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First UA: 102/25 Index: AMR 23/0555/2025 Colombia of December 10, 2025

COLOMBIA THREATS AGAINST COMMUNITY LEADERS

On November 18, the presidents of the community associations of El Porvenir and Matarratón in Puerto Gaitán (Meta) received threatening WhatsApp messages from the same phone number. The messages asked for meetings and for information about community members. They also included a video showing the killing and dismemberment of a person. The sender's profile photo showed someone linked to a Colombian non-state armed group.

These rural communities have already suffered land dispossession and forced displacement. They continue to face threats and attacks because they are standing up for their territorial rights.

We call on the Attorney General's Office to carry out strong and effective investigations and to bring those responsible to justice.

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

- Carry out a strong and effective investigation to identify those responsible for these threats.
- Include previous threats and attacks against the Matarratón and El Porvenir communities in the investigation.
- Take into account the ongoing violations of their land and territorial rights.
- Ensure those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials to help prevent further attacks on land and territorial rights defenders in the Meta River region.

Write to:

Attorney General
Luz Adriana Camargo Garzón
Avenida Calle 24 No. 52 – 01,
Bogotá DC, Colombia
Email: d.asuntosinternacionales@fiscalia.gov.co
X: @FiscaliaCol
Salutation: Dear Mrs. 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) 695-0152 Fax: (613) 230-4416
Email: ecanada@cancilleria.gov.co

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Orinoquian plains cover large areas rich in water, farming potential, and oil reserves. These lands are far from Colombia's major cities and have long been home to Indigenous peoples. For decades, armed groups and other powerful actors have tried to take over this land. They have used violence and fraudulent processes to claim ownership and then sell the land to agro-industrial or oil companies.

Indigenous and peasant communities, including families displaced from other regions, have built homes and kept their traditional practices on these lands. These practices often conflict with the interests of those who have taken the land or bought it in the name of economic development. The Colombian state has a duty to clarify land ownership and respect the rights of people who were dispossessed or forcibly displaced. Although there is a Land Restitution System and efforts toward rural reform, many disputes remain unresolved. As a result, Indigenous and peasant communities continue to face threats and attacks when defending their land and territorial rights.

El Porvenir and Matarratón are peasant communities in the Orinoquian plains on the banks of the Meta River, near Casanare and Vichada. In the late 1980s, armed groups threatened residents and forced them off their land. The land was then taken and sold illegally. Since that time, these communities have worked to reclaim their territory while facing constant risks. Amnesty International documented these risks in a 2014 report on land restitution. In 2016, the Constitutional Court ordered the National Lands Agency to return the territory to its historical inhabitants. Almost ten years later, these orders have not been fulfilled.

Amnesty International has raised alarms about threats to leaders from these communities before, including urgent actions in 2015 and 2019. One of the leaders, Luz Marina Arteaga, was a key voice in the land restitution process. She received many threats and was forcibly disappeared in January 2022. Her body was later found on the banks of the Meta River in Orocué, Casanare.

Neighbouring communities have joined El Porvenir and Matarratón in their fight for land rights. These include the Indigenous community of ASEINPOME, which has also faced threats for its territorial claims. Amnesty International has publicly raised concerns about these dangers. Despite community efforts and public complaints, threats and attacks often go unpunished. This ongoing violence continues to limit access to land and safety across the Orinoquian plains. The most recent threats against leaders from Matarratón and El Porvenir, publicly reported by the Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello, show that the risks remain urgent.

Please take action as soon as possible until March 10, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.