

<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>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

May 12, 2020

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply concerned about continued attacks on social leaders in Cauca Department. On May 1 we wrote to you urging investigations into the killings of four rural community leaders. Today we write about three more leaders who were assassinated. In two of the killings, family members of the social leaders were also killed.

April 4 - **Hamilton Gasca** Ortega, age 33, was assassinated in his home along with his sons **Robert Gasca** and **Kevin Gasca**. Armed men forced their way into his home in the municipality of Piamonte, Cauca Department. Hamilton Gasca was a member of the Trade Union Association of Peasant Workers of Piamonte, an affiliate of the national agricultural union federation FENSUAGRO (Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria). His union received threats in early March

April 29 – **Alvaro Narváez Daza**, his wife **María Daza**, son **Cristian Narváez Daza** and 15-year-old granddaughter **Jeny Catherine López Narváez** were all murdered when armed men broke into their home in the municipality of Mercaderes in southern Cauca Department. Álvaro Narváez Daza was president of the Community Action Council in El Vado, in the township of Mojarras.


April 29 - **Uenseslao Guerrero de La Cruz**, age 57, was killed when two men riddled him with bullets on the street, then fled on a motorcycle. Uenseslao Guerrero de La Cruz was the former president of the Community Action Board of the Curacas district, township of San Joaquin, municipality of Mercaderes.

We continue to have serious concerns about the systematic killing of social leaders in Colombia. According to a report from the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz), more than 710 social leaders have been killed since the signing of the peace agreement in November 2016. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), which was created in the peace agreement to investigate human rights abuses, found that the first few months of 2020 saw the highest rate of murders of social activists since November 2016: on average, one social leader is killed every other day.

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-Coordiators


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 Urrejoa, Rapporteur for Colombia, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz ~ via email
Justice for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

May 2_Telesur_Colombia

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