

<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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July 21, 2023

Dear Sirs:

We are saddened and outraged to learn of the assassinations of two community leaders in Ituango, northern Antioquia. Within the span of 24 hours, on July 4 and July 5 respectively, **César Tapias** and **Ludis Ester Jaramillo** were both murdered. These incidents have sparked fear and outrage from community residents, and bring the total number of murders of social leaders to 86 so far in 2023.

The community leader murdered in the municipality of Ituango was identified as Ludis Ester Jaramillo, a member of the Community Action Board (JAC, Junta de Acción Comunal) of the village of El Capote in the corregimiento of La Granja. The crime, which occurred on July 5, was denounced by the Sumapaz and Indepaz foundations, which confirmed that Ludis Ester Jaramillo was hung from a tree, where she died by hanging. Members of the community recovered her body and brought it to the authorities where they waited for the judicial bodies to carry out an investigation.


César Tapias was killed the previous day by unknown armed men. Another social leader from Ituango, he was the former president of the JAC in the village of Quebrada del Medio village. More recently he was in charge of the working committee of the JAC. His killing also caused heartache among the residents of his village.

Of the recorded 86 killings of social leaders this year, twelve have occurred in Antioquia. In this region of the country, bloody combats are taking place between the Román Ruiz Front and the Clan del Golfo, through the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), organizations that dispute control of the area. Residents suffer constant threats due to the confrontations between armed groups and the absence of military forces in this region. Additionally, a significant number of people have been declared a military objective (target) by both sides, just for being in the middle of the conflict.

As the death toll surpasses 1,500 since the 2016 peace agreement was signed between the government and the the FARC, we join Sumapaz in clamoring for "real guarantees from the National Government for these communities that are at high risk," a cry that has also been joined by other entities that promote peace in marginalized territories. **We therefore strongly urge you to:**

- carry out thorough and transparent investigations into the assassinations of César Tapias and Ludis Ester Jaramillo, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- fulfill the government's commitments made in the Peace Accords, especially to end threats and assassinations of social leaders and all signatories of the Peace Accords

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); Sandra Lee (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance, and US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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