

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego

President of the Republic of Colombia
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Sr. Fiscal Francisco Barbosa Delgado

Attorney General of Colombia
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March 1, 2024

Dear Sirs:

We are concerned about threats made to social leader **Astrid Silva Barreto**, the president and legal representative of Building Dreams Foundation-Mothers Heads of Household (Fundación Construyendo Sueños MCH) in Barranquilla, Atlántida Department.


The social foundation Building Dreams is based at Las Gardenias, a large public housing project built by the national government in 2014; the foundation was established the same year. Las Gardenias has apartments that accommodate 4,080 families. Among those are 200 mothers who are heads of household, 700 children, 300 older adults, 300 disabled people, 200 infants and 200 pregnant women. Building Dreams works with the families in a variety of skills training, psychosocial programs, educational programs and recreational activities. It also works with the families to address issues of concern in the housing project. The families have reported several complaints about incidents of violence such as homicides, gender-based violence against girls, micro-trafficking, and the disappearance of a young man in this community, which is still ongoing.

On February 18, Astrid Silva Barreto received a phone call warning her that she had to leave Las Gardenias; this followed an attack against the administrator of complex 6 of the housing project. Despite the calls made by its residents, leaders and the Ombudsman's Office issuance of early warning 0022 of June 2023, which speaks of the latent risks in this mega urbanization, there have been no clear interventions by local or national authorities to safeguard the residents and leaders of the Las Gardenias.

Because the residents of Las Gardenias fear for their safety and because of the threat made against Astrid Silva Barreto, we urge that you:

- investigate the threat against Astrid Silva Barreto, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice
- consult with the residents and leaders of Las Gardenias to improve security measures, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Luis Fernando Velasco Chaves, Minister of Interior ~ via email
Luis Gilberto Murillo Urrutia, 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
Fundación Construyendo Sueños MCH ~ via email
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:

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