

International Civil Society Organisations express their profound rejection of, and concern for, the murder of Gerson Acosta and the threats against other members of the ACIN



International Civil Society Organisations signatories to this statement express our profound rejection of the murder on 19 April 2017 in Timbío, Cauca of the Indigenous leader Gerson Acosta¹, defender of territorial rights and one of the traditional indigenous authorities of the Kite Kiwe Resguardo (Reserve). As well as, the threats against Margarita Hílamo, coordinator of the women’s programme for the Northern Cauca Association of Indigenous Councils (Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte de Cauca -ACIN), and against other members of the association relating to their role as defenders of territorial and women’s rights².

We express our solidarity with the ACIN, the Indigenous communities of Colombia, and the Afro-descendent and Peasant Farmer communities who today, in the middle of the peace process with FARC and negotiations with the ELN, are seeing their leaders murdered, suffering kidnappings, combats in their territory between armed actors, confinements and threats. The programme “We are Defenders” (*Somos Defensores*) registered 80 murders of defenders in 2016. Of these, 22 were in the department of Cauca, 15 were Indigenous leaders, 13 Peasant Farmers and 7 Afro-descendants³.

We urge the Colombian government and authorities to take immediate measures to stop the wave of killings and attacks against human rights defenders, social leaders, Peasant Farmers, Indigenous and Afro-descendent communities and to begin investigations that will provide the whereabouts of the material and intellectual authors of these acts and bring them to justice as a demonstration of commitment to the construction of Territorial Peace.

SPACE OF COOPERATION FOR PEACE
Bogotá 27 April 2017

¹ <https://nasaacin.org/acin-denuncia-asesinato-de-lider-gerson-acosta/>

² <https://www.oxfam.org/es/sala-de-prensa/notas-de-prensa/2017-04-21/oxfam-rechaza-los-persistentes-asesinatos-y-amenazas>

³ <http://www.coljuristas.org/informe-2016-programa-somos-defensores/>