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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Four years of impunity for the murder of indigenous leader José Miller Correa

Four years after the murder of the Nasa indigenous leader José Miller Correa, former councillor of the Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN), the crime remains unpunished. The undersigned human rights organisations reiterate our demand for truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition, and express our deep concern at the lack of substantial progress in the judicial investigation.

José Miller Correa was a renowned Nasa indigenous leader, human rights defender and traditional authority (Thuthenas) within the ACIN's organisational process – Cxhab Wala Kiwe. His leadership was dedicated to the defence of territory, collective rights and the strengthening of the Nasa people's self-government in northern Cauca.

Due to his work in defence of human rights, he had been the target of threats and intimidation since 2010, a situation that worsened in the years leading up to his murder. **On 14 March 2022, Miller Correa was murdered by unknown assailants** whilst travelling to his home on the road linking Popayán with Santander de Quilichao. Four years on, the case remains without significant progress in identifying and bringing those responsible to justice.

Despite repeated national and international condemnation, the investigation is plagued by worrying delays and shortcomings, with insufficient progress in identifying the perpetrators or clarifying the possible motives behind the crime. Furthermore, there is concern regarding the failure to fully recognise Miller Correa's leadership as a motive for the murder and the failure to recognise the Tacueyó Council as a collective victim, despite the profound impact on the organisational processes of the Nasa people in northern Cauca.

In accordance with international human rights law, the Colombian State has an obligation to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish serious human rights violations, as well as to guarantee full reparation for the victims. The persistence of impunity in this case is a serious cause for concern,

particularly given that it involves the murder of an indigenous leader and human rights defender who exercised his own authority in a territory subject to precautionary measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

This crime is part of a pattern of systematic violence against indigenous authorities and leaders in Colombia. Since the murder of Miller Correa to the present day, at least 120 indigenous authorities and leaders have been murdered¹, which demonstrates the ongoing physical, cultural and political ethnocide against indigenous peoples, particularly the Nasa people, as well as the absence of real guarantees for those who exercise self-government, territorial control and the defence of life and territory.

The signatory organisations urge the Attorney General's Office to proceed diligently, independently and impartially with the investigation into the murder of José Miller Correa, including the identification, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators and those who ordered the crime.

Furthermore, they reiterate their call on the Colombian Government to ensure the full implementation of the Ethnic Chapter of the 2016 Peace Agreement, and to strengthen the protection and physical and psychological integrity of indigenous leaders, members of the Indigenous Guard and spiritual leaders, who have been systematically targeted for murder and attacks on their integrity by armed groups.

The organisations also call for the maintenance and strengthening of international monitoring of the case, including by the United Nations, the European Union and the international community.

Finally, we express our solidarity with the family of José Miller Correa, with the Nasa people of northern Cauca, and with all indigenous authorities and communities who continue to defend life and territory despite the persistence of violence.

¹ According to data from the Indepaz organisation's [database on the murders of social leaders and human rights defenders in Colombia](#)