

<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 Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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October 25, 2020

Dear President Duque and Attorney General Barbosa:

We are horrified at the assassinations, within 24 hours, of four indigenous leaders in two departments: **Avelino Ipia**, **Héctor David Marín**, and **Gustavo Herrera** (in Cauca), and **Eduardo Alarcón** (in Huila). Two other leaders survived assassination attempts in two other departments: **Aurelio Jumí Domicó** (in Córdoba) and **Hernando Benítez** (in Sucre).

October 19

- Armed men attacked and shot to death two indigenous men, Avelino Ipia and Héctor David Marín, in the Guaico Alizal village in Caldono Municipality in Cauca Department.

- A group of armed men on a motorcycle shot and killed Eduardo Alarcón, age 72, at his farm in the village of Las Vueltas in Huila Department. He had coordinated successful campaigns for local farmers to receive land for rice cultivation. He was a member of the Democratic Pole political party and is the eleventh social activist murdered in Huila this year.

- Aurelio Jumí Domicó, vice-president of the indigenous reservation Quebrada Cañaveral Embera Katio del San Jorge in Córdoba Department, survived an assassination attempt. Original reports said he had been killed.

- Hernando Benítez survived an attack in Caño Palomo, in Sucre Department. He is a regional representative for the Movement for Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's internal armed conflict.

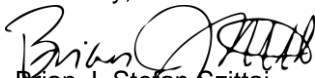
October 20

- Gustavo Herrera, a regional coordinator for the social movement organization Colombia Humana, was shot dead in his vehicle as he traveled between Popayán and the zone of Coconuco in Cauca Department. During the 2018 presidential elections, he ran the campaign in Cauca for President Iván Duque's opponent, Gustavo Petro, who finished second and now serves as a senator.

These attacks occurred while thousands of indigenous, peasant farmers, Afro-Colombian persons and student activists were arriving in the capital of Bogotá as part of marches ("mingas") to demand urgent government action about the violence impacting communities in Cauca and other regions. We are quite alarmed at the continuing and increasing number of assassinations and attempted killings of social activists throughout Colombia. Therefore, we strongly urge that you

- conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the assassinations and attempted assassinations of the victims named above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all necessary measures to improve security, particularly in rural regions affected by high levels of structural poverty where the majority of violence has been concentrated;
- take more proactive measures to ensure implementation and effective functioning of security mechanisms contained in the 2016 peace agreement.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy: Kristen Farrell (human rights) and Mariel Chatman (vulnerable populations) ~ via email
US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
Justice for Colombia ~ via email
Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz / InterChurch Commission for Justice and Peace ~ via email
Colombia Humana ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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