

via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia
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July 22, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed by the alarming rate of assassinations of social leaders in Cauca Department.

On July 3 the bodies of seven men were found on a road in the municipality of Argelia. They had been shot at point blank range with visible signs of torture and other ill-treatment. Five of the seven men have been identified as:

- Jefferson Leandro Sanchez Cuchillo**, alias “Andrés” or “Carro Loco,” who was part of the dissident Eighth Front of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed forces of Colombia);
- Ever Alfarit Gómez Samboní**, alias “Crespo,” who was a former member of the Jacobo Arenas Mobile Column of the FARC. He was in the Territorial Area of Training and Reincorporation (ETCR) of El Estrecho, Patía, in Cauca, and had received instruction from the National Protection Unit (UNP) as a body guard. Sometime later he abandoned the peace process and joined the Eighth Front of the FARC;
- Luis Aurelio Bermú**
- Fabián Guzmán**
- Idelber Gómez**

There have been more assassinations since:

July 15: the decapitated, dismembered and stoned body of **José Bayardo Yonda Montoya**, age 28, was found in Pueblo Nuevo. He was from Florida municipality in Valle del Cauca Department and worked as a taxi driver in Cauca.

July 16: workers in El Carmelo village, in Caloto municipality, found the tortured body of **Luis Eduardo Dagua Conda** who had been a community leader and worked in various union, trade, and agricultural groups. His showed signs of torture. Experts who examined his body, neck and face say he was probably stoned or beaten to death. According to local reports, on July 15, a group of soldiers was camped on Dague’s property near the crime scene.


July 17: the decomposed body of **Ibes Trujillo Contreras** near the Marilópez River in the village of Las Brisas, He was a prosecutor of the Cuenca River Community Council Timba Marilopez, manager of the community company Brisas del Río Agua Blanca Audacia, a member of the Association of Victims Renacer Siglo XXI of Buenos Aires, and of the National Coordination of Afro-Descendant Organizations and Communities (CONAFRO). On July 10 armed men had kidnapped him from his farm in Aqua Blanca Village.

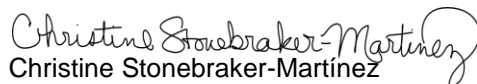
The residents of these communities are fearful that these murders and continuing reports of paramilitary groups in the area may be a warning of future violent acts. The Ombudsperson has warned of the community’s vulnerability on numerous occasions. However, the state response has not been comprehensive nor timely.

Therefore we strongly urge that you

- order a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of the seven people described above;
- dismantle paramilitary groups, in accordance with the government’s express commitments and with recommendations made by international bodies and by Amnesty International;
- provide protection to the Argelia community, ensuring that acts of violence are not repeated, and that their human rights are respected.

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Camilo Reyes, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643 and email
 Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
 Ryan Reid and Christine Russell, Desk Officers for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email
 Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 Margarete May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA128/18 and additional sources_Colombia

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