

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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July 22, 2022

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our sadness and outrage at the assassination of young social and environmental leader Julián David Ochoa Rueda in the small town of Santa Ana in Granada municipality, Antioquia Department. He was killed with a shotgun in the early morning hours of June 27. During the attack, his domestic partner, the mother of his 4-month-old infant, received injuries caused by a machete.

Julián David Ochoa Rueda was an active member of the left political coalition Historic Pact (Pacto Histórico). As such he had been active in promoting the electoral campaign of Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez for the presidency and vice-presidency, respectively. In Granada, Petro's opponent Rodolfo Hernández won with a wide margin.


The Ombudsman's Office issued Early Warning 04 in 2020 (AT 004/20), detailing the risk faced by social leaders in Antioquia amid constant armed conflict by illegal armed groups; in addition to fights for territorial control, they compete for control of activities such as drug trafficking and illegal mining. In Granada there is a presence of several armed actors, including the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), La Oficina, and Front 18 of former FARC dissidents. The region is under the jurisdiction of the Seventh Division of the National Army.

According to the Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz), 91 social leaders have been assassinated so far this year, with a total of 1,318 since the signing of the Peace Agreement in November 2016.

There must be an end to impunity for these attacks on social leaders. We therefore urge you to:

- conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Julián David Ochoa Rueda with the goal of finding the intellectual and material authors of the attack, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take necessary measures to dismantle illegal armed groups operating in Antioquia

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, 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 ~ via email
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: