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| <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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June 21, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are shocked and saddened at the murders of two more community leaders in Colombia: **Benedicto Valentia** in San Vicente del Caguán in Caquetá Department and **Paula Andrea Rosero Ordóñez** in Samaniego in Nariño Department.

Benedicto Valentia, President of the Community Council of Miraflores, was abducted and, on May 15, was found dead from gunshot wounds in his head and back. As a victim of the armed conflict, he had participated in programs of land restitution that aim to benefit some of the people forcibly displaced from their homes by violence. He had worked to improve local projects, school transport for children and protection of land rights.


On May 20 Paula Andrea Rosero Ordóñez, age 47, was shot at close range by two men on motorcycles as she and her husband were driving home from a birthday party. She died in the hospital shortly afterward. Paula Andrea Rosero Ordóñez, a lawyer, was the representative of the Public Ministry of Samaniego. In 2016 she had been given protection measures after receiving threats because of her work in defense of human rights and in targeting corruption in Samaniego.

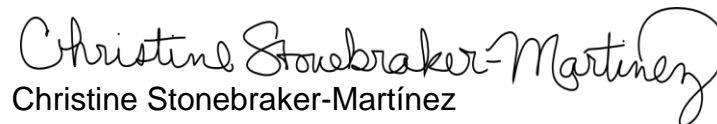
The deaths of these two community leaders add to the murders of almost 600 community leaders that have occurred in Colombia since the signing of the peace accords in 2016. A predominant number of these deaths, such as those described above, have been in departments in the southern area of the country because of the continued high presence of armed groups and the minimal state presence to counteract illegal activities.

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct a thorough investigation into the murders of Benedicto Valentia and Paula Andrea Rosero Ordóñez, publish the results, and bring the those responsible to justice
- take urgent measures to guarantee the safety and lives of all social leaders and human rights defenders, in strict accordance with their wishes.

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, US mail
US Senators Brown & Portman ~via email
US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

JFC/Telesur_5/21/2019_Colombia

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