

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego

President of the Republic of Colombia

contacto@presidencia.gov.co**Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo**

Attorney General of Colombia

despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co

March 22, 2025

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

Diego Alexander Herrera Carranza was a renowned social leader and human rights defender in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. On March 14 he became the 40th social leader to be murdered in Colombia in 2025. Since the signing of the Peace Accords in 2016, Indepaz (Institute of Studies for Development and Peace) notes that "a human rights leader is murdered every two days."

On March 14 armed attackers arrived while Diego Herrera was in a public establishment in the Kennedy neighborhood (located in Commune 6 of Barrancabermeja). They shot him repeatedly—killing him instantly. After carrying out the attack, the perpetrators fled the scene.


Diego Herrera was an active member of the Barrancabermeja Victims' Participation Roundtable. His work focused on defending the rights of communities victimized by the armed conflict and denouncing situations of violence and human rights violations in the Magdalena Medio region, where Barrancabermeja is located. He promoted various initiatives for victim reparations, access to justice, and compliance with peace agreements. His leadership and activism made him a key figure within the social movement and human rights defender in Santander Department.

Because several groups of armed actors are active in Barrancabermeja, the national Ombudsman's Office has issued at least two Early Warnings: AT 027/22 and AT 019/23. Armed actors in the region include: Gulf Clan (Gaitanista Army of Colombia, or EGC), Front 37 of the Magdalena Medio Block, National Liberation Army (ELN), along with other local criminal bands.

We understand that local authorities have already launched an investigation. We urge that you:

- ensure an impartial and thorough investigation into the assassination of Diego Alexander Herrera Carranza, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- clarify the events of March 14, 2025 and determine whether the crime is related to his work as a community leader
- offer a protection scheme to the family of Diego Alexander Herrera Carranza, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator
Christine L. Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Daniel García-Peña, 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: John McNamara (Chargé d'Affaires); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Husted and Moreno ~ via email
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes ~ via email

16 MAR 2025_Infobae_Colombia

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