



Forest Peoples Programme

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Diego Fernando Mora Arango

Director, Unidad Nacional de Protección
Carrera 63 #14-97/Primer piso
Puente Aranda / Bogota DC,
Colombia

July 6, 2018

Dear Mr. Mora Arango:

Re: Threats to the life of Human Rights Defender Clemencia Carabalí Rodallega, Asociación Municipal de Mujeres (ASOM), Proceso de Comunidades Negras

It is with great sadness and worry that The Forest Peoples Programme of the United Kingdom writes this letter urging the Government of Colombia-- and more specifically, the National Protection Unit (Unidad Nacional de Protección) of Colombia-- to offer the highest levels of protection possible to Clemencia Carabalí Rodallega, member of the respected women's organization, Asociación Municipal de Mujeres (ASOM), the Municipal Association of Women of Buenos Aires, Cauca; and member also of the national organization Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN), Process of Black Communities.

On June 5, 2018 Clemencia Carabalí Rodallega received a telephone call at 1:38 pm from a man who identified himself as a member of the 56th Front of the FARC, directing her to leave by 5 pm that very day her ancestral territory, and home community of La Balsa located in the municipality of Buenos Aires (see Urgent Action and Public Comunicué from ASOM, attached). Between June 10 and July 1, she has received 5 threatening telephone calls, and also reports that there have been suspicious people lurking around her house, and even attempting to communicate with her children. She now fears for both her life, and that of her children. Clemencia is a tireless human rights defender, working on behalf of her community and specifically women's rights, whose life and work is now under severe threat. She was also active in the "Colombia Humana" campaign during the recent presidential elections. Clemencia wants to stay in her community with her family to continue undertaking her important community work towards women's empowerment and peace and can do this only with the highest levels of protection from the National Protection Unit.

The Forest Peoples Programme of the United Kingdom will be monitoring this situation closely, particularly given that Clemencia's work is so valued in the Palenke Alto Cauca-PCN, the regional expression of the Proceso de Comunidades Negras with whom the Forest Peoples Programme has been allied since 2009. We have actively supported joint work between the Palenke Alto Cauca and the Embera Chamí communities of the Resguardo Indígena Cañamomo Lomapieta (Municipalities of Riosucio and Supía, Caldas) towards organizational strengthening, territorial defense and self-determined development in the context of Colombia's armed conflict. We are alarmed at the new wave of violence that is affecting Colombia's social leaders despite the Peace Accords signed in 2016, as well as the level of impunity for assassinations such as that of our friend and colleague Fernando Salazar Calvo of the Resguardo Cañamomo Lomapieta, who was assassinated April 7, 2015.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that you have received this letter, as well as assurance that the National Protection Unit will do all it can to offer the highest levels of protection to Clemencia Carabalí Rodellaga as she continues undertaking her important work.

Sincerely,



James Whitehead

Director, Forest Peoples Programme

cc.

Floris van Eijk, First Secretary, Embassy of the Netherlands

Johan Vibe, Ambassador of Norway in Colombia

Peter Tibber, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Colombia

Alberto Brunori, Representative, OACNUDH

Maria Vargas, Subdirección de Evaluación del Riesgo, Asesora Grupo de Solicitudes de Protección, Unidad Nacional de Protección