

I am writing this to express my grave concern on the over 300 displaced people due to paramilitary incursion and subsequent armed confrontation between them and guerrilla groups. They forced a mass displacement of families and the potential confinement of surrounding communities in Peña Azul, Chocó department, in north-western Colombia. The increase in paramilitary activity in the area is placing residents of rural areas of Chocó department at risk.

I am expressing concern for the safety of rural communities Chocó department, given the increase in incursions by paramilitary groups into the area and the continuing presence of other illegal armed groups.

I am urging the authorities to implement protection measures and a safe return or relocation in strict accordance with the wishes of those communities under threat.

I am also urging them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

Sincerely yours,