

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631

Sr. Juan Manuel Santos

President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 504 2220 1756 or 2232-0226

Sr. Eduardo Montealegre

Attorney General of Colombia

August 15, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply saddened at the recent killing of **two transgender women** in the San Nicolás neighborhood of Cali, Valle de Cauca, Colombia and the injuries of a third woman. The names of the women are withheld out of concern for the safety of those close to them.

On the night of July 4, the body of a transgender woman who had been shot in the face and the upper body was found in the San Nicolás neighborhood. On the same night, two men and one woman with knives attacked a group of transgender women in another area in Cali. One of the trans women was fatally injured, and another was taken to the hospital. The police had stopped the three alleged attackers prior to the incident at the request of the trans women, but released them after checking their documents.

The Santamaría Foundation, a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes the self-determination of transgender people in the participation, promotion, and defense of their human rights, has documented four killings of trans women in Cali in 2015, and 68 killings since 2005. Colombia Diversa, a national human rights NGO, has documented 15 killings of trans women in 2015 in Colombia as a whole. The organization reported 164 killings of LGBTI people in the country in 2013 and 2014. The vast majority of the killings happened in the Antioquia and Valle del Cauca Departments. They also noted that there had been an increase in police violence against members of the LGBTI community, especially against trans people.

Because of this continuing violence and our concern for the safety of the trans women attacked as described above, we **strongly urge** that you

- ensure protection measures for them in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the killings and attacks described above, acknowledging the possibility of a transphobic motive, publish the results, and prosecute those responsible.

Sincerely,

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez
Co-Coordinator

cc: NGO ~ via US mail
Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Adam Lenert, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
Tabatha Fairclough, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 155/15_Colombia

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: