

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</p>
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May 6, 2025

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are deeply distressed over the torture and assassination on April 4 of **Sara Millerey González**, a 32-year-old transwoman and activist who had her extremities beaten and broken until she was thrown alive into the Playa Rica River in Bello, Antioquia Department, and left to die. Instead of helping, bystanders posted videos of her suffering. When emergency personnel pulled her from the water and took her to a clinic, she was suffering from hypothermia and had a punctured lung. Sara suffered a cardiac arrest the next morning. A second attack at 3pm ended her life.

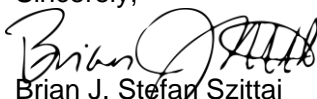
Violence against transgender people in Colombia is alarming. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman reported last November that between January and October 2024, the office “advised and handled 258 cases of bias-based violence against transgender women, transgender men, and non-binary people...[marking] an increase of 29.6% compared to the same period in 2023.” According to Corporación Caribe Afirmativo, more than 24 LGBTI+ people have been murdered in Colombia so far in 2025 (likely an undercount since many LGBTI+ cases are not designated as such). Startlingly, three killed this year were in Bello: two gay men and now Sara Millerey.

Transwomen face the most violence, and Sara knew it. In her diary, she wrote about being stalked. Although she did not reveal who was threatening her, she asked for the courage to face “the many earthly dangers that surround me.” It is unfortunate that the stigmatization followed her even after death. Various media outlets reported on her killing using her masculine “deadname” (name given at birth). Sara, who began her gender transition at age 15, lived with her mother, who related the moment of Sara’s death to a media outlet: “I knelt down and hugged her and told her that I loved her very much. I told her she was going to be with God, because no one in heaven was going to humiliate or discriminate against her for being her.”

We are glad to learn that your government has deployed a special investigative group headed by the National Police and the Attorney General’s Office. We further urge that your government:

- heed the urging of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman to take stronger measures to protect trans individuals, because “there is also evidence of a worsening of violence based on gender identity, especially against transgender women, who endure the most psychological, physical, and sexual violence.”
- work with leaders of the LGBTI+ community to develop strategies to value and protect diversity, end hatred of LGBTI+ people, end the impunity of crimes against the trans community
- work with national and local political leaders to prevent prejudice-based violence against LGBTI+ persons, activate protection mechanisms for transgender people, and prosecute those responsible for hate crimes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

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
Arif Bulkan, Rapporteur on the Rights of LGBTI persons, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email
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
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes ~ via email

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