

Declaration on the assassination of Aldemar Parra Garcia

Monday, January 23rd 2017

The undersigning organizations condemn the assassination of Aldemar Parra García and express our deepest condolences to his family.

Facts

On January 7, Aldemar was assassinated by two unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle on the route from El Hatillo to La Loma in broad daylight. He was a community leader and active trade unionist, until recently employed in the mine of Colombian Natural Resources (CNR). Parra leaves his wife and three children behind.

Regional context

The murder of Aldemar is not an isolated incident. Unfortunately, this murder fits a pattern of violence against civil society and their leaders that we see across Colombia and in the mining region of Cesar. According to the report 'Civil society under Threat', in Cesar at least 200 leaders became victims of threats, assaults and killings during the period 2012-2016. It is important to point out that all of these victims are social leaders whose efforts are considered by certain sectors of the Cesar population to be critical of the impact of mining activities in the region. Most of these acts are claimed by or carry the signature of neo-paramilitary groups, who claim to defend the interests of the mining companies and other economic actors in the region. For example, last September Néstor Iván Martínez, leader of an Afro-Colombian community resisting the expansion of the mines owned by the American mining company Drummond, was assassinated shortly after having been threatened by a neo-paramilitary group.

Aldemar was an active member of the community of El Hatillo; a rural community that since 2010 has been involved in a lengthy process of involuntary resettlement with three mining companies. He was a family member of several community leaders who were critical towards a resettlement plan recently proposed by the mining companies. Since 2014 the community has reported an increasing number of security incidents, e.g. leaflets, text messages or phone calls threatening community members. Since September 2016, inhabitants of El Hatillo have reported the presence of unidentified armed men in the vicinity during the hours of darkness.

The condemnation of the murder of Aldemar by Prodeco and Drummond (as a specific incident) is a first step, but more actions are necessary to effectively mitigate the violence against civil society in Cesar.

We urge the Colombian authorities

- to not treat the assassination of Aldemar Parra Garcia as an isolated incident, but address it in the context of a pattern of acts of intimidation and violence directed against civil society in Cesar, and
- to undertake – in line with the peace agreements – effective actions to crack down on and prosecute the members of any illegal armed group that operates in the mining region of Cesar.

We urge the mining companies

- to publicly distance themselves from neo-paramilitary groups that claim to operate in their interests,
- to actively take up a role in assuring that the security of those that are critical of the impact of mining in Cesar is guaranteed, and
- to search for effective and just solutions for the impacts of mining on the local population in the region, including remediation of grave human rights violations in the recent past, and addressing dwindling livelihood opportunities and unhealthy and unsafe working conditions.

List of Signatories:

Organisation	Country
350.org	International Network
Acción Ecológica	Ecuador
African Uranium Alliance	International Network
AG Bergbau und Menschenrechte in Kolumbien - Berlin	Germany
AGEH - Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe	Germany
Amigos de la Tierra España	Spain
ASK - Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz-Kolumbien	Switzerland
Asociación ambiental e cultural Petón do Lobo, Galicia	Spain
Asociación gallega Cova Crea, Galicia	Spain
Bocas de Ceniza Waterkeeper	Colombia
Both ENDS	The Netherlands
Buirer für Buir	Germany
BUND - Friends of the Earth Germany	Germany
BUND Sachsen	Germany
BürgerBegehren Klimaschutz	Germany
CENSAT agua viva - Friends of the Earth Colombia	Colombia
Center for Environment - Friends of the Earth BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Christliche Initiative Romero	Germany
CNV Internationaal	The Netherlands

Coal Action Network	UK
CoalSwarm	USA
Colombia Caravana UK Lawyers' Group	UK
Colombia Solidaritet	Denmark
Colombia Solidarity Campaign	UK
ContraMINAcción, Galicia	Spain
Cooperación	Peru
Dachverband der Kritischen Aktionäre	Germany
Earth Law Center	USA
Environmental Rights Action	Nigeria
Facing Finance	Germany
FIAN Deutschland	Germany
FNV Mondiaal	The Netherlands
Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika	Germany
Friends of the Earth Australia	Australia
Friends of the Earth Canada	Canada
Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI)	UK
Friends of the Earth International	International Network
Friends of the Earth Japan	Japan
Friends of the Siberian Forests	Russia
GegenStrömung / CounterCurrent	Germany
GIP-LAWS (Ghana Integrated Platform on Land, Water and Seed Struggles)	Ghana
Global 2000 - Friends of the Earth Austria	Austria
groundWork, Friends of the Earth South Africa	South Africa
Informationsstelle Peru	Germany
International Oil Working Group	International Network
JA!Justica Ambiental - FOE Mozambique	Mozambique
Kohleausstieg Berlin	Germany
kolko - Menschenrechte für Kolumbien	Germany
Kolumbiengruppe Hamburg	Germany
Latin American Mining Monitoring Programme	UK
Leave it in the Ground Initiative (LINGO)	Mexico
Les Amis de la Terre	France
LIGA - Lüner Initiative gegen globale Armut	Germany
Lock the Gate Alliance	Australia
London Mining Network	UK
Market Forces	Australia
MISEREOR	Germany
Network Movement for Justice and Development	Sierra Leone
NOAH - Friends of the Earth Denmark	Denmark
OCMAL - Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros de América Latina	International Network
PAS - Pensamiento y Acción Social	Colombia
PAX	The Netherlands
pax christi Solidarität Eine Welt	Germany

philippinenbüro	Germany
PowerShift	Germany
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth Switzerland	Switzerland
Progressio	UK
Re:Common	Italy
Rettet den Regenwald	Germany
Robin Wood	Germany
Russian Social-Ecological Union - Friends of the Earth Russia	Russia
Salva la Selva	Spain
Sociedade Histórica e Cultural Coluna Sanfins, Galicia	Spain
SOMO	The Netherlands
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance	South Africa
Southern Africa Rural Women's Assembly	South Africa
terre des hommes - Hilfe für Kinder in Not	Germany
The Gaia Foundation	UK
The People's Dialogue	International Network
This Changes Everything	UK
Umweltgewerkschaft Düsseldorf	Germany
urgewald	Germany
Waterkeeper Alliance	International Network
WEED e.V. – World Economy, Ecology & Development	Germany
WoMin African Gender and Extractives Alliance	South Africa
Yasunidos Ecuador	Ecuador
Yasunidos Germany	Germany
YLNM - Yes to Life, No to Mining	International Network
Zelena Istra - Green Istria	Croatia