

## CORPORATE LIABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE (CLASP) LAB

### **An Open Letter in Support Of Environmental and Human Rights Defender Jani Silva and Denouncing the 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 Rita Silva. Jani and her organization, the Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Sostenible Perla Amazónica (ADISPA), have recently received threats from the criminal armed group Comando de la Frontera, challenging their work to defend the *Campesino* Reserve of the Amazon Pearl of Putumayo, Colombia from corporate abuse. These threats come amidst an alarming increase in violence against social leaders in Colombia, and we seek immediate action to protect Jani and the organization she leads.

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.

Jani is an environmental and human rights defender from the *Campesino* Reserve of the Amazon Pearl of Putumayo, Colombia. Jani was invited to participate in the CLASP Lab based on her experience and expertise as a leader who has defended her community and their environment against harms caused by oil giant Amerisur Resources Plc since the early 2000s. Amerisur is now owned by GeoPark, a Chilean company, which recently signed agreements with the United Nations Development Programme for its projects in Putumayo. Alleged harms include water and land contamination, displacement, and violations of free, prior, and informed consent. As a CLASP Lab member, Jani has made invaluable contributions to the work of the Lab, including by sharing her community’s experience and analysis of the private and state actors contributing to the degradation of her community’s environment, health, safety, and quality of life.

Despite past threats against her and the entire organization she leads, Jani continues to tirelessly defend the Amazonian ecosystem and her community in Colombia, once of the most dangerous places in the world to defend human rights and the environment. At least 52 social leaders have

been killed in Colombia so far this year, and more than 1,100 rights defenders have been murdered since the peace accords went into effect in 2016.

In December 2018, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted Precautionary Measures to protect Jani. Despite this, the Colombian entity tasked with providing these measures, the Unidad Nacional de Protección (UNP), interrupted some of these protective measures in December 2020. Although the UNP reinstated them, we are deeply concerned about the lack of consistency and political will in protecting human rights defenders at risk of threats and violence.

In recent days, Jani received new threats against her and ADISPA from Comando de la Frontera. Comando de la Frontera claims that it has the support of military, political, and economic actors to control areas of Putumayo. On Saturday April 24, a source within Comando de la Frontera reported that a Comando de la Frontera leader under the alias “Leonel” has ordered that Jani be killed and ADISPA eliminated. The source reportedly stated that Comando de la Frontera directly negotiates with oil company Amerisur and that opposition to extractive development will not be tolerated. In the past, another criminal group, La Mafía, has also threatened Jani.

Due to evident impunity for threats against Jani and ADISPA, and increased violence in the Putumayo region we urge:

- 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.

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)*

Aaron Weah, PhD Researcher, University of Ulster, NI/UK

Abu Brima, Network Movement for Justice & Development (NMJD)

Alaa Talbi, Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux

Alfredo Souza Dorea, Instituição Beneficente Conceição Macedo - IBCM, Instituição Família Telemaco Solidariedade

Andressa Oliveira Soares, Homa - Human Rights and Business Centre

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**Organizational endorsements:**

Abogados y Abogadas del Noroeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales (ANDHES)

African Coalition for Corporate Accountability

African Resource Watch (AFREWATCH)

Centre for Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice (CIGPJ)

Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz

Corporate Accountability Lab

Dejusticia

EarthRights International

European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR)

Forest Peoples Programme, UK

FORUM MAROCAIN DES ALTERNATIVES SUD

H.I.J.O.S. Mar del Plata, Argentina

Homa - Human Rights and Business Centre

Initiatives for Peace and Human Rights (iPeace)

Network Movement for Justice & Development (NMJD)

Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER)