

[Reprisals | Attacks against human rights defenders of Buenaventura, Colombia must end](#)

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This January 27, the head of Interinstitutional Committee for the Defense of Territories Temistocles Machado was assassinated near his house, where he was known for his work for in defense of the territories of the Afro-Colombian population.

Just two days later and during the funeral proceedings of Machado, the apartment of Adriel Jose Ruiz Galvan, a human rights defender and director of Fundescodes, was broken into. Galvan's computer and documents were stolen. These acts were not only intended to obtain information on their legitimate work, but to intimidate and discourage them from continuing that work.

These are clear examples of acts of intimidation and reprisal carried out against those engaging with UN Mechanisms. The Interinstitutional Committee and Adriel Ruiz previously submitted alternate reports to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during its reviews of Colombia at both Session 62 in 2017 and Session 44 in 2010.

Human rights defenders in Colombia, especially those working in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, have been subjected to countless acts of intimidation and violence. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [105 human rights defenders were killed](#) in Colombia last year, despite the recent peace agreement with FARC which brings with it hope that the country's human rights record would improve.

ISHR's Tess McEvoy says, 'These human rights violations happen on a regular basis in Colombia, despite the existence of a mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders. Defenders working on behalf of Colombia's most vulnerable communities need more than just promises; they need action and accountability.'

We urge the international community to highlight these cases both bilaterally and publically, and call on the Colombian State to start complying with its obligations to protect human rights defenders, investigate cases of violations against them and ensure they are adequately addressed.

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Photo: Pacifista.

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