

28 January 2022

Colombia: Concern at continued armed attacks against Nasa Las Delicias communities and the murder of three indigenous human rights defenders.

The Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN) has reported a new series of armed attacks and threats in Nasa indigenous territory in the department of Cauca. During the last weeks of January 2022, armed attacks by alleged outlawed groups have caused the death of three human rights defenders and kiwe thegnas (indigenous guards), **Breiner David Cucuñame López, Guillermo Chicame Ipia** and **José Albeiro Camayo Güetio**, in the Nasa Las Delicias indigenous reservation in the municipality of Buenos Aires. On 24 January 2022, human rights defender and former coordinator of the Indigenous Guard José Albeiro Camayo Güetio was killed, while his family members were threatened.

[The Guardia Indígena del Cauca](#) is a community protection network made up of women, men, boys and girls, part of ACIN, who peacefully defend their territories. Most of the members of La Guardia Indígenas del Cauca belong to the Nasa indigenous group and one of their main objectives is to protect their autonomy and ancestral lands from those who seek territorial control. Since 2001, the Guardia Indígena del Cauca has trained other communities to peacefully defend their own territories. The Guardia Indígena won the [Global Award of Front Line Defenders](#) on 2020, as a recognition of their brilliant work on defending and promoting human rights in Americas.

On 14 January 2022, 14-year-old environmental defender Breiner David Cucuñame López was shot and [killed](#) during an attack by an armed group in the indigenous reservation of Las Delicias, while he and his father were on their way to work in a house construction. Breiner David Cucuñame López was part of the Student Indigenous Guard, with whom he used to plant trees and clean rivers. Guillermo Chicame Ipia, a human rights defender and member of the indigenous guard, was also [killed](#) in the same attack and at least four other indigenous people were injured.

On 24 January 2022, an armed group arrived with a threatening attitude at the Las Delicias reservation, and the indigenous guards demanded respect for the civilian population and asked the armed groups to leave their territory. In response, the armed persons threatened and made accusations against the indigenous authorities. According to [reports](#), hours later an armed attack against the community began, resulting in the murder of human rights defender José Albeiro Camayo Güetio. He was also part of the indigenous guard and very well known land defender. The armed group also kidnapped the teenager Arlin Camayo, son of José Albeiro and his nephew, Breiner Camayo, who were released in the evening.

The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) have [reported](#) that all indigenous territories in Cauca remain on high alert. It has also called for solidarity and protection for the families and community of Las Delicias at this time.

Front Line Defenders has previously raised concerns about the situation of indigenous leaders in Cauca, including frequent attacks against the Guardia Indígena del Cauca. On 20 April 2021, Nasa indigenous human rights defender **Sandra Liliana Peña Chocué** was fatally shot by four unidentified armed persons. The men violently removed the human rights defender from her home in the indigenous reservation of "La Laguna-Siberia" in Caldono, Cauca, before murdering her. [Sandra Liliana Peña Chocué](#) was an Indigenous Authority of the Nasa people and Governor of the indigenous resguardo "La Laguna-Siberia SAT Tama kiwe" in Cauca.

Front Line Defenders expresses its deep concern regarding the increasing attacks against human rights defenders particularly those promoting indigenous peoples' rights, the environment and the implementation of the peace agreement and illicit crop substitution programmes in their communities. Human rights defenders are regularly targeted by armed groups and routinely fail to receive adequate protection from national authorities, despite multiple requests and reports of threats.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the recent killings of members of the Guardia Indígena del Cauca José Albeiro Camayo Güetio, Breiner David Cucuñame López and Guillermo Chicamen Ipia, as it believes that they were attacked and killed solely for their peaceful and legitimate work in defence of the rights of indigenous peoples and their land. Front Line Defenders reiterates its concern regarding the lack of protection for human rights defenders in Colombia.

Front Line Defenders urges the Colombian authorities to:

1. Strongly and publicly condemn the murder of José Albeiro Camayo Güetio, Breiner David Cucuñame López and Guillermo Chicame Ipia;
2. Conduct an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the murder of José Albeiro Camayo Güetio, Breiner David Cucuñame López and Guillermo Chicame Ipia with the aim of publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of the family and community of José Albeiro Camayo Güetio, Breiner David Cucuñame López and Guillermo Chicame Ipia, in consultation with them;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment.