

I am writing to express my grave concern on the life of the La Europa peasant farmers and their leader, Argemiro Lara in northern Colombia as concern rises about a wave of killings of human rights defenders, including land activists. In the morning of 17 November, an unknown assailant on a motorbike pointed a gun at Argemiro Lara as he made his way to a meeting accompanied by his state-provided bodyguard. Before he had a chance to fire his weapon, the assailant was shot by the bodyguard. Argemiro Lara has been repeatedly threatened over the years because of his work in support of the community's claim of ownership over La Europa farm. Since the 1990s, many of its residents have either been killed or forcibly displaced. Since 2013, the community has sought to obtain legal ownership of La Europa through the Land Restitution Unit, but are still awaiting adjudication of their claim.

I would urge the authorities to guarantee the safety of Argemiro Lara, peasant farmers of La Europa and other human rights defenders, including social and community leaders at risk, in strict accordance with their needs and demands. Please urge them to order full and impartial investigations into the attack and threats against Argemiro Lara and other social and community leaders, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice. The authorities should be reminded to fulfil their obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Your attention on this matter would be highly appreciated .

Sincerely yours,