

Bogotá D.C, November 26, 2020

ALERT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: Grave human rights violations against LGBT people and lack of security guarantees for victims of the armed conflict

“Something very serious is going to happen to this town,” said an old woman in a short story by Gabriel García Márquez. This woman could embody any woman in any place at any time. Today, she could be a trans woman in Tumaco: something very serious is going to happen if we continue to stand idly by while unceasing violence snuffs out the lives of LGBT people in this region.

Over the course of the past year, **COLOMBIA DIVERSA** has learned of multiple acts of violence against LGBT people that make us fear for the survival of the communities and organizations that defend the rights of afro-Colombian LGBT people in Tumaco. These acts take a toll on every person that identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans, either publicly or privately, due to the symbolic nature of the violence.

Specifically, we have been informed of the following incidents during 2020: two extortions of LGBT business owners; multiple threats against members of the **FUNDACIÓN AFROCOLOMBIANA ARCO IRIS**, including its director; armed men on motorcycles circling the office of the Fundación; six beatings of gay men and trans women in public spaces in the downtown area, some in broad daylight and on busy streets; and at least four homicides (one of them as a result of a brutal beating) of LGBT persons in Tumaco and Llorente committed by alleged members of illegal armed groups.

Some of the victims of the recent spate of attacks have also suffered conflict-related violence in the past and are currently represented by Colombia Diversa before the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). Given the government’s inaction and the increasing militarization of the municipality, these attacks could hinder their participation in the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition (SIVJRNR). In fact, last year, we petitioned the JEP to establish protection measures for the LGBT victims accredited in case 002 on the situation of Tumaco, Barbacoas, and Ricaurte but have yet to receive a response.

Such violence is not investigated, prosecuted or punished, and LGBT victims receive no protection or support from authorities. On the contrary, they are left to languish in exclusionary and vulnerable living conditions that deny them access to full citizenship. The lack of due diligence in finding a solution to the current situation in Tumaco, especially as it pertains to LGBT people, is highly alarming. In order to safeguard the lives and protect the rights of LGBT people in Tumaco and members of the **FUNDACIÓN AFROCOLOMBIANA ARCO IRIS** in particular, the government must act in a decisive and coordinated fashion, marshaling efforts and resources across multiple sectors, institutions, and levels of government.

We respectfully ask the international community to support this urgent message to the Colombian government; incorporate these acts of violence in official discussions and reports on the human rights situation in Colombia and the implementation of the Peace



Accord; monitor the implementation of national and local protection measures for human rights defenders and vulnerable populations; strengthen the visibility, recognition, and support for the **FUNDACIÓN AFROCOLOMBIANA ARCO IRIS**; or take any other steps at their disposal to support the work of the **FUNDACIÓN AFROCOLOMBIANA ARCO IRIS** and other LGBT human rights defenders in the Pacific region of the Nariño department.

Moreover, we ask that your financial, technical, and/or political contributions to the Colombian government call for and verify the development of specific work plans and monitoring mechanisms that demonstrate compliance with its obligations to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible for the human rights violations described in this document, as well as to protect the lives and rights of conflict victims and human rights defenders.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact us via email at msanchez@colombiadiversa.org or phone at 3045810228.

Sincerely,

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Colombia Diversa