

<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 24, 2019

Dear Sirs,

We are outraged at the recent killings by paramilitary groups—as well as government security forces—of four persons in Colombia. They are: **Jader Pertuz**, age 24, **Jader Polo**, age 24, **Jeferson Trochez Escue**, age 16, and **Luis Fernández Velásquez**.

Jader Pertuz was a seminarian at the Montelíbano Educational Foundation; Jader Polo was a motor taxi driver. Both were residents of the village of Brazo Izquierdo in San José de Uré in Córdoba Department. They were coca farmers who had been assisting in crop substitution programs under the terms of the 2016 peace agreement, which stipulates the community-led removal of coca plantations and their replacement with traditional crops. They were members of the Patriotic March political organization and the Peasant Farmer Association of Southern Córdoba.

On May 23 at least 10 men from the armed group Virgilio Peralta Arenas (also known as “Caparros”) arrived at their village, forced residents from their homes, and executed the two young men in front of horrified community members. They then painted the walls of the city with the acronym AGC (Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia). On May 24 the same armed group murdered Luis Fernández Velásquez, another participant in the National Comprehensive Plan to Replace Crops for illicit use (PNIS).

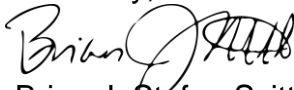
On June 6 police and military units, including heavily armed ESMAD (Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron) riot police, beat to death 16-year-old indigenous human rights defender and trade unionist Jeferson Tróchez Escue at a farm in Caloto in Cauca Department, which indigenous people have occupied for more than three years. The police used teargas and live ammunition to expel the occupants, beat Jeferson Tróchez, and dragged him away. Community members pleaded to attend to him but were prevented from doing so. He subsequently died from his injuries.

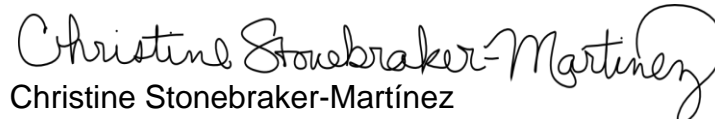
Jeferson Trochez Escue was a member of the FENSUAGRO agricultural trade union. At least five FENSUAGRO trade unionists have been killed in 2019 (cf our letters of Feb 1, Apr 23, Apr 24).

We **strongly urge** that you

- conduct an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the murders of Jader Polo, Jader Pertuz, Jeferson Trochez Escue, and Luis Fernández Velásquez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- ensure that the conditions of the peace process can be carried out safely and without fear of reprisals in all campesino, Afro-descendant, and indigenous communities throughout Colombia

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
 Antonia Urrejoa, Rapporteur for Indigenous Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

JFC/Telesur_06/06/2019_Colombia

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