

<p>via email: <a href="mailto:contacto@presidencia.gov.co">contacto@presidencia.gov.co</a>  <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez</b>          President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: <a href="mailto:despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co">despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</a>  <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b>          Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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March 22, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are quite concerned about threats by paramilitaries against Justapaz (*Asociación Cristiana Menonita de Justicia, Paz y Acción Noviolenta*, Mennonite Association for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action).

On February 28, Justapaz learned of a pamphlet where they were described as an immediate military target by the paramilitary group Águilas Negras (Black Eagles). In the pamphlet, the Águilas Negras threaten social leaders, human rights organizations, and entities committed to peace, including Justapaz.


This is not the first time that Justapaz has been threatened. In its written threats, the Águilas Negras typically use language such as vowing to “exterminate” all human rights defenders and social leaders, and calling them “guerrillas in disguise.” This threat, however, is much more specific; it threatens to target Justapaz members’ families and children at their schools.

The work of Justapaz is important and legitimate and must be protected. Since its establishment in 1990, Justapaz has worked to promote nonviolence and peacebuilding. It has developed a broad range of initiatives in training, organization and action for nonviolent conflict transformation at local, regional, national, and international levels. In regions of Colombia such as Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Sur del Chocó, Bajo Putumayo, Nariño and other regions, Justapaz partners with local Christian churches in communities facing threats from armed groups. To achieve their goal of taking control of territories, the armed groups implement systematic actions of intimidation and assassinations of social leaders.

To protect the important and legitimate work of Justapaz, we **strongly urge** that you:

- investigate the origin of these threats and bring those responsible to justice
- take immediate action to protect members of Justapaz and their families, in strict accordance with their wishes
- provide comprehensive protection of Christian churches in conflict zones, especially in places where violence has increased, such as Chocó, Bajo Cauca, Antioquia, Norte del Cauca and Bajo Putumayo.
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary structures
- launch measures for the protection of life that were stipulated in the Peace Agreement of 2016 and other measures that are necessary to prevent these waves of violence from spreading across 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  
 Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email  
 Antonia Urrejola, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail  
 Justapaz ~ via email  
 Global Ministries – Disciples of Christ/United Church of Christ ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

03/02/20\_Justapaz\_Colombia

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