the association of which he was part of, for criticizing the National Government while seeking the rights of peasants in the region and for defending the peace process and the Havana agreements.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Association of Peasant Workers of Valle del Cauca, ASTRACAVA**



May 16, 2017  
**José Reyes Guerrero Gaitán**  
Chiriguaná Victims Participation  
Board  
Chiriguaná - César

José Reyes Guerrero Gaitán, 53 years old, resident of the municipality of Chiriguaná, was assassinated on May 16, 2017 near the town of La Sierra of the same municipality. The community leader received six gunshots: Two in the head and the rest of them in his arms, legs and back.

Guerrero Gaitán, was a substitute member of the Chiriguaná Victims Participation Board and he had been exiled by paramilitaries several years ago. Being a member of the table of victims, he worked with them in this municipality of the Cesar department. He also had a position as administrator of the Puerto Rico farm, located



between the towns of Santa Cecilia and La Sierra and, whose owner, Jaime Royero Bonilla, was shot on 18 November.

“There is very little information about the murder of my father, because it seems that there were no witnesses, but the truth is that he took two shots while he was still riding his motorcycle, because there were two bullet caps

on the place where he jumped off his motorcycle and started running. He jumped over a barb wired fence and ran about 250 meters. In the middle of the shooting race, he was hit by gun projectiles and fell, face down. On the ground, they made sure to shoot him in the head. So it is obvious that they brutally assassinated him”, informed the son of the victim during an interview.

Javier Guerrero said that he accompanied his dad to the farm to find the milk every day, each one on their own

motorcycle: “He used to take the lead and I followed him, but on the day of the homicide, curiously, like when things are meant to happen, I had another task to do; I left home when he was getting ready to start his daily journey and within a few minutes I was called to be informed about the tragic news” he said.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culpit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Chiriguana Victims Participation Board**



May 18, 2017

**Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas**

Ethnic and Popular Movement  
 of Pacific, MOEPP  
 Magüi Payan - Nariño

Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas, 37 years old, was murdered on the afternoon of Thursday, May 18, 2017 in the district of Guilpi Piragua, municipality of Maguá Payan, Nariño. The incident took place between 3:00 and 4:00 PM, when strangers approached the leader Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas and told him that he had been called for a meeting. Álvaro Arturo went to the cited place of the meeting with his two brothers and at the Bocas de Guilpi located near the river Patía, the unknown subjects fired their weapons against him. The lifeless body of the social leader Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas evidenced 10 gun impacts.



Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas, was the campaign manager for ORLANDO QUIÑONEZ TENORIO in the regional elections of 2015, and he was taking part in ORLANDO's Pre Candidature. In addition he was a social leader, politician and defender of Human Rights, who developed actions demanding the rights of the Afro people in the area through their participation in the Ethnic and Popular Movement

of the Pacific, MOEPP, which is also a member of the National Coordination of Coca, Amapola and Marihuana Growers-COCCAM and of the Political and Social Movement Patriotic March in Nariño.



May 25, de 2017  
**Segundo Víctor Castillo**  
Tumaco Social Movement  
Tumaco - Nariño

Segundo Víctor Castillo, leader and defender of human rights, was assassinated on May 25, 2017, in the Panama neighborhood of the Tumaco municipality, in Nariño, after having denounced, since last April, serious threats against the life and personal integrity of him and other six social leaders from the same municipality.

The community leader was killed the night of Thursday, May 25, in the Panama neighborhood in the Tumaco municipality, when he was coming back home. Segundo Víctor Castillo had managed to have more than 120 young people join productive activities and struggled to stop them from engaging criminal activities.

The Ombudsman Carlos Alfonso Negret Mosquera, personally asked the authorities to carry out the relevant investigations in order to clarify this crime and to reinforce, as a matter of urgency, the protection measures for threatened social leaders who have been subjected to intimidation and threats in the municipality of Tumaco.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Ethnic and Popular Movement of Pacific, MOEPP**



On May 12, 2017, the Ombudsman's Office had requested the National Protection Unit (UNP) to implement urgent emergency measures for Segundo Víctor Castillo; to the National Police, the adoption of preventive measures and the accusations were transferred to the District Attorney's Office. The UNP had recently granted soft protective measures (a bullet-proof vest, media and the provision of an amount of money intended as an immediate relocation measure).

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Tumaco Social Movement**



May 26, 2017  
**Carlos Augusto Paneso**  
 Arco Iris (Rainbow) LGBTI  
 Colombian Foundation  
 Tumaco - Nariño

Right after Colombia and the world celebrated the Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, an LGBTI leader was assassinated in Tumaco, Nariño. Carlos Augusto Paneso is the name of the gay activist who died in the early hours of May 26, after receiving several gunshots. Paneso was leaving his house when he was killed. He was a victim of forced relocation and also a leader in the Arco Iris LGBTI Colombian Foundation, an organization of Tumaco that has worked jointly with Caribe Afirmativo. Paneso worked with LGBTI young people from the peripheral areas of Tumaco.

In Tumaco, 12 LGBTI people have been killed between 2011 and this year so far, and none of the investigations has progressed, according to the Arco Iris



LGBTI Colombian Foundation. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex people have been victims of threats from illegal armed groups, which keep them living filled with anxiety. The Tumaco organization has denounced these crimes before the authorities. However, everything remains unpunished.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Arco Iris (Rainbow) LGBTI Colombian Foundation**

June 3rd, 2017  
**Efren Santo**  
 Campoalegre village  
 Riosucio – Chocó

Efren Santo was an Afro and peasant leader of the Campoalegre village, who was dedicated to the agricultural labors in his property and to the organizational work with afro descending population of the community councils of the zone. On the morning of June 3, 2017 several individuals arrived asking



to see him. Once they identified him, they proceeded to assassinate him by lacerating him with a white weapon on several parts of his body and later on, cutting his throat.

Efren was a part of Afro-descendant local leaderships within the Campoalegre village in Riosucio and connected with the land claim processes of the Pedeguita-Mancilla Community Council. According to organizations consulted on the matter, Santo was a leader with a very low profile in the area due to the number of armed groups that are

present in the territory and he was an important source of information on the problems that afflicted the community. He was also involved in a dispute over lands that had been seized during the armed conflict. However, there is still no precise indication of whether this leader belonged to a formal process within the framework of law 1448.

**Had he reported threats:** No  
**Alleged Culprit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Campoalegre village  
**Community**



June 4, 2017  
**Iván Martínez**  
Organization of Security  
Workers Union – UNSITRASEG  
Fonseca - La Guajira

Iván Martínez, a union leader, was murdered on June 4, 2017 in the municipality of Fonseca, department of La Guajira. The hit man arrived at his residence pretending to be drunk, he then approached the victim and shot him repeatedly. Iván Martínez, was transferred to a medical center where they confirmed his death. The event occurred on a Sunday night at the corner of 18th Street with 22nd, in Las Delicias neighborhood of that municipality.

Martínez belonged to the board of the Organization of Security Workers Union – UNSITRASEG - entity that repudiated the murder of one of his colleagues and do not rule out that



the criminal action was caused by the so-called 'Plan Pistola' (Pistol Plan), since they have also been declared military targets by groups outside the law.

**Had he reported threats:** No  
**Alleged Culprit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Organization of Security  
**Workers Union – UNSITRASEG**



June 4, 2017

**Wilmar Felipe Barona**Colombian Union of Carton  
Workers, Sintracarc  
Cali - Valle del Cauca

Wilmar Felipe Barona, a leader of the Colombian Union of Carton Workers, Sintracarc, died on Saturday, June 4th, 2017, from wounds caused by a strong car crash with a police patrol in Cali, by the Southeast Highway with the 23rd Street.

According to Carlos David Barona, Wilmar Felipe Barona's first degree cousin, they have not received clear versions from the Metropolitan Police. According to Major Jhon Jairo Vargas, second commander of the Metropolitan Police District of Cali, his men were chasing after Wilmar Felipe Barona because, Vargas allegedly said, he committed an armed robbery.

His union mates consulted at 6:33 p.m. of Wednesday, June 14th, the page of judicial history of the Police and found that Wilmar Felipe Barona does not return any judicial records. This was confirmed by television reporters before the high commander of the National Police (PONAL). What happens here is that the website of the Police offers one version and the implicated



policeman tells a very different one. In addition to this, there is public video evidence of how one of the policemen that persecuted Wilmar, approached the body and took the union leader's cell phone right after the crash.

Faced with such a level of suspicious facts around the death of this union leader, neither PONAL nor the Mayor's Office of Cali have pronounced so to clarify this confusing death. Meanwhile, the family of Wilmar Felipe Barona requested this case to be investigated in depth, his relative informed.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: National Police**  
**Social and/or human rights process**  
**affected: Colombian Union of Carton**  
**Workers, Sintracarc**



June 7, 2017

**Ricardo Córdoba**

Communal Action Board of Los  
Medios Village  
Miraflores - Guaviare

On June 7th, 2017, in the municipality of Miraflores, department of Guaviare, Ricardo Córdoba, the president of the Communal Action Board of the Los Medios Village, was assassinated. The events occurred in the los Medios village, five hours away from the urban area of Miraflores. Apparently and according to witnesses, after committing the offense, the murderer fled on the way to Calamar, where the authorities were duly informed to facilitate his capture. The authorities are currently investigating the case and continue to search for those responsible for the crime of the communal leader.

Córdoba had been performing this task for less than a year and took over the post after his predecessor was also killed. Neither the mayor of Miraflores



nor the Government of Guaviare have pronounced about this affair. This area is one of those which was tightly controlled by the FARC and that, after they left, converged a significant number of dissidents of this guerrilla group as well as the presence of new armed actors in the territory which are fighting over territorial control.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of Los Medios Village**



June 6, 2017

**Bernardo Cuero**

National Association of Afro  
Descendants - Afrodes  
Malambo - Atlántico

Bernardo Cuero, leader of the Atlántico Departmental Board of Victims and national prosecutor of the National Association of Afro descendants - Afrodes, was assassinated on Wednesday June 7th, 2017, in his own home, located in



the Villa Esperanza neighborhood of the Malambo municipality, in Atlántico.

Bernardo Cuero, 62, received four shots that immediately ended his life. According to the reports, two men onboard a motorcycle arrived to his house, pretending to be looking for an address until they caught the attention of the Afro leader. After being lured out, he was shot dead.

Only 18 days before that, a package with an intimidating and explicit message arrived to the headquarters of Afrodes in Cali: A small coffin with a cross and a piece of paper inside. The paper contained a letter issued by the Gaitanista Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AGC), in which Erlendy Cuero, vice president of the organization, Arnaldo Hernández, leader of the organization in Cartagena, and other leaders of the organization were declared as military targets.

“If a member of Afrodes suffers an attack, or one of their family members,

we hold the Government responsible about it for not taking the necessary measures. We ask to be heard before any tragedy happens to us” had Cuero said the day that the menace was left on the Cali facilities, thus revealing the desperation of the members of the organization for the threats.

Despite Afrodes insistence on the need to reinforce the security schemes of their leaders, the requests were not completely attended to and Cuero is now one more name that increases the list of assassinated leaders since the implementation of the Peace Agreement. In fact, paradoxically, after the multiple complaints he made about the threats received, his security scheme was suspended and he was given only a bulletproof vest and a cell phone.

**Had he reported threats: Yes**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: National Association of Afro Descendants - Afrodes**



June 7, 2017  
**Washington Cedeño Otero**  
 Association of Teachers and  
 Education Workers of Córdoba  
 ADEMACOR  
 Puerto Escondido - Córdoba

Washington Cedeño Otero was murdered on June 7th, 2017, in a rural area of the municipality of Puerto Escondido, Córdoba. The fact materialized when the teacher was heading to lead a cle-



aning day, as an extracurricular activity in the middle of the teacher's strike; when he was intercepted by two men on a motorcycle. One of the hit men repeatedly shot him until he ended his life.

The commander of the Cordoba Police Department, Colonel Engelbert Grijalba Suarez, confirmed that the area where the 47-year-old teacher Washington Cedeño Otero was murdered on that Tuesday afternoon, in the village of Sabalito Arriba, municipality of Puerto Escondido, the 'Gulf Clan' is present.

Washington Cedeño Otero, was born in El Obligado district between San Pelayo and Cereté. He obtained a degree as a graduate in Spanish Language and for 20 years he was a basic school teacher. He was the father of four children, all of them, minors. He was also a member of the Association of Teachers and Education Workers of Córdoba ADEMACOR, organization that produced the accusation. This teacher was

in constant opposition to the fact of young people joining illegal armed groups.

His family reported that the teacher had visited them 15 days ago, with the same extroverted and jovial attitude with which he will always be remembered. The last time he visited town, he did it in order to paint his father's tomb, in the cemetery of that locality.

The president of the Association of Teachers and Education Workers of Córdoba ADEMACOR, Domingo Ayala Espitia, asked the authorities to execute exhaustive investigations in order to find those responsible for the murder of Teacher Cedeño, "because most of these cases remain are left unpunished".

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Association of Teachers and Education Workers of Córdoba ADEMACOR**



June 14, 2017  
**José María Lemus Téllez**  
Communal Action Board of Las  
Palmas  
Tibú - Norte de Santander

During night of Saturday, June 10, 2017, in Las Palmas de Tibú village, some people who were sharing drinks in a pub in Las Palmas started a fight, which resulted in lethal white weapon wounds on a 22-year-old young man



and the president Of the Community Action Board of the mentioned village. The leader was transferred to the University Hospital Erasmo Meoz where after 3 days, he died from the damage he received, as confirmed by Colonel George Quintero, commander of the Police Department of Norte de Santander.

Regarding the death of José María Lemus, the Peoples' Congress pointed out that this murder was committed due to his communal leadership work, because he was the president of the Las Palmas Community Action Board (JAC) and this area is one of the most dangerous in terms of public order in

the municipality of Tibú. In this regard, the authorities (such as the police commander of Tibú) ruled out that it was a homicide related to his leadership and stated in public statements that this murder was due to personal problems. To this date, neither the District Attorney's Office nor the Municipality Mayor's Office have pronounced on this matter and there is a worrying lack of information on the case.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Communal Action Board of Las Palmas**



June 14, 2017  
**Katherine Escalante Castilla**  
 Aguachica Civil Defense  
 Aguachica - César

On June 14, 2017, the lifeless body of the Aguachica Civil Defense President, Katherine Escalante Castilla, was found. The body of the community leader was found around the area of the Socorro airport, in the jurisdiction of the Palmas del Socorro municipality, in Santander.

Katherine Escalante had been missing since May 15th, and from that moment her relatives alerted the authorities thus starting the desperate search, hoping to find her alive. However, the news were not encouraging, as authorities reported the finding of the corpse of the Civil Defense leader.



All the investigations point towards a soldier, who would be the alleged murderer of Katherine Escalante Castilla. "She lost contact with us on May 15th, when she left at 3:00 p.m. The last call she was made was to contact her mother when she arrived in Bucaramanga", said the father of the missing girl.

The last time the girl was seen alive, it was on May 15th at Centenario Park in Bucaramanga. "A friend of hers saw her between 3:30 and 4:00 in the afternoon. He says she was alone, she was carrying a bag and a jacket and he did not know anything else because she had to travel," said a familiar. On the same day, May 15th at 2:00 pm, her family reported her missing before the competent authorities as stated in

the "Consultation of cases registered in the database of the Oral Criminal Accusatory System - SPOA"

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: A Soldier of the National Army**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Aguachica Civil Defense**

June 15, 2017  
**Narda Barchilón**  
Women Community of the  
Villaluz neighborhood and  
Apoyar ORG  
Arauca - Arauca

On the night of Thursday, June 15, the murder of women's leader Narda Barchilón was perpetrated in the Villa Luz Residential Compound, in the capital of the Department of Arauca. At around 6:30 pm two subjects on a motorcycle were lurking around the Villa Luz neighborhood, after several laps and making sure that there was no presence of the public force in the sector, they went after their objective.

The criminals entered the House of the leader Narda Barchilón, who was, at the time of her murder, sharing with her family. The men broke into the house producing a weapon and shooting several bullets against her.

According to information from people who were in the house at that moment, the killers entered without a



word, grabbed the woman by the hair and proceeded to shoot her several times, killing her instantly. Her husband was also injured with a projectile shot at one of his legs after he tried to respond to the attack. Then they fled.

Narda was part of the Apoyar ORG in Arauca, dedicated to accompanying entrepreneur women in this area of the country. According to Apoyar ORG, this woman was part of the training and leadership processes among the villaluz women in matters of health and women's rights; by the time of her death, Narda was no longer part of the organization, but she continued



her leadership role in this difficult neighborhood of Arauca, where several dozens of families exiled by the conflict have settled in, as well as members of illegal disbanded armed groups.

**Had she reported threats:** No  
**Alleged Culprit:** Unknown  
**Social and/or human rights process affected:** Women Community of the Villaluz neighborhood and Apoyar ORG



June 22nd, 2017  
**Mauricio Fernando Vélez López**  
 Mixed Union of Public  
 Universities Employees,  
 Sintraunal  
 Buenos Aires - Cauca

On June 22, 2017, in the village of San Francisco, of the Timba District, rural area of Buenos Aires, northern Cauca, Mauricio Fernando Vélez López, Vice President of Sintraunal and former chair of the America de Cali Soccer team, was tortured and subsequently murdered.

The union leader had been kidnapped from a farm by 12 armed men on Wednesday night, after tying his relatives. The government secretary of this locality, Manuel Popó, said that during morning hours of that Thursday “the corpse of the professor was found by peasants of the San Francisco village, and it was reported to the Police and the Army”.

A source from the SIJIN said that “there is a version of some of the victim’s relatives who indicated that he arrived to his farm in the afternoon hours of Wednesday to visit his family, with the intention of bringing them some cleaning goods and tools for required



work on the property. As it is a remote place, he was asked to stay overnight to join them for a barbecue. It seems that they were sharing this activity when about twelve subjects arrived, armed with rifles, without identifying themselves nor further explanations, and went ahead beating the people present at the time, after which they tied them up and kidnapped the professor using a car of its property”. Vélez López’s corpse was found, apparently, with signs of violence and torture. The corpse was taken by the experts of the SIJIN to the headquarters of Legal Medicine in Santander de Quilichao.

Mauricio Vélez López was from Cartago, Valle del Cauca, but he lived in Cali, the capital of the department. His name was widely recognized back

in 2010 when he was the Director of the America de Cali Soccer Team during the process of transformation and sanitation that they started in order to leave the dreaded Clinton List in which the names of the companies worldwide accused of laundering money are mentioned.

From a very young age he was an activist of the Valle University and from there he ascended until he became president of the union of that College. Later, he was promoted in his union leadership when he was named vice-president of the Mixed Union of Workers of the Public Universities,

Sintraunal, position that filled at the moment of his death.

Once the unionist's crime was known, several organizations publicly expressed their repudiation of the murder and demanded the authorities to solve his homicide and also those of other social leaders, riddled in the department.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Mixed Union of Public Universities Employees, Sintraunal**



June 30, 2017  
**Alberto Román Acosta**  
National Union of Agricultural  
Industry Workers – Sintrainagro  
El Cerrito, Valle del Cauca

On June 30, 2017, union leader Alberto Román Acosta was shot dead on a soccer field in the municipality of El Cerrito - Valle del Cauca where he was watching his son play.

The “José Alvear Restrepo” Collective Bar Association (CCAJAR) reported in a statement that Acosta was murdered in the municipality of El Cerrito by two hitmen who repeatedly shot him. The group adds that Acosta was the president of the National Union of Agricultural Workers (Sintrainagro) that gathers sugarcane cutters from Guacarí, a town in the department of Valle del Cauca. The union leader was



transferred to the hospital San Rafael of El Cerrito, where he later died due to the injuries from the bullets.

Sintrainagro is a union that groups sugarcane cutters in the Valle del Cauca department, while its affiliates are workers of banana plantations in Antioquia and flowers in the center of the country, as well as employees on farms

where palm oil is grown. It is important to note that he is the second human rights defender murdered in this municipality during the year, an atypical situation since previous killings of this type of leader in El Cerrito had not been reported in previous years.



**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: National Union of Agricultural Industry Workers – Sintrainagro**

June 30, 2017  
**Eugenio Rentería Martínez**  
 Civic Strike Committee in  
 Chocó  
 Quibdó - Chocó

Eugenio Rentería Martínez, leader of the Civic Strike Committee in Chocó, was found dead on June 30, 2017, in Quibdó, Chocó, with signs of violence as blunt blows and knife wounds.



The murder was committed in the sector El Caraño de Quibdó, very close to the units where 1,500 free houses were assigned. The murder of this young man aged 27 has distressed the other members of the Committee who demand a quick action from the authorities to clarify this episode. Aristides Valenzuela, mobility coordinator for that group, also said that they are concerned that the attack had been in retaliation for the Strike.

Rentería was an active member of the Civic Committee for the Salvation of Chocó that promoted the strikes in

that department in August of 2016 and May of 2017, and that ended with several agreements, among them, the publication of the new Chocó map including Belén de Bajirá in their territory. The members of the Civic Committee also demand security guarantees from the authorities, as agreed in the ceasing of the last strike in Chocó.

**Had he reported threats: No**  
**Alleged Culprit: Unknown**  
**Social and/or human rights process affected: Civic Strike Committee in Chocó**



## POLITICS, PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

What in 2016 seemed like a bad premonition, today is a sensitive reality: There is an important increase of homicides and attacks against the life and physical integrity of the defenders of the Human rights in Colombia. And it is not that such violence is new. As documented, at least since the Somos Defensores Program started, since at least 10 years ago, the attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders have been a historical reality in the context of sociopolitical violence and now with the silence of the FARC rifles, this violence is even more focused on this type of activists.

This is why this report intends to raise a warning voice for the defenders of the country, given the lack of effective political protection delivered by the State in an increasingly polarized and difficult environment for the defense of all rights and the activists behind these fair struggles, despite the context of “peace”. “Agúzate” (watch out) as the title of this report (taken from the famous homonymous song by salsa singers Richie Ray and Bobbie Cruz), is a call for self-protection between defenders, to assist in mutual care amongst activists before a passive state protection, a null prevention of such violence and a minimum advance in the investigations of these

crimes. And it is on the framework of the last subject that we will appraise the relationship that defenders had with politics, peace and state actions in these first 6 months of 2017, in front of this complex phenomenon of violence that seems to have no end.

### DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE: The “historical advances”

With a certain touch of victory, the Attorney General’s Office issued a statement in July 2017 stating that it had achieved “historic progress” in investigations of crimes against human rights defenders in the country but did not report concrete results. In order to have a clear scenario and help the readers of this report to build a solid opinion, it textually quotes the Communication from the District Attorney’s Office:

“HISTORICAL RESULTS IN  
INVESTIGATIONS”

With the recent results, the District Attorney’s Office has clarified 51,72% of the cases of human rights defenders homicides confirmed by the UN.

Of the 87 crimes reported by the international agency, significant progress has been made in 45 of these investigations.

In these cases there are 101 incriminated persons and 71 were deprived of freedom, appointed as possible perpetrators of the murders.

In five cases sentences have already been stated and 13 are in trial stage.

The Attorney General of the Nation, Nestor Humberto Martínez Neira, assessed the progress so far reached in the investigations and reiterated that they represent the solid commitment of the Attorney General to do justice and reach the ultimate consequences against those who perpetrate attacks against social leaders.

He insisted that these results represent the serious and committed work to find and subdue the culprits. In addition, it is the best contribution of the District Attorney's Office to peace and human rights.

The 87 homicides of defenders confirmed by the UN have occurred in 22 departments. Cauca is the most affected department with 16 murders, followed by Antioquia with 11, Norte de Santander with 7, Valle with 7 and Nariño with 6.

The important results in the investigations are achieved thanks to the commitment of 25 sectionals and three National Units of the General District Attorney's Office of the Nation."<sup>1</sup>

This statement managed to fill the headlines of the media inside and outside of Colombia, which reported

the news with the same victory tone that was used by the General District Attorney's Office, stating that it is a "historical" achievement and allowing public opinion to read these so decontextualized headlines such as "Colombia has clarified 51.72% of the homicides of the Human Right Defenders"<sup>2</sup>, nothing further from reality.

Given what was mentioned above, it is possible to determine that this is indeed a "historic" step given the impunity reigning in these investigations and the contempt with which this subject was treated for years by the investigating entity. However these incipient results can be "historical" given the historically ineffective labor of the entity, but they are absolutely insufficient; These are some of the reasons why they are insufficient:

- The District Attorney's Office is only providing results on 87 cases between 2016 and 2017. The Program alone has documented approximately 509 cases between January 2009 and June 2017, which in the vast majority have not had any progress or have been classified as cold cases and therefore, filed. That means we are setting aside more than 85% of the cases.
- Of these "developments" enunciated by the Office of the Prosecutor, there are only 5 cases with conviction or sentence between 2016 and 2017. Five cases of 87 homicides investigated by the Office of the Prosecutor in 18 months. Definitely an insufficient progress to fight impunity.
- The information provided by the Dis-

1 <http://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/noticias/resultados-historicos-en-investigaciones-por-homicidios-de-defensores-de-derechos-humanos/>

2 <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/colombia-ha-esclarecido-el-5172-de-los-homicidios-de-defensores-de-ddhh-articulo-702704>

strict Attorney's Office is vague and too general. There is no specific mention of which cases are "solved", not even those that allegedly resulted in a conviction and of which the confidentiality policy is supposed to be rise.

- These supposed "developments" should be accompanied by full analyzes of the ways in which these defenders were murdered, in order to determine whether or not there are patterns or systematicity and not to refer to this issue with only comments from District Attorney Martínez, which is what the high official made us get used to.
- The District Attorney's Office continues to ground its records of homicides against defenders, based on data provided by OHCHR and have not yet build a record of these cases on their own; which means that the investigating entity is not yet self-sufficient in consolidating its own figures and depends on third parties to map such an important topic. It then cuts out the investigations for crimes reported by Somos Defensores, the Ombudsman's Office, Indepaz, Patriotic March and the Agrarian Summit, among others, which generate higher indexes of victims.

Regarding this last section, another remarkable element that catches our attention when reviewing this "historic" victory of the District Attorney's Office and particularly of District Attorney Martínez in the matter of crimes against defenders, is the overwhelming silence that the institution and its director keep about the important collaboration with this specific issue that it has received, and still does, from the OHCHR.

Since 2015 and under the direction of the District Attorney's Office presided

by Eduardo Montealegre, the UN Office for Human Rights directed by Todd Howland took the lead on the titanic task of mobilizing and influencing the work of the District Attorney's Office on crimes against defenders, not only to prioritize these investigations but to initiate the investigation processes based on the notion that the murdered people were HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS and therefore their lives were at imminent risk because of their work.

In fact, OHCHR provided the District Attorney's Office with an important amount of information collected by its ground officials that allowed the District Attorney's Office to accelerate their investigations. The advances can be seen, but the ingratitude of Martínez towards the work of OHCHR through these almost 3 years is evident, as he is taking all the credit of a joint work that should be acknowledged.

### **New Structure of the District Attorney's Office**

With the end of the conflict with the FARC-EP as a guerrilla movement and the implementation of the Peace agreements achieved with that insurgent group in The Havana, Cuba, an endless number of pending tasks emerged to guarantee the promised changes. One of these changes was that justice should be more effective in several issues such as the dismantling of paramilitary organisms or the protection, prevention and investigation of attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders in the country.



This agreement was materialized in Decree Law 898 of 2017, by means of which...

(...) it is created, within the General District Attorney's Office, the Special Investigation Unit for the dismantling of criminal organizations and behavior, responsible for homicides and massacres that attack Human rights defenders, social or political movements or that threaten or assault the people involved in the implementation of agreements and peacebuilding, including criminal organizations that have been designated as successors of paramilitarism<sup>3</sup>.

In the words of District Attorney Martínez himself, this decree - law, along with other reforms, creates the "Post - Conflict District Attorney's Office"<sup>4</sup>, since it creates an internal renewal of the entity in order to respond to the commitments that the District Attorney's Office holds towards to the agreements in The Havana. Although these modifications recreate a kind of "liposculpture" to the entity (because it rearranges its basic staff, it makes it more austere and effective, as well as it reallocates functions of existing areas in the entity and creates new dependencies), we will have to wait and see if all these changes become reality or as in the case of the government's protection policy consigned in the Decree 1066 of 2015<sup>5</sup>, its regional application was minimal

and clumsy as it was evidenced in the SIADDHH special report of 2013 named "Protection, walk to the Board" <sup>6</sup>.

### **Something smells bad in the District Attorney's Office Bunker**

All these changes and / or change processes deeply contrast with recent news that make us think that "something smells bad" inside the District Attorney's Office. In the last months, several scandals have been exposed causing the public opinion to wonder about the suitability of the officials of this entity and the supervision that they may have implemented for the development of their functions, in front of the important responsibilities that they develop today and the future post-conflict. Below we describe three cases that should be a matter of observation and monitoring by public opinion and that could affect (as it already happened) the processes for aggressions against defenders and / or processes AGAINST human rights defenders:

1. This case is about District Attorney Hilda Janeth Niño who was a major counterterrorism prosecutor and apparently was a key asset for paramilitary groups within the entity and that may have collaborated in the diversion of all the investigations that affected them. "The District Attorney's Office declared that it has all the eviden-

3 <http://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/es/decreto-898-del-29-de-mayo-de-2017/37040>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSKLeNFC1xE>

5 [http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sites/default/files/decreto\\_1066\\_de\\_2015\\_unico\\_reglamentario\\_del\\_sector\\_administrativo\\_del\\_interior.pdf](http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sites/default/files/decreto_1066_de_2015_unico_reglamentario_del_sector_administrativo_del_interior.pdf)

6 <https://www.somosdefensores.org/index.php/en/publicaciones/informes-siaddhh/88-informe-especial-proteccion-al-tablero>

tiary material to demonstrate the responsibility of the official about this criminal behavior that she was imputed with and that would confirm her alleged illegal relationship with demobilized members of the autodefensas (self-defenders). Apparently one of the beneficiaries may have been paramilitary member Orlando Villa incarcerated in the Picota Prison in Bogota and who was in an expel process from the Justice and Peace Law, where precisely this Attorney was the investigator. Attorney Niño pleaded not guilty to the charges and said that it is a persecution against her with the sole purpose of affecting her and getting her out of the institution. The magistrate of the Supreme Court of Bogotá endorsed the arguments of the investigators and the Attorney General which requested Villa to be seized, therefore his transfer to a jail was ordered.”<sup>7</sup>

2. The second and quite shameful scandal is starred by Luis Gustavo Moreno Anti-Corruption Head of this entity (one of the most important positions of District Attorney’s Office), who received bribes to divert investigations precisely for corruption: “Luis Gustavo Moreno was the prosecutor responsible for fighting against corruption in Colombia. And since the 28th of June, 2017, he has been held captive by the District Attorney’s Office themselves, to be extradited to the United States, for having received

US\$ 10,000 in an envelope from the former governor of Cordoba, Alejandro Lyons Muskus, who is in that country with a pending accusation of charges, as a result of the embezzlement he committed in his division, where he was in charge of handling the royalties.”<sup>8</sup>

3. The third and most worrying case is the one involving María Bernarda Puente López, sectional District Attorney in Cartagena, who was in charge of the Third Specialized District Attorney’s Office and who was captured for taking part of a corruption network: “According to the investigative entity, two of their prosecutors related to the so called heroic city (Cartagena) sectional entered negotiations to procure prison releases, home detention measures and pre-agreements with large reductions of penalty, amongst other benefits, with people in custody, in exchange for large amounts of money. These officials are Maria Bernarda Puente López, sectional District Attorney and Silvia Esmeralda Angulo, 46th prosecutor who was part of the Unit against micro-traffic.”<sup>9</sup>. The seriousness of this capture resides in the fact that we are talking about the same prosecutor who, on March 22, 2017, ordered the capture of residents and social leaders in Southern Bolivar and Central and South of the Cesar department and requested measures

7 [http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/06/17/judicial/1497653227\\_698536.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/06/17/judicial/1497653227_698536.html)

8 [http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/06/28/judicial/1498671086\\_224758.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/06/28/judicial/1498671086_224758.html)

9 <http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/fiscales-capturados-por-cases-de-corrupcion-114250>

to ensure the defendant's appearance at trial with an exile component, against The Afro-descendant leader, popular communicator and spokesperson of the Interlocution Commission of that region, Milena Quiroz<sup>10</sup>. Already for months, human rights defenders had pointed out the procedural flaws in these captures and the possible political persecution that these abuses by the District Attorney's Office meant<sup>11</sup>; time proved them right.

These three cases create doubts about the honesty of the officials investigating and exercising justice in the country, and even more so, those leading the processes of social leaders and human rights defenders. As well as it is noteworthy that the actions of dismantling these networks of corruption within the Attorney General's Office are an important step towards the depuration of the entity, it leaves a very bad environment to unravel the obscure ways in which Colombia leads their investigations and how illegal commands have such reach that not only involves low-rank officials but also dirties the highest spheres of the state's main investigating institution.

## OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE: There's no deceit if there was a warning

Since the beginning of the history of the Colombian conflict, preventing has been a great challenge, which day by day faces the intensification of violent behaviors and the multiplicity of actors who perpetrate them. However, Colombia has also been a pioneer in the development of warning mechanisms to alert about the serious massive violations of human rights in the midst of conflict. One such "star" mechanism is undoubtedly the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman's Office<sup>12</sup>.

This system, currently under the direction of the Delegated Ombudsman for Risk Prevention, is a key mechanism to prevent many Colombians from being victims of the violent actions caused by the war, that is, to save lives. However, the bureaucracy has often made these "Early Alerts" to go unheard and not processed with the speed necessary to indeed prevent the effects on the civilian population. In the case of human rights defenders, they have also been subjected to warnings due to the risk involved in carrying out their work for peace, democracy and human rights.

With this report, the Imminence Reports, Risk Reports and the Follow-up Notes prepared by the SAT constitute true prevention instruments that are often disregarded by the authorities and in most cases do not have the in-

10 <http://www.colombiainforma.info/detienen-por-corrupcion-a-fiscal-que-persigue-a-lideres-sociales/>

11 <http://www.comitedesolidaridad.com/es/content/pronunciamento-ante-la-persecucion-C3%B3n-pol%C3%ADtica-la-opinion-C3%B3n-p%C3%BAblica-nacional-e-internacional>

12 <http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/delegadas/4/>

cidence they deserve. Regarding the matter of violence against defenders, the SAT has repeatedly included the dangers faced by human rights activists in Colombia in their risk reports; however in 2017 they made a major effort.

In March 2017, the SAT of the Ombudsman's Office issued the Risk Report No. 010-17 specifically written to warn of the risks faced by several human rights organizations and their members throughout the national territory. The results are frightening: There is explicit danger in 265 municipalities and 337 social organizations are under the spotlight of violent actors<sup>13</sup>.

The document states that since the end of 2015, attacks on social leaders have increased, but he points out that since August 26, 2016, when the Final Agreement was announced, "threats and attacks against social and community leaders raged, especially those who develop activities associated with the defense of their territories, opposition to extractive projects and particularly, in relation to those leaders dedicated to impart pedagogy for peace and wager on the construction of territorial peace"<sup>14</sup>.

The report also mentions that there is the risk of new actors entering the regions that, since always, have been controlled by the FARC, for these are fighting over territorial control and the income that the guerrilla group re-

ceived from both legal and illegal economies. In this regard, he points out that these circumstances are "mainly creating an impact on individuals and organizations that support the defense of territory, natural resources, victims' rights, restitution of lands, who tend to strengthen community agendas and the implementation of Peace agreements at the territorial level"<sup>15</sup>.

This important report joins a series of warnings made in the first half of the year by the Ombudsman on the alarming increase in murders of social leaders<sup>16</sup>, which for that organism adds up to 52 cases in 2017 so far<sup>17</sup> (one more than the number revealed on this report).

Undoubtedly, the crimes against defenders have been more than anticipated. The problem is that there are no blunt actions by the Government or to prevent these cases (even when this and other warning reports exist) and no actions are being taken in order to protect the lives of these activists, when most of them are not attacked in the cities but in rural areas and do not have the possibility of easy access state protection mechanisms such as the UNP. There is no deceit if there was a warning and 51 homicides during the first 6 months of 2017 confirm it.

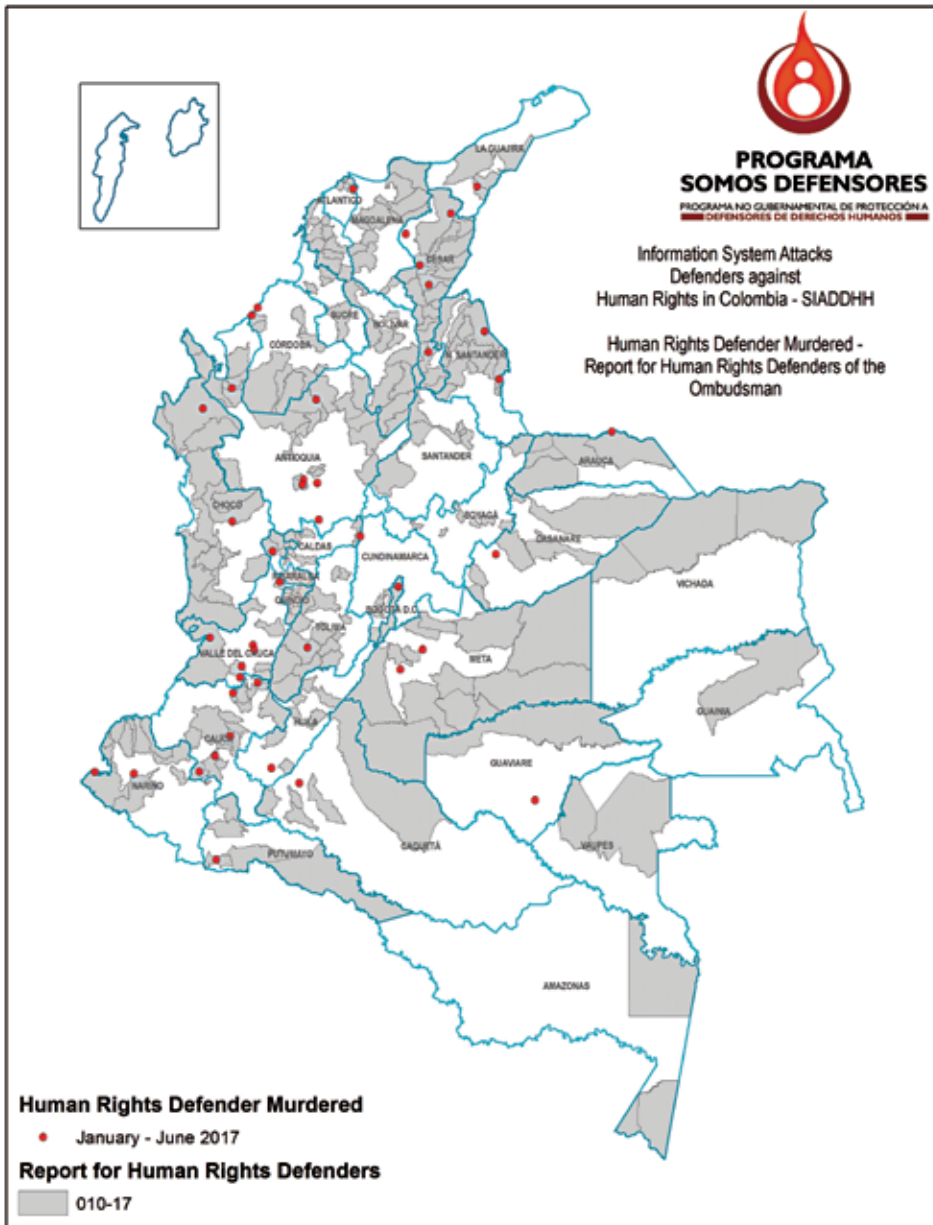
<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/noticias/6236/156-l%C3%ADderes-sociales-y-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-han-sido-asesinados-en-los-%C3%BAltimos-14-meses-Defensor%C3%ADa-Defensor%C3%ADa-del-Pueblo-l%C3%ADderes-sociales-Defensor-del-Pueblo-Colombia-l%C3%ADderes-sociales.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.elmundo.com/noticia/Defensoria-denuncia-el-asesinato-de-52-lideres-sociales-en-2017/355610>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.verdadabierta.com/victimas-seccion/los-resistentes/6598-defensoria-del-pueblo-emite-informe-de-riesgo-sobre-lideres-sociales>

<sup>14</sup> Informe de Riesgo No. 010 – 17 Defensoría del Pueblo – Sistema de Alertas Tempranas SAT. Marzo 2017



## PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE: A Late but Necessary Directive

8 years of political obscurantism had to pass, under the administration of

today's presidential pre-candidate for the Colombian extreme right Alejandro Ordoñez, so that in the main control organism of the Colombian State, the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation, the topic of protection

and guarantees for the right to dissent and defend human rights in Colombia was once again discussed.

On June 14th Attorney General Fernando Carrillo issued the directive 002 of 2017 on guidelines for protection of the rights of HR defenders<sup>18</sup>, thus replacing directive 12 of 2010 which is quite precarious compared to the new stipulation of the Public Ministry. This directive indicates the commitment of the Attorney General's Office with the warranty of human rights and urges all the authorities towards the same objective. It makes an important call not to stigmatize the work of the defenders and to act diligently, in relation to the investigation of violations or threats against them.

This new directive broadens the concept of the human rights defender. It also includes "members of social movements, political parties, political and social leaders and their organizations and those who in this condition are actively involved in the implementation of the Peace Agreement<sup>19</sup>. It is important to note the call that it makes the Government to create a decree which adopts a public policy of prevention and protection for the defenders, both individually and collectively. Given the severity of the attacks against defenders and social leaders, this policy is urgently called for and it is very important that a key entity in State control, such as the Attorney

General's Office, claims for it.

But undoubtedly, one of the most important points of the directive, is that it recommends the Government to create a unique database on the violation of rights to defenders and social leaders; a situation which, as mentioned in previous sections of this report, is an actual necessity in order to have a uniform coverage of these violent actions and to derive real protection actions from there.

The Attorney General's Office also invites the National Protection Unit and the Risk Assessment Committee to strengthen and improve protection measures. Finally, within the Attorney General's Office, the directive points to the creation of an analysis and information group on the prevention and protection of human rights defenders.

Once again, we have a new document in excellent condition and with statements that fill the hope of the community of human rights defenders in Colombia, however, as it has happened with an endless number of norms, decrees and laws with "good intentions" "We will have to wait for this directive to be applied and taken to the territories, because that is where the greatest challenge lies.

Undoubtedly this is a directive necessary for the main control entity to catch up on its responsibility in guaranteeing the rights of defenders, who in previous years were even attacked by their officials in various ways. A directive indeed, late, but necessary.

18 <https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/portal/discurso-defensores-derechos-humanos.news>

19 [https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/portal/media/file/portal\\_doc\\_interes//258\\_directiva-002-derechos-humanos.pdf](https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/portal/media/file/portal_doc_interes//258_directiva-002-derechos-humanos.pdf)



## Peace and protection for human rights defenders

The first 6 months of 2017 were characterized by a complex environment for human rights defenders: in the first instance by the number of attacks against their lives and physical integrity as will be discussed in the next chapter. Secondly because of the great responsibility that they have acquired in the implementation of the peace accords as observers and citizen observers in the fulfillment of these agreements and in the execution of pedagogical actions for peace in areas where the State is not yet present .

But perhaps one of the most important points of this semester with respect to defenders and explicitly with respect to their protection and security was the creation of the Security Guarantees Commission through decree 154 of February 3, 2017: “the National Commission of Security Guarantees, whose purpose is the design and monitoring of public and criminal policy on the dismantling of responsible criminal organizations or behaviors, homicides and massacres, which attack human rights defenders, social movements or political movements, or threaten Or to attack the persons involved in the implementation of the Peacebuilding Agreements, including criminal organizations that have been designated as successors of paramilitary groups and their support networks.”<sup>20</sup>

Evidently, this commission was created to do both public and criminal politics with the sole interest of ending paramilitarism and criminal organizations that affect human rights defenders. However, there is already a distortion of the sense of this commission by the Government itself: “The National Commission for Security Guarantees was established in the Peace Agreement framework celebrated between the Government and the FARC. Its purpose is to guarantee the exercise of politics without the threat of arms. This includes protecting those who are giving up their weapons, those in charge of implementing peace agreements, social leaders, human rights defenders and members of political parties, among others. The Commission is chaired by the Head of the State and is also composed by the Ministers of Interior, Defense and Justice; by the District Attorney General, the Attorney General and the Ombudsman, the commander of the Armed Forces and the Director of the National Police, and finally by the director of the Special Investigation Unit for these crimes. Also, within the group there are 3 recognized experts in the field and 2 delegates of human rights platforms. The Technical Secretariat of the Commission is exercised by the Security Director of the Presidency of the Republic”<sup>21</sup>.

According to the previous ruling of the Presidency of the Republic itself, this commission would have the task of ensuring that preventive and effective

20 <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/DECRETO%20154%20DEL%2003%20FEBRE-RO%20DE%202017.pdf>

21 <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/noticia/170321-Comision-Nacional-de-Garantias-de-Seguridad-escucha-a-voceros-de-organizaciones-sociales>

protection actions are implemented on the populations already described and subsuming the functions that had been temporarily granted to the high-level commission of the Government created in 2016 to deal with violence against social leaders and Human Rights defenders<sup>22</sup>. This commission was installed by the President in midst the increase of homicides of human rights activists and a wave of concerns about the guarantees to his work in March 2017<sup>23</sup>. This is positive news since for the first time there is a mechanism in the high government, established by decree, which will deal with the violence of which the defenders are victims and has the full support of the entities of the executive power in Colombia.

However, there are already a number of concerns about the functioning of the State itself in relation to this commission, and the institutions and norms that already existed for the protection of social leaders and defenders that can generate confusion when dealing with emergencies (as we are already going through). As it is well known by the public domain, there is a Protection Program established in Decree 1066 of 2015<sup>24</sup>, in which also the Human Rights defenders appear as objects of protection. However,

this commission is currently responsible for dealing with cases of homicide against defenders and of potential risks against them, a task that IS NOT OF THEIR COMPETENCE, since this commission was created (as mentioned by its very definition) to work with public politic and not cases of violence.

With this action, the Government duplicates existing spaces that were dedicated to reviewing cases of aggression (threats and killings), such as the National Guarantees Board, which was created since 2009 and which brings representatives of the Government of Colombia, State entities, delegates of human rights organizations with the mediation of UNDP and members of some embassies of countries interested in the subject of human rights in Colombia, together around a table, in the search for real guarantees for the work of these activists.

So far there is no clarity as to how the State will function in the practice to protect human rights defenders in post - conflict situations. At the moment, this type of cases continues to be dealt with through the traditional mechanism (Decree 1066) or if the Security Guarantees Commission will continue to address issues that are not of their competence. Neither has the Colombian Government pronounced on whether there will be inter-institutional work between the Security Commission and the Protection Program headed by the Ministry of the Interior. The concern is aggravated by the silence of the Government on the issue and the increase of violent actions against Human Rights activists which continues to rise.

22 <http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sala-de-prensa/galeria-multimedia/comision-de-alto-nivel-para-hacer-seguimiento-los-homicidios-y-amenazas-lideres-sociales-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-de-cauca>

23 <http://nacionesunidas.org.co/blog/2017/02/24/comunicado-de-prensa-sobre-la-instalacion-de-la-comision-nacional-de-garantias-de-seguridad/>

24 [http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sites/default/files/decreto\\_1066\\_de\\_2015\\_unico\\_reglamentario\\_del\\_sector\\_administrativo\\_del\\_interior.pdf](http://www.mininterior.gov.co/sites/default/files/decreto_1066_de_2015_unico_reglamentario_del_sector_administrativo_del_interior.pdf)



## PROGRAMA SOMOS DEFENSORES

PROGRAMA NO GUBERNAMENTAL DE PROTECCIÓN A  
DEFENSORES DE DERECHOS HUMANOS

# January - June 2017 Report Information System on Aggressions against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia - SIADDHH

According to the records kept by the System of Information on Aggression against Human Rights Defenders -SIADDHH- of the Non-Governmental Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders – Somos Defensores<sup>25</sup> (We Are Defenders), during the first six months of 2017, 335 defenders were victim of some type of aggression that endangered their life and integrity and hampered the legitimate and legal work of defending human rights in Colombia.

### INDIVIDUAL AGGRESSIONS

In the first half of 2017, there was an increase of approximately 6% in individual aggressions against defenders in relation to the same period in 2016. Between January and June 2016 the SIADDHH reported 314 defendants beaten; in 2017 in the same period, there were 335 cases.

When referring to the occurrence of these aggressions per month, we see that the highest number of registered cases occurred in March 2017 with 85 assaults, followed by January with 75 assaults, June with 52, February with 50 and finally April and May, each with 11 aggressions.

<sup>25</sup> This System records information known directly by the Somos Defensores Program and through direct source with the Social Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations that report cases to the Program.

Number of Aggressions per Month  
SIADDHH ciphers  
January-June 2017 Period



Source: SIADDHH- Somos Defensores, Program 2017

Regarding the aggressions by gender, out of the 335 defenders attacked between January and June in 2017, 76% were men and 24% were women. The percentage decrease in the number of attacks against female human rights defenders in the January - June period is evident, compared to the same period in 2016, which reported more than 100 assaults against women defenders.

Gender Agresiones	Cases
Women	79
Men	256
Total individual Agresions	335

AGGRESSIONS ACCORDING  
TO THE TYPE OF VIOLENCE

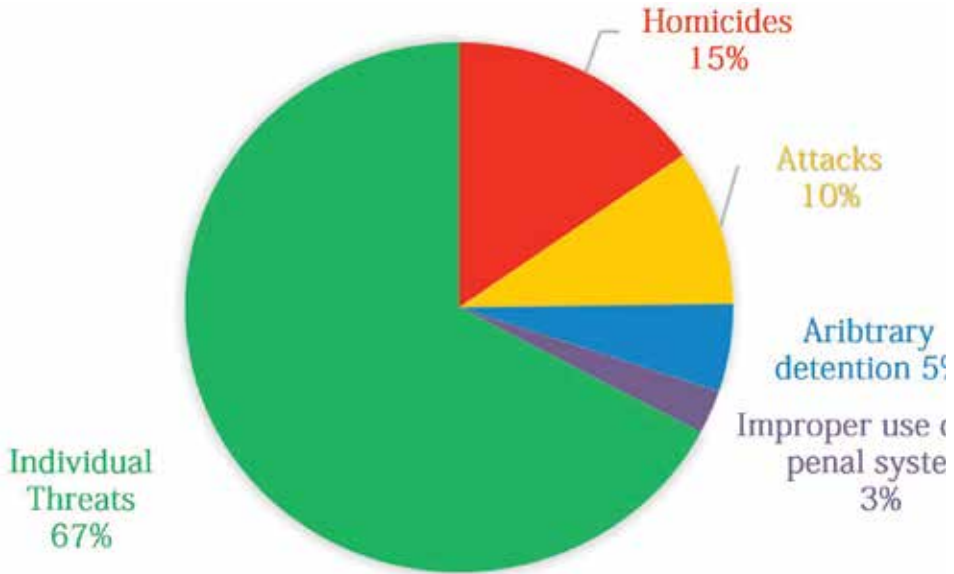
In the period of time covered by this report, information on five types of aggression against human rights defenders in Colombia was collected: murders, attacks, threats, arbitrary detentions and arbitrary use of the penal system. From the analysis of the figures it is possible to determine an important increase in the killings, attacks and arbitrary detentions, as well as a slight decrease in the threats. The reported number of cases on arbitrary use of the penal system for this semester of 2017 remains unchanged compared to the previous year.

Defenders Assassinations

In the current semester the numbers of homicides increased; Between 2016 and 2017 we see a 31% increase in homicides. From 35 cases reported in the first half of 2016 to 51 defenders, defenders, leaders or social leaders murdered in the first six months of 2017. Next, we outline their names, in recognition of their work, so that they are not forgotten and Justice is done:

*“The communal, peasant, community and afro defenders and leaders were the common targets of aggression in the first half of 2017.”*

Percentage According The Type of Agresion  
SIADDHH Ciphres  
January-June 2017 Period



Source: SIADDHH- Somos Defensores Program, 2017

Type of Individual Aggressions	Number of Aggres- sions January – June, 2016	Number of Aggres- sions January – June, 2017
Threats	232	225
Assassinations	35	51
Attacks	21	32
Arbitrary Detentions	13	18
Arbitrary use of the penal system	9	9
Information theft	3	No Record
Disappearance		No Record
Total individual aggressions	314	335

***“On average, between January and June 2017, every day TWO defenders were assaulted and every 3 days, one of them was murdered”***

DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
01/01/2017	Norte de Santander	Cúcuta	Carlos Jesús Báez Torres (Karla)	Social Leader of the Cúcuta LGTBI	LGBTI LEADER	UNKNOWN
07/01/2017	Cesar	El Paso	Aldemar Parra Garcia	President of the El Hatillo Beekeeping Association	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
10/01/2017	Antioquia	Carepa	José Ymer Cartagena Usuga	Vicepresident of the Alto Sinú Peasant Association (Asodecas) and Leader of the left-wing Patriotic March movement	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
12/01/2017	Antioquia	Sonsón	Edmiro León Alzate Londoño	Movement for Life and Defense of the Territory in Eastern Antioquia (MOVETE)	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
14/01/2017	Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura	Emilsen Manyoma Mosquera	Community leader, member of the Conpaz Network, former member of several social organizations and former collaborator of the Buenaventura humanitarian space.	COMMUNITARY LEADER	UNKNOWN
25/01/2017	Risaralda	Pueblo Rico	Hernando Murillo Armijo	Presumed Afro Descendant Leader and former president of the Community Action Board of the village of Agüita (2012-2016).	AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
26/01/2017	Cesar	Valledupar	Yoryanis Isabel Bernal Varela	"Defender of the rights of indigenous Wiwa women. Wiwa Golkuche from Kowi, Malay and Arhuaco Indigenous Reserves, Yoryanis Isabel assisted in all of the processes of the Wiwa ethnic group regarding indigenous women's rights"	INDIGENOUS LEADER	UNKNOWN



DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTAMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
27/01/2017	Antioquia	Bello	Leonidas González Pérez	Journalist, member and coordinator of the afro chapter of the Human Rights Bureau of the Medellín and Antioquia journalists - MESDHUPERA	COMMUNICATOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER	UNKNOWN
02/02/2017	Valle del Cauca	Cartago	Miguel Ángel Hoyos	Representative of the Valle Departmental Committee of Coffee Growers for the period 2014-2018. He was affiliated to the Coffee Growers Cooperativa (Small bank Figure) in the north of the department.	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
04/02/2017	Cesar	El Copey	Edilberto Cantillo Meza	President of the Communal Action Board of El Copey Village and a member of the Victim Villagers Association of El Copey (ASVERVIC), an member organization of the Cesar Peasant Board for the Restitution of the Lands and Good Living	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
12/02/2017	Tolima	Chaparral	Deiner Alexander Méndez Berrío (Danna Méndez)	Activist of the Chaparral LGTBI Diversa Association, helped to ensure the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals	LEADER LGBTI	UNKNOWN
16/02/2017	Antioquia	Cáceres	Eberto Julio Gómez Mora	President of the Community Action Board of San José del Mane	COMMUNAL LEADER	LARAMILI-TARY
18/02/2017	Cauca	Mercaderes	Falver Cerón Gómez	President of the Communal Action Board of Esmeraldas - issues of illegal mining and crop eradication	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN

DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
20/02/2017	Bogotá	Usme	Wilfredy González Noreña	He worked with the Usme community in a case of intolerance. Human Rights Board of Usme	COMMUNITY LEADER	UNKNOWN
22/02/2017	Caldas	La Dorada	Cesar Augusto Parra	Spokesman for the Motorcycle-Taxi drivers and he was leading the protests against La Dorada Mayor's Office	COMMUNITY LEADER	UNKNOWN
26/02/2017	Cauca	Corinto	Éder Cuetia Conda	Peasant Leader, coordinator of the peasant security of the Andes small town of the municipality of Corinto	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
02/03/2017	Antioquia	Bello	Fabían Antonio Rivera	President of the Rosalpi Communal Action Board	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
02/03/2017	Antioquia	Medellín	Ruth Alicia López Guisao	Assisted Asokinchas (National Agrarian Coordinator in Chocó) in the execution of the Agrarian Summit and National Government execution.	COMMUNITY LEADER	PARAMILITARY
19/03/2017	Casanare	Aguazul	Edenis Barrera Benavides	Important Social Leader in Aguazul, also a volunteer for Civil Defense in the rice-producing municipality	COMMUNITY LEADER	UNKNOWN
22/03/2017	Cauca	Corinto	Javier Oteca Pilcué	Ancestral directive to carry out activities of liberation of the Mother Earth that take place in the Corinto, Cauca chapters and claimant of lands in northern Cauca.	INDIGENOUS LEADER	UNKNOWN
26/03/2017	Putumayo	San Miguel	Albenio Isaías Roseo Álvarez	Presumed Communal Leader reported as the President of La Unión Village Communal Action Board	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
31/03/2017	Cauca	Sucre	Jairo Arturo Chilito Muñoz	He worked in the school of El Paraiso village, rural area of Sucre.	STUDENT OR EDUCATING LEADER	UNKNOWN

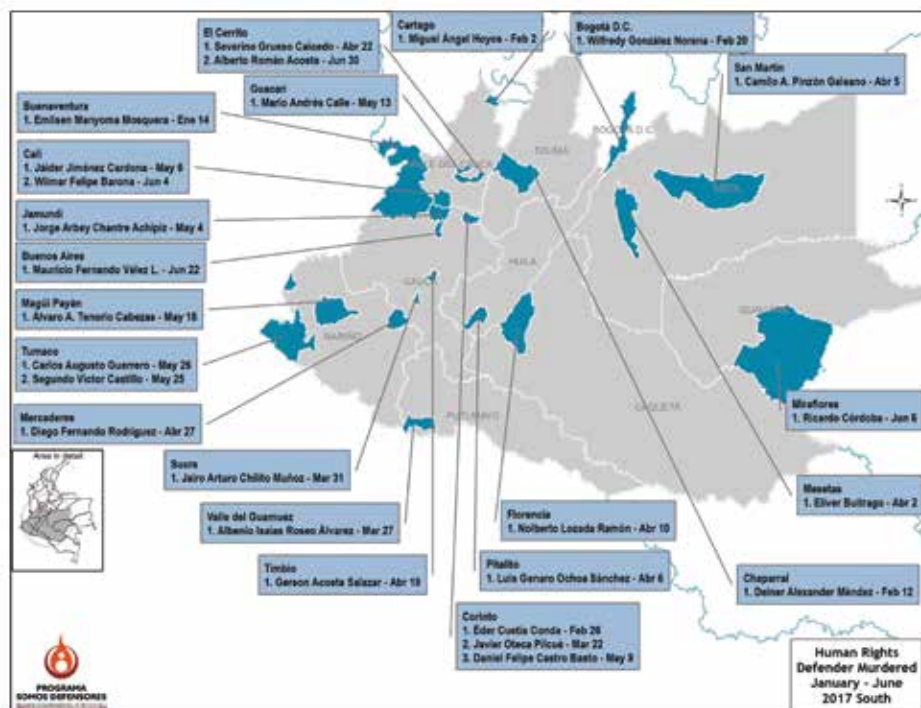
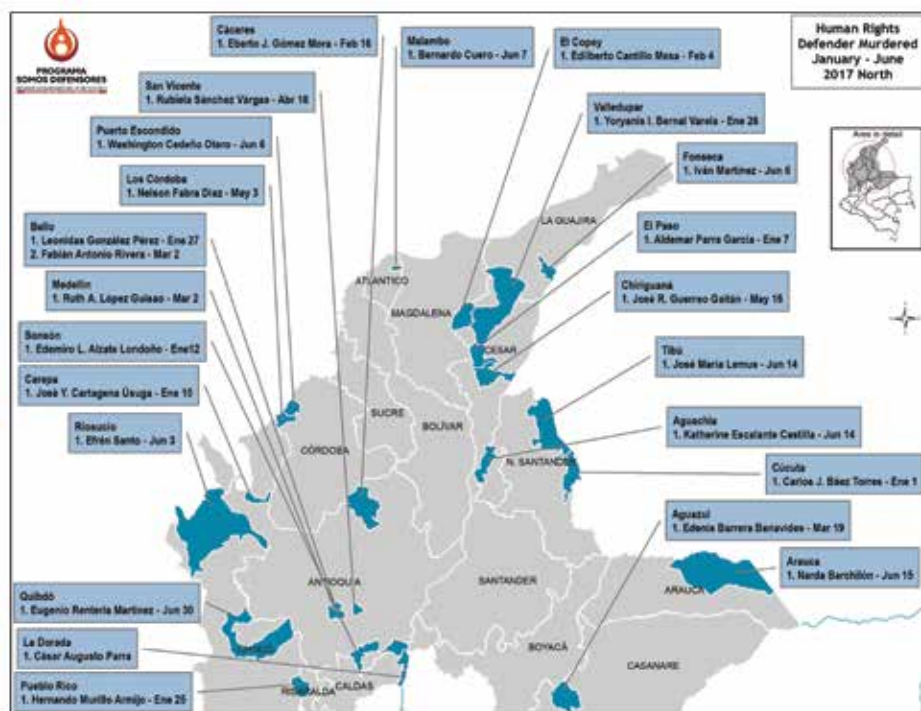
DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTAMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
02/04/2017	Meta	Mesetas	Eliver Buitrago	President of the Board, With no political affiliation nor religious creed, devoted to his work	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
05/04/2017	Meta	San Martín	Camilo Alberto Pinzón Galeano	Vice President of the Communal Action Board of the Fundo Nuevo neighborhood and remembered as a person who fought for the well-being of the population. Among his latest performances, is a request to the mayor of the municipality of San Martín and the company Hocol, demanding the construction of a bridge in the village.	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
06/04/2017	Huila	Pitalito	Luis Genaro Ochoa Sánchez	Human rights defender and carrying out investigation cases of corruption	DEFENDING ATTORNEY	UNKNOWN
10/04/2017	Caquetá	Florencia	Nolberto Lozada Ramón	Communal Leader, President of the Communal Action Board of the Buenos Aires Bajo village in Florencia	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
18/04/2017	Antioquia	San Vicente Ferrer	Rubiela Sánchez Vargas	Community Leader of the Cruces village, 49 years old, she was a candidate for the council of her municipality and was devoted to work for the community, besides taking care of her six minor children.	COMMUNITY LEADER	UNKNOWN
19/04/2017	Cauca	Timbío	Gerson Acosta Salazar	The 35-year-old human rights defender and traditional authority in his territory, Governor of the Kite Kiwe shelter in the municipality of Timbío	INDIGENOUS LEADER	UNKNOWN

DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
22/04/2017	Valle del Cauca	El Cerrito	Severino Grueso Caicedo	69 years old. President of the Communal Action Board of the Prado Valle neighborhood in Cerrito	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
27/04/2017	Cauca	MERCADERES	Diego Fernando Rodríguez Montenegro	Legal representative of the Ganaplata and Canei Community Council and member of the La Torre Palenque (Palenque is a small village whose population is mostly Afro Descendant).	AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
03/05/2017	CÓRDOBA	Los Córdoba	Nelson Fabra Díaz	Leader of the municipality of Arboletes, Antioquia	COMMUNITY LEADER	UNKNOWN
04/05/2017	Valle del Cauca	Jamundi	Jorge Arbey Chantre Achipiz	He belonged to the Pueblo Nuevo Chapter in Jamundi and served as President of the Alternative Indigenous Movement, MAIS	INDIGENOUS LEADER	UNKNOWN
06/05/2017	Valle del Cauca	Cali	Jáider Jiménez Cardona	Conciliator, Community Action Board Decepaz.	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
09/05/2017	Cauca	Corinto	Daniel Felipe Castro Basto	Indigenous communal member and liberator of Mother Earth	INDIGENOUS LEADER	PUBLIC FORCES
13/05/2017	Valle del Cauca	Guacarí	Mario Andrés Calle	President of the Association of Peasant Workers of Valle del Cauca, Guacarí sectional, and connected to the Peasant Coordination of Valle del Cauca	AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
16/05/2017	Cesar	Chiriguana	José Reyes Guerrero Gaitán	Alleged victims leader, substitute of the board of victims of Chiriguana (Cesar)	VICTIMS OR EXILED LEADER	UNKNOWN

DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTAMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
18/05/2017	Nariño	Magüi Payan	Álvaro Arturo Tenorio Cabezas	Leader, member of the political movement Magüi Humana - Member of the Ethnic and Popular Committee of the Pacific of COCCAM	AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	ELN
25/05/2017	Nariño	Turnaco	Segundo Victor Castillo	Panama neighborhood, Tumaco	COMMUNITARY LEADER	UNKNOWN
26/05/2017	Nariño	Tumaco	Carlos Augusto Guerrero Corrotez "Carlos Augusto Paneso"	He was an activist and victim of forced exile and belonged to the Colombian Arco Iris (Rainbow) LGBTI Foundation, organization of Tumaco that has worked jointly with Caribe Afirmativo (Affirmative Caribbean)	LEADER LGBTI	UNKNOWN
03/06/2017	Chocó	Riosucio - Belén de Bajirá	Efren Santo	Efren was an Afro and peasant leader of the Campoalegre community council who was dedicated to working with agriculture in his property. Efren was part of local leadership within the Campoalegre Community Council Process	AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
04/06/2017	LA GUAJIRA	Fonseca	Iván Martínez	He belonged to the board of the Trade Union Organization of Security Workers - UNSTRASEG.	UNION LEADER	UNKNOWN
04/06/2017	Valle del Cauca	Cali	Wilmar Felipe Barona	Leader of the board of Carton Workers' Union of Colombia, Sintracarcot	UNION LEADER	PUBLIC FORCES
06/06/2017	Guavire	Miraflores	Ricardo Córdoba	President of the Communal Action Board of the Medios village, jurisdiction of Miraflores	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN

DATE OF THE FACTS	DEPARTMENT	PLACE	VICTIM	ORGANIZATION THE HE/SHE WAS PART OF	TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	ALLEGED CULPRIT
06/06/2017	CÓRDOBA	Puerto Escondido	Washington Cedeno Otero	Basic School teacher, he was a member of the Association of Teachers and Education Workers of Córdoba, Ademacor, 20 years devoted to education.	STUDENT OR EDUCATING LEADER	PARAMILITARY
07/06/2017	Atlántico	Malambo	Bernardo Cuero	Leader of the Departamental Board of the Atlantic Victims and national Attorney of the National Association of Afrodescendants (Afrodes), also a delegate of the Communal Action Board.	AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	UNKNOWN
14/06/2017	Norte de Santander	Tibú	José María Lemus	Las Palmas Communal Action Board (JAC)	COMMUNAL LEADER	UNKNOWN
14/06/2017	Cesar	Aguachica	Katherine Escalante Castilla	President of the Aguachica Civil Defense	COMMUNITARY LEADER	PUBLIC FORCE
15/06/2017	Arauca	Arauca	Narda Barchilon	Women Processes in Arauca - Arauca and Apoyar ORG	LEADER DE MUJERES	UNKNOWN
22/06/2017	Cauca	Buenos Aires	Mauricio Fernando Vélez López	Vice President of Sintraunal and former president of the America de Cali Sports Club	UNION LEADER	UNKNOWN
30/06/2017	Valle del Cauca	El Cerrito	Alberto Román Acosta	President of the Agricultural Workers Union.	UNION LEADER	UNKNOWN
30/06/2017	Chocó	Quibdó	Eugenio Rentería Martínez	Civic Committee for the Salvation of Chocó and Leader of the civic strike in Chocó	COMMUNITARY LEADER	UNKNOWN





Out of these 51 assassinations, 86% were men (44 cases) and 14% were women (7 women); It is worth noting the increase in the number of female defenders who went from 3 cases registered in 2016 to 7 in 2017 in the same period (January - June). Cauca and Valle del Cauca are the departments with the highest number of defenders killed, with 8 leaders each. Antioquia follows with 7 cases; Cesar with 5 cases, Nariño with 3 cases; Chocó, Córdoba, Meta and Norte de Santander with 2 each and finally Arauca, Atlántico, Bogotá, Caldas, Caquetá, Casanare, Huila, La Guajira, Putumayo, Risaralda and Tolima with one case respectively. Of these 51 homicides, in 7 of them the sources consulted confirm that the defenders had denounced threats before their murder; in the remaining 44 cases no threats had been reported or there was no information available about them.

Also, out of the 51 homicides, 36 of them were carried out with firearms, 7 with white weapon, 1 case product of a beating, 1 produced by violence with a blunt object and in 6 cases the mechanism used for the murder remains unknown. According to reports received by the Program, 7 of the reported homicides were preceded by the disappearance of the defender and followed by the finding of the corpse. It was also evident that the bodies of the defenders murdered in 6 cases showed signs of extremely cruel torture. This point is of highly important since the forms of torture in these cases denote a degradation in the ways of assassinating a defender, even more in times of peace. These

are two explanatory cases on this matter:

- José Yimer Cartagena Úsuga. Leader of the Peasant Association of Alto Sinú (Asodecas) - Córdoba. Murdered on January 10, 2017. He was abducted and later his body was found with 32 stab wounds and signs of torture as they ripped off his tongue and tore out his nails. This form of murder denotes very similar mechanisms of torture and violence that were not seen since the time of the partisan violence of the 1950s with the so-called "Corte de Corbata" ("Tie Cut") in which the victim's tongue was subtracted by means of a perforation done in the neck.
- Edenis Barrera Benavides. President of the Civil Defense in Aguazul - Casanare. Murdered on March 19, 2017. Edenis may have been massacred by more than one person, and her body was thrown into a place other than where the horrid crime was committed. The corpse was found by cyclists who were training around 6:00 am in an inhospitable area, near the road leading from Aguazul to San José del Búy. Her body showed signs of violence (beating) and she was half naked; with stab wounds at height of her chest (cuts on her bosom) and the abdomen, she was in addition impaled with vegetal material inside her intimate area. It is not ruled out that she was victim of sexual violence. Edenis is survived by two children, aged 16 and 10.

These homicides that on their form of execution concentrate practices as heinous as rape, torture, mutilation or impalement, together with the fact of the previous disappearance of the defender, are a clear evidence that behind these murders there are criminal structures with members highly trained for such levels of violence; these very specific practices of violence are far from the theories mentioned by several institutions of the State in which they are mentioned as possible common scenarios of homicides, qua-

rels, street robbery or problems due to excessive consumption of alcohol.

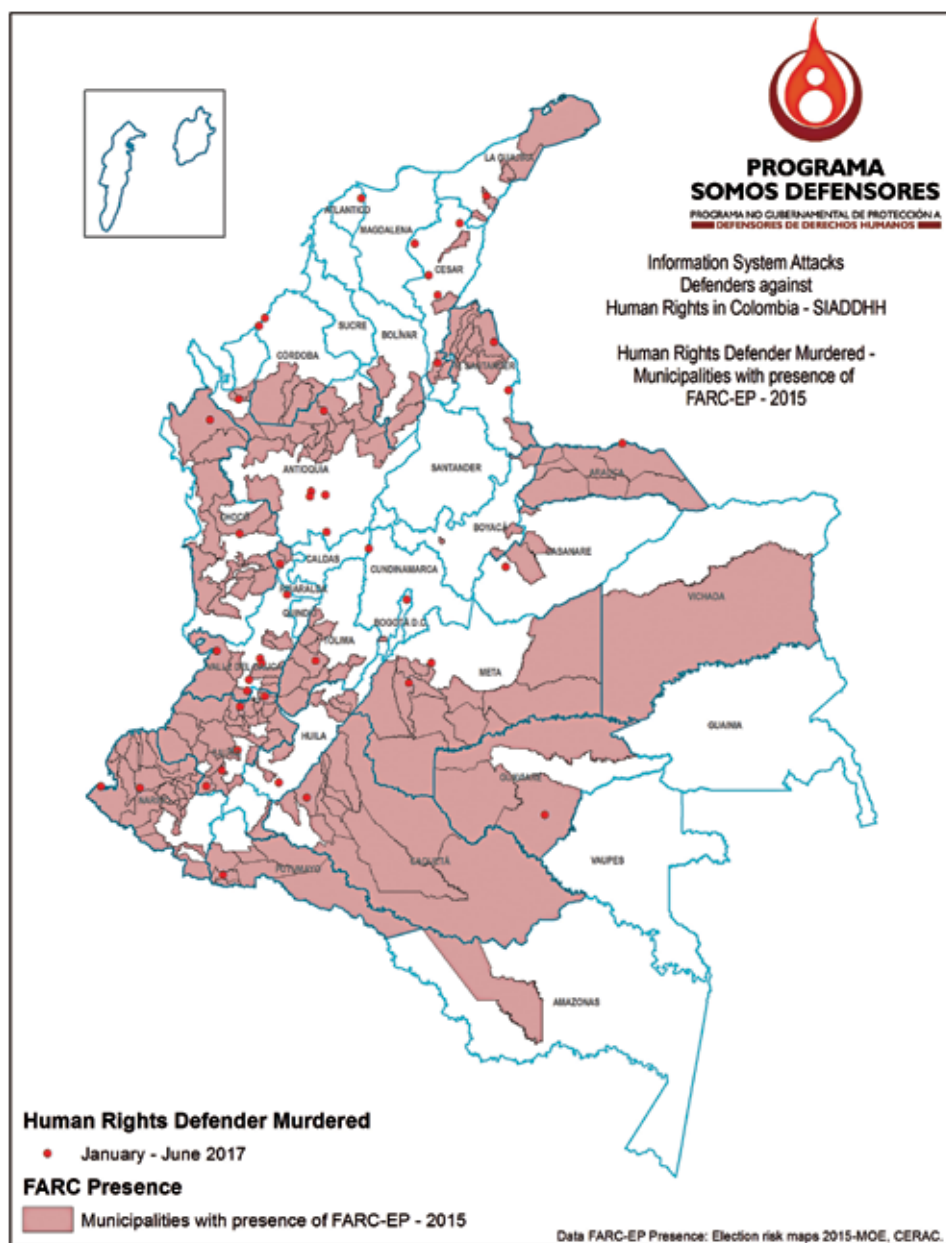
It is worth noting that 36 out of the 51 homicides were perpetrated through the HIT MAN modality in which one or several unknown and armed men burst into the defender's house, nearby or on roads that leader takes and fire their guns against them, causing their death. Only 3 of these leaders were assigned protection measures.

Type of Leader	Cases
COMMUNAL LEADER	12
COMMUNITARY LEADER	10
AGRICULTURAL OR PEASANT LEADER	6
AFRO DESCENDANT LEADER	5
INDIGENOUS LEADER	5
UNION LEADER	4
LGBTI LEADER	3
STUDENT OR EDUCATION LEADER	2
COMMUNICATOR, HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER	1
DEFENDER ATTORNEY	1
WOMEN LEADER	1
VICTIMS OR EXILED LEADER	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>

When reviewing the most affected leaderships in the first half of 2017, we find that they are those associated with Community Action Boards, community work (especially in rural areas) and peasant leaders with the highest

number of homicides (28 out of 51); fortunately it is noteworthy that the number of indigenous leaders murdered fell as they held the first places on this table for years.

***“Between January 2010 and June 2016, 381 human rights defenders have been murdered in Colombia”***



The high levels of planning and follow-up of the executioners of human rights defenders in Colombia are still evident. In 80% of cases, it is evident that crimes occur in the early hours of the morning or late at night when the leaders leave for or return from work or they are

simply resting, and several of them were preceded by the disappearance of the leader.

It is a duty to mention that in 5 of the homicide cases, relatives or friends of the defenders continue to be

assaulted during the facts; this very same situation was detected in the analysis of the last six years and now in 2017. This situation brings to mind the derivation of the risks of the defenders and their families and circle of close friends; **it doubly affects social leaders and defenders since the people close to them perceive their activity as dangerous and it often causes social rejection**, stigmatization and abandonment by family and friends

Alleged homicide Culprit	Cases
Unknown	44
Paramilitary	3
Public Force	3
ELN	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>

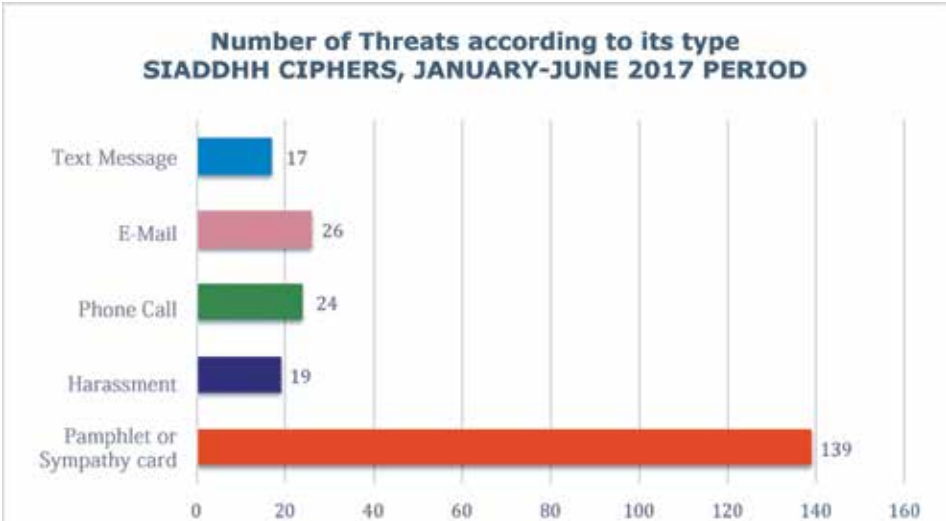
In most of these murder cases, the alleged perpetrators remain UNKNOWN, despite the fact that the District Attorney General's Office indicates that more than 50% of these cases have been clarified; unfortunately this investigation organism has not openly mentioned the names of the murdered defenders and those whose cases have been solved. What is possible to determine is that there is a very high number of cases in which people are captured but the intellectual authors continue to be unidentified.

## Individual Threats

During the period of January-June of 2017, 225 threatened defenders were registered throughout the country. It is necessary to emphasize as positive the decrease of this type of aggression. It is estimated that, for the period analyzed in this report (January-June), between 2016 and 2017 there was a decrease of 3% in the number of threatened defenders (from 232 defenders threatened in 2016 to 225 in 2017 in the same period).

About the suspects responsible for the threats in this semester, we find that paramilitary groups of different denominations register 117 cases, unknown actors increase their percentage with 35 cases and State security institutions (like the National Army and PONAL) decrease their alleged participation with only 1 case. In this list we find actors who are not supposed to exist any longer, such as the Úsuga Clan, Los Rastrojos or Urabeños with 18 cases and also other groups that belong to common crime or organized crime threatening 34 human rights defenders. The threats from the Gaitanista Self-Defense Groups of Colombia, AGC, deserve a special mention since, while decreasing the number of threats with respect to 2016, continue to be a major participant in the intimidation of the Human Rights defenders.

*“Among the results of the murder of these 51 defenders and 51 peasant, communal, indigenous, union, victim and LGBTI processes, are that we lose a leader, their training, their experience and recognition.”*



Alleged Threat Culprit	Number of threatened defenders Jan-Jun, 2017	Number of threatened defenders Jan-Jun, 2016
Águilas Negras	117	119
Unknown	35	2
Other Groups	34	30
Gaitanista Self Defenses of Colombia - AGC	20	51
Urabeños	9	No record
Rastrojos	8	21
Public Force	1	5
Úsuga Clan	1	4

Also, Cauca registers the largest number of defenders threatened with 59 cases, followed by Bogota with 40; Valle del Cauca with 26; Tolima with 18; Antioquia with 15, La Guajira with 14 and Santander with 11. The

disproportionate threats increase in Cauca, Tolima and La Guajira is quite distressing. On the other hand, the threatening pamphlet is still the most used method to intimidate, with 139 defenders menaced by this mechanism,



followed by threatening mails with 26 cases; telephone calls with 24, direct harassment with 19 and text messages close this countdown with 17.

Aside from the figures, a subject to be highlighted in terms of threats, is the first conviction for this crime that has been achieved by the Colombian State and which was filed in May 2017. “The Penal 45th Court of the Bogotá Acknowledgement Circuit sentenced Diego Alejandro Céspedes Moreno to 4 years and 2 months in prison for threatening, through electronic means, 18 social leaders and human rights defenders in 2014...” The case goes back to February 2014, when Jaime Caicedo Turriago, political leader and human rights defender, denounced death threats from an e-mail account with intimidating messages addressed to his personal mailbox. A threatening pamphlet signed by ‘Los Rastros Comandos Urbanos’ was attached to the mails, in which a reward of up to 50 million pesos was offered to the member of the organization who managed to terminate the life of one of the 18 political leaders and defenders of Human Rights of the Political Movement Patriotic March and the Political Party Patriotic Union (UP) mentioned in the document, such as Aida Avella Esquivel, Piedad Esneda Córdoba Ruiz, Rigoberto De Jesus Jiménez, Jaime Caicedo Turriago, among others.”<sup>1</sup>

What was truly perturbing was that the prisoner, who confessed to having

made the threats, served as an escort to the leader who was assigned State protection measures: “Céspedes Moreno served as escort of the protection scheme for José Gilberto Buitrago Quiroga, leader of the Land Restitution Program. According to the investigation, the defendant worked in the DAS as a detective and escorted various political leaders, including some left-party leaders.”<sup>2</sup>

Although the sentence and its contents are unknown, it must include explanations about why this escort threatened his protégé, whether he acted alone or with the help of someone else and even if he belonged to an illegal group; it is also true that this case corroborates the hypotheses set forth in previous SIADDHH reports which pointed out how dangerous the passage of the DAS agents to the National Protection Unit, due to the low level of research on their resumes, their suitability to protect people at risk; again, time proves we are right.

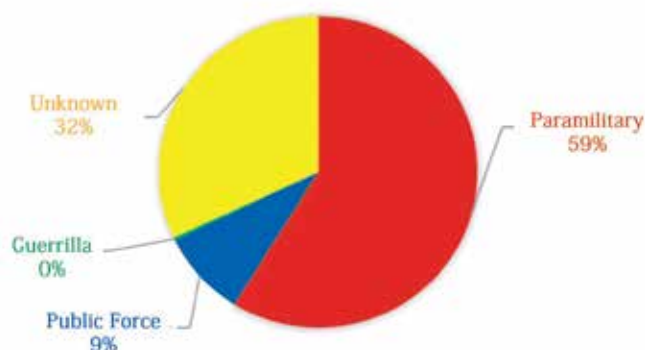
## ALLEGED CULPRITS

About the possible offenders or perpetrators of the 335 attacks that occurred between January and June 2017, in most of the cases SIADDHH registers the Paramilitaries as alleged culprits, being held responsible for 197 cases, while 107 cases belong to Unknown. Members of the State security forces (National Army, Police, SIJIN, District Attorney’s Office among others) are

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/primera-condena-por-amenaza-a-lideres-sociales-por-internet-AN6492103>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/escolta-de-unp-acepto-responsabilidad-amenazas-contra-p-articulo-568698>

**PERCENTAGE OF AGGRESSIONS ACCORDING TO ALLEGED CULPRITS  
SIADDHH CIPHERS, JANUARY-JUNE 2017 PERIOD**



registered in 30 cases with presumed responsibility in the attacks. The guerrillas appears in 1 case with responsibility in the aggressions. It is important to mention that all those suspected felons decreased in their participation percentages, except the ones that remain unknown, which went from 67 cases in the same period in 2016 to 107 cases in 2017 which would mean an increase of 37%.

## AGGRESSION AREAS

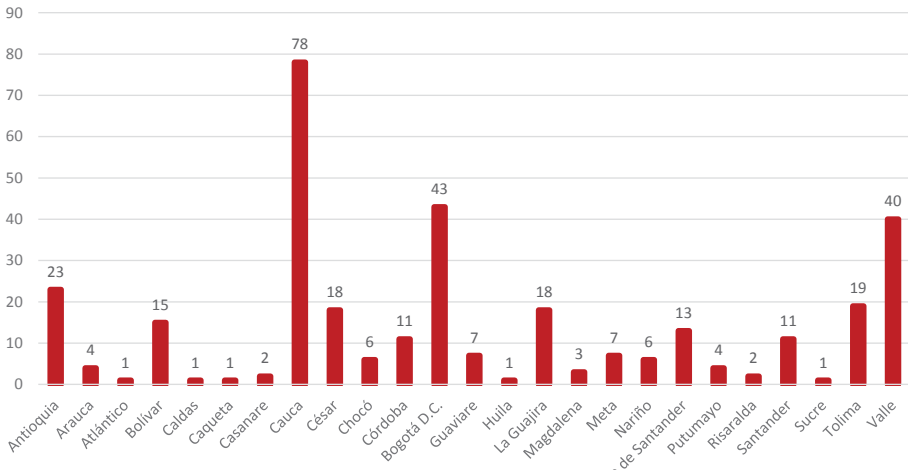
Compared with the records of the same period in 2016, there was a decrease in cases in Bogotá (from 67 to 43) and the Valle del Cauca department (from 64 to 40). However, the departments of Cauca, Tolima, Cesar and La Guajira generate concern: Cauca increased its aggression cases by 34, and violence against leaders in

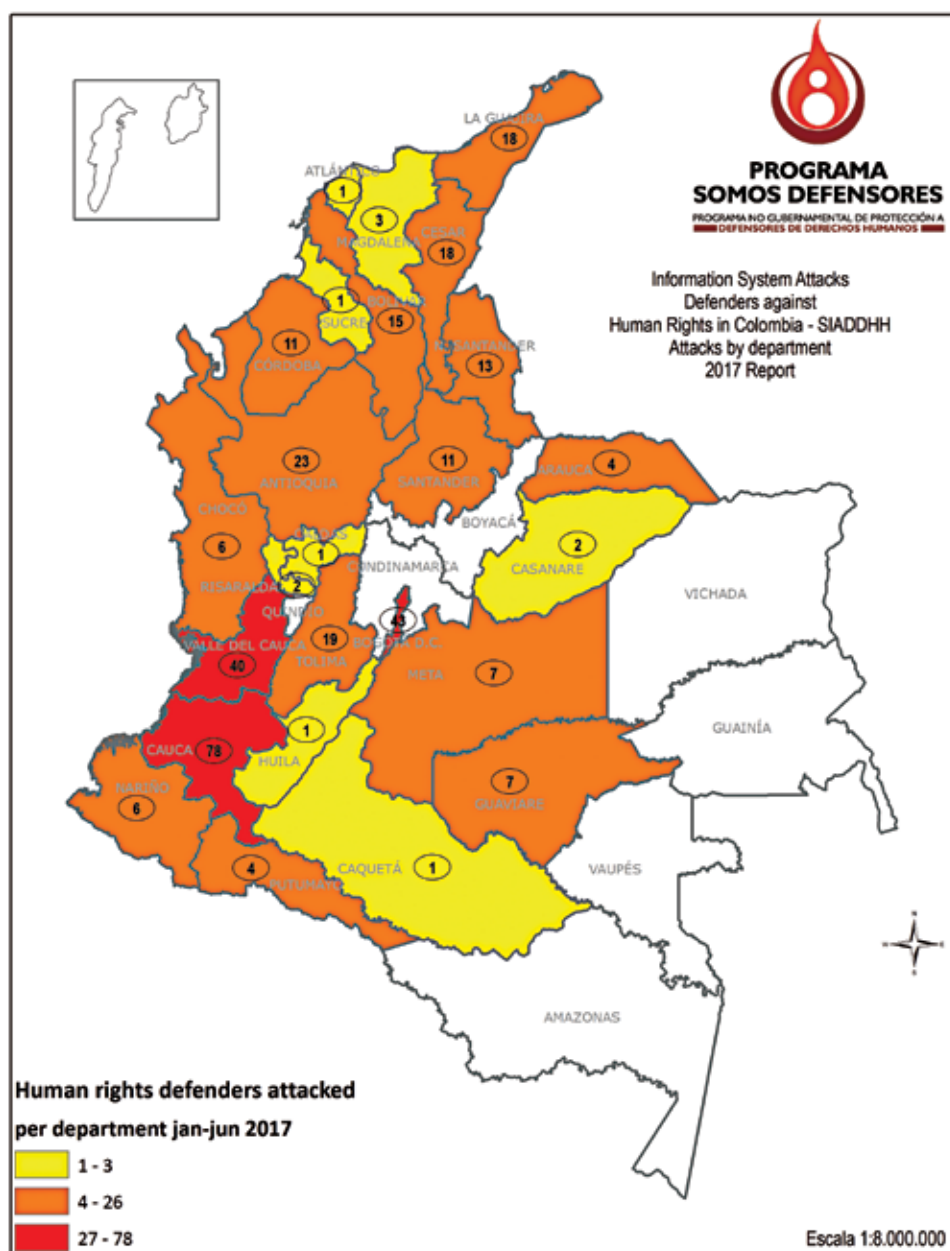
this territory is the most critical in the whole country, with the aggravating fact that the eyes of the Institutions and the international community are placed on this department through the presence of the State in multiple forms and international support.

On the other hand Tolima, Cesar and La Guajira have never emerged in this ranking and their numbers of aggression are still on the rise, an alarming situation especially for the last two departments that had never been subjected to such a number of assaults since the Somos Defensores program's SIADDHH generates this type of reports. This is commensurate with several early warnings generated by the SAT of the Ombudsman's Office for these departments, but to this date, the institutional actions taken to mitigate such risk are not known.

Ranking	Higher Number of Cases 2017	Higher Number of Cases 2016
1	Cauca – 78 cases	Bogotá – 67 cases
2	Bogotá – 43 cases	Valle del Cauca – 64 cases
3	Valle del Cauca – 40 cases	Cauca – 44 cases
4	Antioquia – 23 cases	Santander – 33 cases
5	Tolima – 19 cases	Antioquia – 20 cases
6	Cesar – 18 cases	Atlántico – 18 cases
7	La Guajira – 18 cases	Córdoba – 13 cases

NUMBER OF AGGRESSIONS BY DEPARTMENT  
SIADDHH CIPHER, JANUARY-JUNE 2017 PERIOD





## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

### About the Ciphers:

1. The increase in aggression against human rights defenders during the first half of 2017, compared to the same period in 2016, was of 6%, from 314 to 335.
2. Homicides increased by 31%. Homicides against women increased with respect to 2016, reaching 7 in this period. The groups of defenders that remain most affected by this crime are the communal, community, peasants and afro-descendants located on rural areas. The same pattern of assassination has been identified since 2009. The disappearance prior to the homicide in several registered cases, as well as the use of torture and cruelty in such cases, at the time of committing the homicide, is disturbing.
3. There is a slight decrease in threats. It is estimated that, between 2016 and 2017 for the analysis period of this report (January - June), there was a decrease of 3% (from 232 defenders threatened in 2016 to 225 in 2017 in the same period).
4. The social sectors that remain highly victimized in their social leadership are indigenous, communal and peasant.
5. In relation to the alleged perpetrators, it is still a contradictory indicator, since while the National Government insists on the disappearance of paramilitarism, the complainants

indicate that 59% of paramilitaries are suspected of being responsible for the assaults in the mentioned period, followed by those Unknown with 32%.

6. As for the regions where aggressions against defenders are most committed, Cauca continues with the highest negative number, followed by Bogota, Antioquia and Valle del Cauca. The outbreak of violence against defenders in Tolima, Cesar and La Guajira is striking.

### About the context:

1. Despite the countless announcements, commitments and dispositions of the National Government and entities of the Colombian State related to the protection and prevention of aggression against human rights defenders in Colombia; the figures are compelling in showing a contradictory reality.
2. The Nation District Attorney General's Office is moving forward, but not at the required pace. It mentions historical advances but they are not sympathetic with the volume of cases are registered on a day by day basis. While some progress has to be made in some cases (where in the past these processes ended up in a file), violence against human rights defenders is a problematic and old phenomenon, which is just now starting to

- be identified by the entity but still far from completely controlled. The Nation District Attorney General's Office would play a better role if results they produce were less sensationalist for the press headlines, and advances more in background and structural investigations to find out the criminals behind this violence.
3. Regarding the different figures on murders of human rights defenders, it should be noted that neither the Nation District Attorney General's Office nor any other governmental entity has an Information System on attacks against human rights defenders or social leaders; in compliance with what was established by the Attorney General's Office in its latest directive, this system should be created as soon as possible by the National Government. Also, before the figures, the debate should not focus on who are defenders or who are not, the institutionality has the responsibility to INVESTIGATE ALL CASES AND FIND THE CULPRITS regardless of who reports them and under what concept it is done. In this regard, it would make sense that, in addition to the OHCHR figures, the cases documented by entities such as the Ombudsman's Office and other civil society organizations should also be taken into account in order to have a larger universe of cases and a lower level of impunity.
  4. Violence against defenders is overtaken. At least 10 reports from state entities, civil society and academic centers have pointed out that social leaders and defenders are at risk. What is the Executive Branch doing with these warnings? Why are the attacks not being prevented? It is now time for the Government to PREVENT and stop promising high-level special boards and committees for the protection of hard-working activists.
  5. The Havana Agreements brought with them a new institutional framework that contained new stipulations for the protection of human rights defenders; however, these conditions are creating confusion both within and outside the Government regarding how they will work and the way they will be articulated with the existing laws. The Government must clarify this matter as the number of assaulted defenders grows day by day and in order to prevent their deaths, it is necessary to provide an integral protection.
  6. To welcome the role that the Ombudsman's Office has assumed as a defender of human rights, since for many years it remained silent before the attacks on social leadership, despite the continuity of warnings, early alerts and risk reports.
  7. Also to welcome the recovery of the role of Attorney General's Office, as an organism vigilant of guarantees and rights, which was not only lost but extrapolated to a role of persecutor of social movements, Human Rights, Social minorities and left-wing opponents. The directive 002 of June 2017, issued by the Attorney General, Fernando Carrillo, testifies that.