

via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia
--	--

May 1, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply concerned about attacks on rural community leaders in Cauca Department. This is part of a wave of violence that continues to impact many regions of Colombia. Since January 1 more than 60 social leaders have been assassinated across the country. In a period of just one week, these four social leaders were assassinated in Cauca: Teodomiro Sotelo Anacona, Andrés Andrelio Cacimanca Burbano, Mario Chilhueso, and Hugo de Jesús Giraldo López.

April 17 - **Teodomiro Sotelo Anacona** was riddled with bullets in front of his family at his home in the village of Betania del Tambo, part of El Tambo municipality. He was a rural organizer and a council member for the Afrorenacer del Micay association, which promotes the rights of African-Colombian communities.

April 18 - **Andrés Andrelio Cacimanca Burbano** was murdered in the town of Honduras. According to local reports, armed men arrived at his home searching for his wife, a well-known community leader. Upon learning she was elsewhere, they killed Andrés.

April 19 - **Mario Chilhueso**, age 44, was killed at 5:00am as he left his home in the village of Los Robles, municipality of Buenos Aires. He was the president of ASTCAP (Asociación de Trabajadores y Pequeños Productores Agropecuarios), a rural association for small-scale farmers. He had previously survived a massacre in 2011


April 22 - **Hugo de Jesús Giraldo López**, age 64, who was a colleague of Mario Chilhueso, was killed by two gunmen who, at 6:20am, arrived at his home in the village of San Pedro, municipality of Buenos Aires. A member of the Patriotic March, he also served as president of the rural association of community action boards ASOCOMUNAL (Asociación de Juntas de Acción Comunal de Zaragoza).

We are seriously concerned about the systematic killing of social leaders in Colombia. We understand that both Mario Chilhueso and Hugo de Jesús Giraldo López had previously received death threats but were not given any protective measures, even though they had reported the threats to authorities.

We strongly urge that you

- carry out transparent and thorough investigations into the assassinations listed above, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice
- provide protection measures to members of the organizations listed above, in strict accordance with the wishes of their local leaders
- demilitarize the rural areas of Cauca because of the military's complicity in the armed violence, forced displacement, and targeting of rural social leaders

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
Margarette May Macaulay, Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Antonia Urrejoa, Rapporteur for Colombia, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Comisión Colombiana de Juristas ~ via email
Asociación Nacional Campesina-Coordinador Nacional Agrario de Colombia ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

04/23/20_JusticeForColombia_Colombia

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