

<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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May 25, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are extremely saddened by the murder of **Doctor Cristian Camilo Julio Arteaga**, age 24, in El Bagre in the Bajo Cauca region of Antioquia Department. He had just ended his shift on May 11 and was on his way to his home in Caucasia to celebrate mother's day with his family when two men on motorbikes ambushed him on a main road and shot him.

Dr. Arteaga was in El Bagre for a rural placement year required for his medical certification. Along with an overwhelming outpouring of grief and support in honor of the young doctor's memory, there has been a great deal of public political protest and demonstration in Dr. Arteaga's name. As of now, the culprits and motive for this assassination are unknown but there has been an outcry by the community urging the authorities to investigate the causes of the murder, and bring those responsible to justice.

In addition to provoking outrage in the town, Christian Camilo's death has instilled fear in and among his medical colleagues. Six doctors have fled the town resulting in the closing of Our Lady of Carmel Hospital, leaving 75,000 residents of El Bagre without any medical assistance.


The fleeing of doctors from El Bagre is devastating though not surprising. Doctors in the community have been calling for increased and improved personal security measures for quite some time. The Bajo Cauca region is a historically neglected area where the paramilitary groups Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) and Los Caparrapos have been waging a drug turf war.

Antioquia Health Secretary Alejandro Perlaza said it would be difficult to get the hospital open and running again because of the widespread fear resulting from Dr. Arteaga's murder.

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the murder of Dr. Cristian Camilo Julio Arteaga, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate action to break up paramilitary groups, in accordance with the commitments made by the government and recommendations from international bodies.
- take all necessary measures to immediately provide increased security in the Bajo Cauca area.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

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, US mail
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
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: