

<p><b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego</b> President of the Republic of Colombia <a href="mailto:contacto@presidencia.gov.co">contacto@presidencia.gov.co</a></p>	<p><b>Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado</b> Attorney General of Colombia <a href="mailto:despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co">despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</a></p>
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January 21, 2024

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to demand justice for the assassination of campesino leader **Robert Fernández**. He was killed with a firearm in an area known as La Venta, located on the outskirts of the municipality of Cajibío, Cauca Department, on December 11, 2023.

When Robert Fernández arrived home from work he went outside to feed some chickens, about 50 meters from La Filigrana farm. From the house, his wife heard a motorcycle arrive. Then she heard an unknown man yell to Robert and ask if he was going on a trip. Then she heard two gunshots. Running outside, his wife saw the hitman climb onto a black Auteco motorcycle driven by another subject, and they fled. Her husband lay dead with two gunshots to the head.

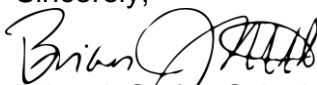
Robert Fernández was a well-respected community leader with several affiliations. He was a member of the local Community Action Board, the National Association of Peasant Reserve Areas (ANZORC), the Popular Unity Process of the Colombian Southwest (PUPSOC) and the Patriotic March social movement. In his role as a campesino land rights defender, he was in charge of the collective land allocation process for several families affiliated with the Association of Peasant Workers of Cajibío (ATCC), a local chapter of FENSUAGRO (National Federation of Agricultural Trade Unions). They were waiting for the transfer of title for the Filigrana farm, a piece of land purchased by the National Land Agency (ANT) to be divided among the campesino families. Robert Fernández was an active leader in ATCC.

Local campesino associations report that 25 social leaders were killed in the region in 2022. With the killing of Robert Fernández, there have been 42 in 2023. That is an alarming increase.

We urge that you:

- publish the results of the investigation into the assassination of Robert Fernández and bring those responsible to justice
- work with campesino leaders in Cajibío to provide protection measures, in accordance with their wishes
- move forward in designing (and funding) a new comprehensive plan for the protection of social leaders, as ordered by the Constitutional Court on December 11, 2023, and involve social leaders in the process

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Luis Gilberto Murillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail  
José Luis Caballero Ochoa, 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); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email  
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email  
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance ~ via email  
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, 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:**