

<p>via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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January 12, 2019

Dear Sirs:

We are saddened and angry at the assassinations of **six social leaders** that have occurred during the first week of 2019.

On January 1 **Gilberto Valencia**, social entrepreneur, peace builder and cultural manager of Suárez municipality in Cauca Department, was shot and killed while celebrating the New Year with family and friends. With his initiative "Traveling Dialogues for Peace" he endeavored, through music, to disseminate the terms of the 2016 Peace Agreement between the government and the former Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC).

On January 2 armed men arrived at the grocery store of **Jesús Adier Perafán**, age 52, shot at him several times, leaving him dead. He was the founder of Courage Caicedonia and president of the Community Action Board of his neighborhood in Caicedonia municipality, Valle del Cauca Department.

On January 4 four armed men in civilian clothes shot to death **Wilmer Antonio Miranda**, an active member of the Association of Rural Workers of Cajibío in Cauca Department. He was an active supporter of the crop substitution program that enables transitioning to legal crops replacing marijuana, poppy, and coca.

On January 4 strangers shot **José Rafael Solano**, age 60, at his home in the village of Puerto Jobo in Zaragoza, Antioquia Department; his family witnessed the assassination. He was president of the Community Action Board and manager of social projects for peasant farmers, including the defense of ancestral mining practices.

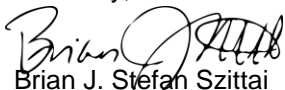
On January 5 unidentified armed men on motorcycles shot **Wilson Pérez Ascanio**, age 34, in the Catatumbo region of Hacarí in the north of Santander Department. On January 6 he died from his bullet wounds. He was the leader of several social movements, including the Popular Constituent Movement (MCP).

On January 7 **Maritza Quiroz Leiva** died in the hospital after being shot four times by unidentified men who broke into her property in the village of San Isidro in Santa Marta municipality, Magdalena Department. The mother of four, she was an Afro-Colombian representative on the Santa Marta Victims' Roundtable who worked on reparations for the victims of torture, kidnapping, displacement, and sexual violence that have occurred during Colombia's 50 year armed conflict. In late December she had participated in a ceremony to celebrate a land redistribution initiative in Santa Marta, which resulted from the Peace Agreement.

We strongly urge you to:

- investigate thoroughly and impartially the murders of these six activists, publish the results, and bring the assailants to justice;
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, 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
Margarette 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, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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