

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co	Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
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May 26, 2022

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to demand accountability for the ongoing killings of social leaders, for protections of social leaders moving forward, and for full implementation of the Peace Accords. So far in 2022, at least 76 social leaders have been murdered in Colombia. Three were killed over the weekend of May 14-15 in Cauca and Valle del Cauca: **Didimo Hernán Rodas**, **José Alexander Espinoza Valencia**, and **Edgar Quintero**.

Didimo Hernán Rodas, a 59-year-old member of the association of peasant producers Asoproamed (Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Plátano), was assassinated on Saturday, May 14, in the village of Los Medios, municipality of Buga, Valle del Cauca Department. He was attacked with a knife and died of his injuries at Hospital San José de Buga.

Also in Valle del Cauca, on Sunday, May 15, armed men assassinated **José Alexander Espinoza Valencia**, president of the Community Action Board of the village of El Retiro, municipality of Tuluá. The incident occurred at noon, when at least two armed men caught up with him and shot him on the road that leads from the village of La Moralia to the village of Naranjal. The Ombudsman's Office, through Early Warning 046/20, had already identified the difficult situation in Tuluá, noting "serious violations of the rights to life, liberty, integrity and security of the civilian population...through possible selective and multiple homicides..."

Also assassinated on May 15 was **Edgar Quintero**, an Afro-descendant leader in Northern Cauca Department. He was a local leader in the alternative crop program, promoting the cultivation of pineapple to strengthen the local economy through the land restitution program for victims of the armed conflict. Edgar Quintero was ex-president of the Community Action Council in the village of Lomitas, Santander de Quilichao municipality. While he was leaving his house to attend to the cattle on his farm, four men on motorcycles approached, shot him at least three times, and killed him.

The staggering number of deaths and lack of safety in Colombia are stripping local communities of peace and security. We therefore urge that you:

- conduct thorough and transparent investigations into the assassinations of Didimo Hernán Rodas, José Alexander Espinoza Valencia, and Edgar Quintero, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- consult with local leadership in Cauca and Valle del Cauca to provide security for rural communities, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators



Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Daniel Palacios, Minister of the Interior ~ via email
Joel Hernández García, 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: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim); Kristen Farrell (human rights); Mariel Chatman (vulnerable populations) ~ via email
US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

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