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Via e-mail: brownp@nih.gov; olaw@mail.nih.gov;
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**Re: Colombian grant awardees Caucaseco Scientific Research Center,
PHS Assurance F20-00459, and Malaria Vaccine and Development
Center, PHS Assurance F16-00043**

Dear Drs. Brown, Auchincloss, and Jones:

Thank you in advance for your time. On December 21, PETA shared with you and Colombian authorities [our findings](#) regarding documented animal neglect as well as alleged abuse and possible misconduct pertaining to projects funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at the Caucaseco Scientific Research Center (Caucaseco) and the Malaria Vaccine and Development Center (MVDC). On January 27, the Colombian environmental agency Corporación Autónoma Regional del Valle del Cauca (CVC) made public a ruling against these facilities' heads, Sócrates Herrera Valencia and his wife, Myriam Arévalo Ramírez, in which it orders them to end all experiments on monkeys. The ruling also establishes a plan to seize these animals. The CVC's decision stemmed from its findings during an inspection performed on January 16 at the facility controlled by Herrera and Arévalo.

In light of this development, PETA requests the following:

- The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) should immediately withdraw its approval for the Public Health Service (PHS) Animal Welfare Assurances granted to Caucaseco (PHS Assurance F20-00459) and the MVDC (PHS Assurance F16-00043 [A5048-01]).

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- The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) should immediately stop funding Caucaseco and demand that funds be reimbursed and refrain from funding Caucaseco and the MVDC in the future.
- The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) should immediately investigate both Herrera and Arévalo and take all appropriate action.

The CVC Ruling

The [CVC's ruling](#) confirms that Caucaseco and its associated primate center, Fundación Centro de Primates, have lacked the required permits to experiment on monkeys since December 2012. The inspection performed by the CVC on January 16, the results of which were just made public, found that no meaningful changes to improve conditions for the monkeys have been made at the facility since the previous inspection on November 24, 2021. The reasons listed by the CVC to order Herrera and Arévalo to cease their experiments on monkeys and to establish a plan for the seizure of these animals include the following:

- Lack of records documenting the legal acquisition and transport of the monkeys from where they were captured to Caucaseco
- The unexplained disappearance of 21 *Aotus griseimembra* monkeys between November 24, 2021, and January 16
- The unexplained disappearance of three of these monkeys from the “experimental group” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack of records regarding “the fate or location of the monkeys” who have “already completed the experimentation cycle due to their age” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Experiments performed on animals who, due to their age, must be “out of the experimental facility” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack of records on the number of monkeys who have been born in captivity
- Lack of records on the number of deceased primates and lack of necropsy reports
- Lack of records documenting the legal origin and possession of six *Saimiri cassiquiarensis* monkeys accounted for during the inspection
- Lack of records documenting the legal origin and possession of the *Aotus griseimembra* monkeys accounted for during the inspection
- “Inadequate conditions of possession” of the monkeys and “[l]ack of care, and adequate” confinement conditions. There were “up to four (4) individuals per cage ... limiting their movement.” In addition, “[d]irt and a considerable amount of excrement” were found in the cages, and corrugated pipes were used as nests, “which makes evident that the cleaning of the cages ... is not frequent.” There was also a “[l]ack of adequate ventilation.” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Findings made *at the time* of the January 16 inspection
 - A baby monkey was found dead in a cage.
 - Three monkeys showed signs of eye disease.
 - A monkey was missing an eye.
 - The monkeys’ tails were covered with feces.
 - “[T]he cages, nests used by the monkeys, waterers, and the [monkeys] were found with excrement and dirt adhered to them.” [*translated from Spanish*]
 - Some monkeys were wet.
 - There was a strong smell of feces.

- Dog kibble continues to be the main food given to the monkeys.
- Lack of records on the diet given to the monkeys and lack of “justification of the feeding schedule,” which goes against “the nature of the species” and “could be regarded as a lack of care or attention in the feeding of the primates” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack of records “that show [a monkey’s] clinical and scientific [use in experiments] history, which allows establishing the state of health, the type of tests or experiments carried out or the type of medications or substances administered to each one of the primates, evolution sheets, ... ethograms that allow to know the state of each specimen” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack of records or “résumés of the personnel in charge of taking care of the primates that show the experience required for the proper handling and care of wildlife.” The inspector confirmed “that the current personnel in charge of these activities do not have the experience” or “certifications” required to performed their jobs. [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack of records or “résumés of professional and auxiliary personnel who participate in scientific experimentation activities with primates” [*translated from Spanish*]
- Lack “of an ethics committee in accordance with the provisions of [Colombian] Law 84 of 1989 [*translated from Spanish*]
- Inclusion of the species *Aotus griseimembra* as vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List

At this point, there shouldn’t be *any reason* for OLAW to maintain its approval of the PHS Animal Welfare Assurances granted to Caucaseco and the MVDC, for NIAID to continue funding Herrera or considering future funding for Arévalo, or for ORI not to launch a comprehensive investigation into Herrera’s and Arévalo’s actions. We urge you to act swiftly. Any delays in the execution of your offices’ responsibilities would only result in the abuse of more animals and the potential manipulation of vulnerable communities.

You can contact me at MagnoliaM@peta.org. I look forward to your reply regarding this important matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



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