

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
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COLOMBIA

PROTECT AMAZONIAN LAND DEFENDER, JANI SILVA FROM DEATH THREATS

On September 10, Jani Silva, a defender of land and the environment in the Colombian Amazon, received a death threat. A caller warned they would "blow you up, car and all." Silva is the president of ADISPA, an organization that manages a peasant reserve zone in Putumayo, Colombia. Although the National Protection Unit (UNP) provides her with protective measures, the threat targets her armored vehicle, suggesting explosives could be used. We call on Colombian authorities to respond urgently by conducting thorough investigations to identify and prosecute those responsible. They must also provide effective and timely protection for Silva, her team, and her community, while addressing the root causes of the violence they face.

Write to the Attorney General of Colombia urging her office to:

- Conduct a thorough and effective investigation into the threats and attacks against Jani Silva and members of ADISPA.
- Identify, prosecute, and bring to justice those responsible for ordering and carrying out these attacks, with full respect for due process.
- Take necessary steps to prevent future attacks against human rights defenders in the Bajo Putumayo region.

Write to:

Luz Adriana Camargo
Attorney General of Colombia
Avenida Calle 24 No. 52 – 01
Bogotá DC, Colombia
E-mail: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
X: @FiscaliaCol
Salutation: *Dear Attorney General,*

And copy:

His Excellency Carlos Arturo MORALES LOPEZ
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Colombia
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X7
Tel: (613) 230-3760 Fax: (613) 230-4416
Email: ecanada@cancilleria.gov.co

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Putumayo, in southern Colombia along the Ecuadorian border, spans from the Andes foothills into the Amazon rainforest. The region is rich in water, biodiversity, and natural resources. However, it is also a

major coca-growing area. In 2022, over 48,000 hectares—about 20% of Colombia's coca crop—were cultivated there, especially near the Ecuadorian border.

Control over the coca economy has fueled violent conflict between two armed groups: the Comandos de la Frontera and the Carolina Ramírez Front. These groups are linked to larger movements, the Second Marquetalia and the Central General Staff (EMC). Both factions are engaged in peace talks with the government as part of President Gustavo Petro's Total Peace policy.

Despite a brief period of calm in 2023, tensions reignited by the end of the year, increasing pressure on civil society. Organizations like the Association for the Integral Sustainable Development of the Amazonian Pearl (ADISPA) are caught in the crossfire. ADISPA, founded in the late 2000s, manages the Peasant Reserve Zone of La Perla Amazónica, promoting sustainable farming and protecting peasant communities. These efforts have put ADISPA, and its leader Jani Silva, in conflict with armed groups pursuing other economic interests in the region.

Jani Silva has faced escalating threats due to her work defending the Peasant Reserve Zone. Amnesty International issued urgent actions in 2020 and 2021, calling on Colombia's Ministry of the Interior and the National Protection Unit (UNP) to safeguard her life. In 2021, more than 415,000 supporters sent messages of solidarity to Silva through the Write for Rights campaign.

While the UNP provides both individual and collective protection for Silva and ADISPA, Amnesty International has identified serious flaws in these programs. The measures are not fully adapted to Silva's situation or the challenges faced by ADISPA. These threats continue to affect Silva's safety, her leadership role, and the well-being of the community she defends. On September 13, the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace reported the latest threats against her.

Please take action as soon as possible until December 17, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.