

via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez 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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January 26, 2019

Dear Sirs:

We continue to be disturbed by the increasing number of assassinations of social leaders that have occurred in the past month. In addition to the six assassinated social leaders about whom we wrote in our letter of January 12, we write you once again—saddened and outraged—about six more who have been killed, two as recently as today.

Caquetá Department

January 7: Community Action Board member **Miguel Antonio Gutiérrez**, age 40, was shot to death at his home in Cartagena del Chairá. He had previously received several paramilitary death threats.

Nariño Department

January 10: **Faber Manquillo Gómez**, age 30, a rural organizer missing since December 26., was found dead in El Rosario near the Cauca border

January 24: **Maritza Ramírez Chaverra** died from multiple injuries inflicted on her January 14 by unknown men in the El Tigre zone of Nariño. She was President of the Community Action Council in the village of Aguas Claras and helped coordinate programs to substitute traditional crops for illegal coca crops.

Norte de Santander Department

January 17: Armed men stopped the car in which **Luis Alfredo Contreras Ortega** and his partner were driving in Catatumbo. His partner fled after they threatened to kill her. The men abducted, tortured and killed Luis with multiple gunshots. He was President of the Community Action Board in Las Mercedes and coordinated voluntary replacement of coca plantations with legal crops in the Sardinata zone. Crop replacement is a core component of the peace process of 2016, but those participating in (or coordinating) the program face high levels of violence. About 30 members of the coca farmers association have been murdered since 2016.

January 26: **Lede María Ortega Ortiz** was attacked with a knife by someone who entered her home in the early morning hours in the village of Mundo Nuevo, near El Tarra municipality. She died minutes after arriving at the hospital. She worked as secretary for the Community Action Board of El Tarra, of which she was also a member.


Valle del Cauca Department

January 26: **José Jair Orozco Calvo**, age 52, was shot several times near his home in Cartago. He was a member of the Community Housing Board of the Vista Hermosa Urbanization, a housing project for low-income residents.

We strongly urge you to:

- investigate thoroughly and impartially the murders of these six social leaders, 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
 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, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

Jan 11-26 JFC_Colombia

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