

## CORPORATE LIABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE (CLASP) LAB

August 10, 2021

### **An Open Letter Supporting Environmental Defender Jani R. Silva and Reporting the Colombian Government's Failure to Protect Her and to Investigate Threats Against Her**

We write this open letter as members of the Corporate Liability and Sustainable Peace (CLASP) Lab to express solidarity with our colleague, friend, and fellow CLASP Lab member Jani R. Silva and to urge the Colombian government to protect Jani and her colleagues at the *Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Sostenible Perla Amazónica* (ADISPA). The CLASP Lab is a “social lab” convened by Corporate Accountability Lab, the Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability, and Dejusticia. Our members are community leaders, human rights advocates, and social justice lawyers from more than twenty-five countries collaborating to develop strategies to address impunity for human rights and environmental abuses committed by companies in conflict settings like Colombia.

Three months ago, we denounced [death threats](#) that Jani and members of ADISPA had received from the criminal armed group *Comando de la Frontera* in connection to ADISPA's decades of defense of the *Campesino* Reserve of the Amazon Pearl of Putumayo, Colombia from the human rights and environmental abuse by Chilean-owned oil giant Amerisur Resources Plc (Amerisur), including water and land contamination, displacement, and alleged violations of free, prior, and informed consent.

We again condemn *Comando de la Frontera*'s targeting of Jani and ADISPA and the Colombian government's ongoing failures to protect Jani, which recently [led her and her family to flee](#) the territory she has defended for decades. On July 23, Jani was forced to flee her home in Puerto Asís, Putumayo after it became known that *Comando de la Frontera* had devised a plan to assassinate her. A group of hitmen had reportedly begun monitoring Jani's routines and tracking her movements. This coincides with Jani's reports of suspicious activity outside of her home in the weeks prior to the report of the assassination plan.

We seek immediate action to protect Jani and her colleagues at ADISPA and urge the Colombian government to ensure Jani's safe return home so that she may exercise her internationally-recognized right to defend human rights. Since 2020, mounting threats and

harassment against Jani and ADISPA, and the lack of adequate government response, have increasingly prevented ADISPA from defending human rights and the environment in Putumayo. However, Jani has never had to flee Putumayo until now.

As we noted in our previous letter, Colombia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to defend human rights and the environment. At least 101 social leaders have been killed in Colombia so far this year, a number that has doubled since our last letter reporting threats against Jani.

Due to impunity for threats against Jani and ADISPA and the assassination plan that has displaced Jani from Putumayo, and increased violence against social leaders in Colombia, we urge:

- The Colombian and Chilean governments to investigate and hold GeoPark and Amerisur accountable for their impacts on human rights and the environment in Putumayo and connection to endangerment of human rights and environmental defenders including Jani and her colleagues at ADISPA;
- Amerisur to provide information on its adherence to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- The United States government to ask the Colombian government to protect Jani and ADISPA, and ensure they may freely associate and defend human rights;
- The United Nations Development Programme to investigate the situation and commit to not renewing its project with GeoPark in Putumayo, which it suspended for human rights concerns a week after initiating the partnership earlier this year;
- The Colombian government to take comprehensive measures to protect Jani's safety and provide these measures without interruption, in accordance with Colombian and international law;
- The Colombian government to take comprehensive measures to protect all members of ADISPA and ensure that their freedom of association is not infringed;
- The Colombian government to address the significant increase in threats and violence against human rights and environmental defenders in Colombia, including through providing better protections for defenders, and by addressing the underlying causes of threats and violence; and
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to monitor the situation and meet regularly with Jani and ADISPA to implement effective protection measures.

In solidarity with Jani and ADISPA and in gratitude for their work for a better world,

**Members of the Corporate Liability and Sustainable Peace (CLASP) Lab:\***

*(Organizational endorsements below)*

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Alaa Talbi, Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights-FTDES

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**Organizational endorsements:**

Abogados y Abogadas del Noroeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales

African Coalition for Corporate Accountability

African Resources Watch (Afrewatch)

Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez (AFEDES)

Centre for Inclusive Governance Peace and Justice

Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador, A.C. (CAT)

Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz

Corporate Accountability Lab

Dejusticia

EarthRights International

European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)

Forum Social Maghreb-Machrek

Homa - Human Rights and Business Centre

Initiatives for Peace and Human Rights (iPeace)

Network Movement for Justice and Development

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