

<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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April 5, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are outraged at the assassination of social leader **Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez**, an active member of the Popular Women's Organization of Colombia (OFP, Organización Femenina Popular), in San Pablo, Bolívar Department, on March 24. At around 8pm, armed men arrived at her home in the Guarigua neighborhood, forced her to walk with them a few meters from the house, and then killed her with a firearm.

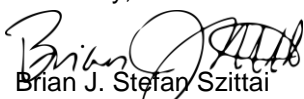
According to OFP leader Gloria Suárez, Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez "defended human rights and life; she participated in all actions of rejection of violence against women because she was one of the leaders of her community." She worked on projects with women producers, leaders, and defenders of victims of violence for more than 10 years through OFP. Also active with the Civil Defense in San Pablo, she worked in disaster risk management, social action and environmental management. Just hours before her murder, she was collecting money to help some of the more vulnerable people in her neighborhood in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are disturbed that police are seeking to downplay the likely motive of social leadership in her murder. An OFP member in San Pablo reported that on March 25 at around 8:00am, National Police officers came to her house and demanded that she make a statement and sign a document to denounce the important leadership role that Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez held in the community. Likewise, the National Judicial Police Section-Magdalena Medio Section (SIJIN-DEMAM) contacted OFP and requested multiple documents such as copies of calendar appointments and the minutes of meetings to prove that Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez was an active member of OFP. The National Police also started a stigmatization campaign via the WhatsApp media platform, alleging that Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez had criminal ties.

According to the annual report on Colombia of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 108 human rights defenders were murdered in Colombia last year. Given the constant assassinations of social leaders (more than 800 since the signing of the Peace Accords in 2016) and our deep distress over the brutal killing of Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez, we again urgently call upon your humanity and integrity to take the following actions:

- carry out a thorough, open, and impartial investigation into the assassination of Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez, using as the first investigative hypothesis her work as a social leader
- identify the criminal structures responsible for her assassination (including the intellectual authors), publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- stop all acts of stigmatization against the OFP and stop pressuring its members during this time of mourning
- take all measures deemed appropriate by the Popular Women's Organization of Colombia (OFP) to guarantee the safety of its members
- guarantee the timely and adequate protection of all women social leaders within the framework of Mandatory Preventive Isolation (in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic)

Sincerely,

  
 Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Co-Coordinator

  
 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via 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  
 Margarete May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail  
 Organización Femenina Popular ~ via email  
 Christian Peacemaker Teams-Colombia ~ via email  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

03/25/20\_OFP\_Colombia

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