

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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May 21, 2026

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are writing to express our dismay over the killing of **Indigenous leader Reinaldo Campos**, who was murdered on April 7, 2026, after being kidnapped the day prior in the department of Arauca. According to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz), Reinaldo Campos became the 37th social leader assassinated in Colombia this year.

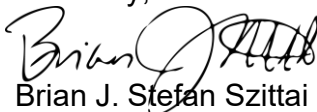
Reinaldo Campos had been governor of the Macarieros Indigenous Reserve of the Makaguan people in Tame, Arauca, and former president of the Association of Councils and Traditional Authorities (ASOCATA). He also served as a liaison for the Special Consultation Mechanism for Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDET), helping represent local and marginalized needs in planning for the structural transformation of the Colombian countryside. Before his kidnapping, he had allegedly received threats from the Estado Mayor Central (EMC), the largest dissident faction of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). (The EMC is led by Ivan Mordisco, for whose capture the Colombian government has already listed a multimillion-dollar reward.)

According to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz), at least 170 social leaders and human rights defenders were killed in Colombia in 2025. The murder of Reinaldo Campos shows that this unchecked violence against human rights defenders continues in 2026. The targeting of Reinaldo Campos is especially concerning given that the Makaguan Indigenous people have been subject to special protection orders by the Colombian Constitutional Court since 2010, due to risk of physical and cultural extinction. However, the Colombian state is largely absent in rural zones where Indigenous communities struggle to protect their land and human rights amidst ongoing conflicts over territorial control by armed actors.

In light of this, we urge that authorities:

- (1) carry out a thorough investigation into the assassination of Reinaldo Campos, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- (2) adopt immediate and effective protective measures for Indigenous communities across Arauca, including the Makaguan people
- (3) take necessary measures to ensure that human rights defenders, community leaders, and civil society organizations can carry out their work without fear of violence or reprisals.

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
Riyad Insanally, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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: Jarahn Hillsman (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 and 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: