

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sr. Fiscal General Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</p>
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April 28, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are horrified and extremely saddened at the killing of **Nasa Indigenous Governor Sandra Liliana Peña Chocué** on April 20 in the Indigenous reserve of “La Laguna-Siberia” in Caldono in Cauca Department. Four unidentified armed men violently abducted her from her home and shot her. She died on the way to the hospital.


As governor, Sandra Peña worked tirelessly to protect the autonomy and ancestral culture of the Nasa Indigenous Peoples. She rejected threats and pressure from illegal armed groups who promote the expansion of illicit crops, illegal mining, and drug trafficking. Just prior to her murder, she had spoken out against the increase in illicit crop cultivation in the reserve. She subsequently received threats from illegal groups that exercise territorial control in Cauca. She reported these threats to the authorities.

The assassination of Sandra Peña occurred in the context of an upsurge of violence because of the increasing disputes for territorial control by illegal groups and a worsening humanitarian situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in the departments of Cauca and Chocó. Incidents of attacks against (and killings of) human rights defenders in Colombia such as Sandra Peña continue to increase, particularly against those promoting the implementation of the peace agreement and National Program for the Voluntary Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS).

We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, exhaustive and impartial investigation into the killing of Governor Sandra Liliana Peña Chocué, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of the relatives of Governor Sandra Liliana Peña Chocué, the Nasa Indigenous Peoples, and the leaders and members of all Indigenous communities
- join with all members of the National Commission of Security Guarantees to establish and implement policies that will identify, prosecute, and dismantle the intellectual authors, financiers, and members of the neo-paramilitary and other criminal groups that are continuing to interfere with the implementation of the peace process.

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
UN: 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
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

21 APR 2021_Telesur_Colombia

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