

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</p>
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November 26, 2022

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to call for justice for the assassinations of two social leaders last night. **Efraín Sánchez Durán** and **Oswaldo Eliecer Duglas Bula** became the 169th and 170th social leaders killed in Colombia in 2022.

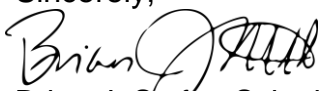
Community leader **Efraín Sánchez Durán** was shot and killed by four armed men in the Paloca sector of Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. The hitmen fled the scene but were later captured by authorities. Efraín Sánchez Durán was the director of the Manos Amigas foundation, which serves the elderly in his community. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo) had issued Early Warning AT 027/22, stating that "the strong social leadership and the iron defense of human rights, life and territory are against the interests of those who intend to impose an economic and political model from arms." Under the jurisdiction of the Second Division of the Colombian Army, in Barrancabermeja there are several illegal armed groups such as the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and local criminal gangs.

Also assassinated on November 25 was **Oswaldo Eliecer Duglas Bula** in Montería, the capital of Córdoba Department. He was a champion of various social processes, including the relocation of vendors from the South Market, a union of which he was a part. In Early Warning AT 005/20, the Ombudsman's Office stated that "the increase in illegal armed actors due to the dispute over the territory, the execution of attacks against life, liberty and physical integrity and the use of methods and means to generate terror and intimidation, exposes the civilian population to the violation of their fundamental rights due to the probable consummation of selective or multiple configuration homicides." The Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) paramilitaries are active in this region, which is under the jurisdiction of the Seventh Division of the Colombian Army.

We urge that you

- conduct thorough and transparent investigations into the assassinations of Efraín Sánchez Durán and Oswaldo Eliecer Duglas Bula, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- take measures to dismantle illegal armed groups operating in Santander and Córdoba

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

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
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: