



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Consular Directorate  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

28 September 2018

M E Voisin  
Her Majesty's Senior Coroner, Area of Avon  
The Coroner's Court  
Old Weston Road  
Flax Bourton  
BS48 1UL

Dear Ms Voisin

I am writing in response to your report dated 29 August 2018, following the inquest into the death of Henry Jack Miller on 23 April 2014 in Putumayo, Colombia.

In your report, you note your concern that other British nationals could come to harm in similar circumstances in the future and recommend that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) issue a warning to prospective travellers.

The safety of British nationals abroad is a paramount concern for the FCO. Through our foreign travel advice service, which we have provided since 1990, we aim to provide objective information and advice to help British nationals make informed decisions about foreign travel and enjoy safe, healthy and trouble-free trips abroad. We keep our travel advice under regular review to ensure it reflects our current assessment of risks and includes information on issues that may affect British nationals specifically.

Colleagues at the British Embassy in Bogotá have been following local developments in this case closely and we have been in contact with Mr Miller's family. Following receipt of your report, our South America team finalised a review of our travel advice for Colombia and the wider region. We concluded that it was appropriate to include information on the risks of participating in spiritual cleansing ceremonies in our travel advice for Colombia and Bolivia. These updates were made on 31 August 2018. The extract from our travel advice for Colombia, found in the 'Local laws and customs' section, is as follows:

*Ayahuasca, or yage, is a traditional plant used in 'spiritual cleansing' ceremonies by indigenous communities in Colombia, primarily in Putamayo and the Amazon region. The yage ceremony typically involves the consumption of a brew containing dimethyltryptamine (DMT), an hallucinogenic drug. Consumption of this brew is not regulated and its interaction with existing medical conditions is not well understood. People have suffered serious illnesses and in some cases death after participating in these ceremonies.*


*Spiritual cleansing or yage retreats are usually some distance from populated areas, making it difficult to access medical attention for those who need it.*

Our full travel advice for Colombia, including information on areas of the country where we advise against travel, is available on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/colombia>

We continue to promote our travel advice through our established social media channels and our TravelAware prevention campaign, which is supported by a network of over 200 travel industry partners. Our travel advice for Colombia received over 280,000 unique page views in 2017.

I hope that British nationals travelling to Colombia find this update to our travel advice useful in planning for a safe and healthy trip, and that similar tragic cases can be prevented as a result.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

Head of Consular Assistance Department  
Consular Directorate  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office