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| Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego 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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October 21, 2022

Dear Sirs:

On Saturday, October 16, journalist **Rafael Emiro Moreno Garavito** was fatally shot by two motorcyclists in Montelíbano, Córdoba Department. The investigative reporter was also a respected social leader in his community in Puerto Libertador municipality, Córdoba. At the time of his assassination, he was carrying out several investigations related to criminal and disciplinary complaints by his neighbors.


Rafael Moreno worked for the independent news outlet *Voces de Córdoba*. For several years he had received threats because of his investigative reporting. We are writing because it is imperative for Colombian authorities to thoroughly investigate his killing, determine if he was targeted for his work, and hold accountable those responsible.

Several years ago, the government's National Protection Unit (UNP) had assigned a bodyguard to protect Rafael Moreno, gave him a protective vest, and gave an early-warning panic button. It is unclear to us whether the protection measures were still in place. It was reported by one source that Rafael Moreno was working at his restaurant on October 16 and told a bodyguard that he could take the rest of the day off. Indepaz (Institute for the Studies of Development and Peace), however, has stated that the UNP withdrew the security mechanism for the journalist a few months ago.

So far this year, seven journalists in Córdoba have received threats. Six of the cases were registered in Montelíbano. Because of our concern for the safety of journalists in Córdoba, we strongly urge that you:

- conduct a transparent investigation into the assassination of Rafael Emiro Moreno Garavito, determine whether the motive was connected to his professional journalism, find both the intellectual and material authors of the killing, and bring those responsible to justice
- provide protection for the team of journalists at *Voces de Córdoba*, under agreed upon conditions
- clarify whether the UNP's security mechanism had been in place on October 16 and, if not, provide the reasons why not
- ensure that journalists throughout Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate work activities without fear of reprisal

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Sziittai
Co-Coordiators


Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Luis Gilberto Murillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
Joel Hernández García, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
Pedro José Vaca Villarreal, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
FLIP: Fundación para la Libertad de la Prensa ~ via email
Natalie Southwick, CPJ Central and South America Program Coordinator, Committee to Protect Journalists ~ 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

19 OCT 2022 Committee to Protect Journalists_Colombia

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