

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
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November 21, 2025

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

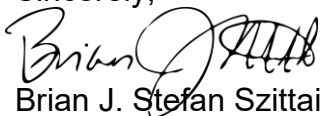
We write to you with a deep sadness and anger over the murder of **Julián Rincón Arenas** in Chaparral, Tolima Department. A member of the Patriotic Union and a former candidate for the Chaparral City Council for the Historical Pact Coalition, he was deeply committed to defending the rights of his community. On November 17, returning home from several meetings with farmers, Julián Arenas was shot multiple times near the village of Las Juntas. He died at the scene.

The Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz) has noted that the Ismael Ruiz Front, a group belonging to the FARC dissident rebel organization Central General Staff (EMC), is active in the region of Chaparral. There had previously been warnings issued by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman about the risk posed by armed groups in this region, especially for human rights defenders. We understand that Julián Rincón Arenas had previously requested protective measures but had not received a response.

We are deeply concerned for rural communities and their leaders, and for human rights defenders in general, who are increasingly facing death threats, violence, and killings. We therefore strongly urge you to:

- (1) ensure a thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Julián Rincón Arenas and hold accountable both the material and intellectual authors of his killing, as has been demanded by President Gustavo Petro
- (2) immediately enact appropriate governmental measures to ensure the protection of rights and security of social leaders in Chaparral and surrounding rural communities
- (3) provide adequate protection to social leaders and human rights defenders who are constantly exposed to threats to life, in strict accordance with their wishes
- (4) Make an earnest commitment to ending violence and persecution of rights defenders and rural communities by putting in place proper legislative means to building long-lasting peace in Colombia

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Daniel García-Peña Jaramillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email
 José Luis Caballero Ochoa, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email
 UN: Scott Campbell, 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

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