

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sr. Alfonso Campos Martínez Director of the National Protection Unit director@unp.gov.co</p>
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September 25, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to demand protection for journalist **José Alberto Tejada**, director of the media outlet Canal2, whose life is being threatened. His investigative reporting has been crucial in denouncing human rights violations and crimes under international law committed by security forces during the Colombian National Strike. That reporting has made him the target of threats, and his security has been jeopardized at least 14 times in the past three months.

June 4: While the journalist was working in the Paso del Aguante area of Cali (Valle del Cauca Department), a member of the Group of Special Operations (GOES) of the National Police told him: "You are good enough to shoot you."

July 7: The InterChurch Commission for Justice and Peace received credible information about an ongoing plan to kill José Alberto Tejada, including the fact that unidentified men collected 30 million Colombian pesos to pay for his assassination.

July 20: A member of José Alberto Tejada's protection team was shot three times while covering the demonstrations, receiving wounds to his shoulder, thigh, and knee. It is believed that the shooter was an agent of ESMAD (Mobile Anti-riot Squad).

August 7: A team of volunteers who were protecting José Alberto Tejada observed a man on a red motorcycle drawing a gun near his residence at 1:30 a.m. When intercepted by the volunteer security patrol, the motorcyclist fled to a nearby public establishment where several police officers were gathered. When the man arrived, the officers departed.

The targeting of journalists—especially if the police are involved—raises serious issues over press freedom and the ability of the press to hold Colombian authorities to account for the brutal treatment of demonstrators.

We therefore strongly urge that you

- conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and grant José Alberto Tejada appropriate protection measures (as he requested on July 9), in strict accordance with his wishes
- instruct officials in your government to stop stigmatizing protesters and suggesting that they are linked to armed rebel groups
- instruct officials in your government to stop stigmatizing journalists (accusing them of spreading “fake news”) who are reporting on popular demonstrations

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Barbosa Delgado, Attorney General of Colombia ~ via email
Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Daniel Palacios Martínez, Minister of the Interior ~ via email
IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
IACHR: Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, 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
CIPJ: Comision Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz (InterChurch Commission for Justice and Peace) ~ via email
Amnesty International -Urgent Action Network ~ 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

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