

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 26, 2026

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are deeply distressed to learn of the **threats of social cleansing** that have been circulating in pamphlets in the departments of Valle del Cauca (Yumbo, Vijes, Yotoco) and Cesar (Valledupar, Pueblo Bello, Codazzi, and La Paz), spreading hate towards certain groups, explicitly threatening the LGBTIQ+ community. The stigmatization and dehumanization of LGBTIQ+ people expressed in these pamphlets is set in the context of a protracted and violent social climate for LGBTIQ+ persons that includes homicides, forced displacement, and systemic threats.

These pamphlets have been accompanied by in-person actors threatening transwomen in the Mamatoco sector of Santa Marta (Magdalena Department). In April, several transgender women were approached by male members of an armed group, demanding payment of “security fees” to allow them to work (and threats if they did not pay). The armed men’s nightly patrols resulted in displacement, widespread fear, and the loss of work.

Pamphlets attributed to armed groups such as the Self-Defense Forces of the Sierra Nevada (ACSN) and the Gaitanista Army of Colombia (EGC) were circulated in the towns of Cesar and Magdalena, as the groups fight for territorial control. Promising “security and peaceful coexistence,” they describe young people using drugs and people experiencing homelessness as social threats that need to be “cleansed” from the community. The audacity of the EGC is revealed by their message to civil leaders, announcing its “absolute control” of parts of Cesar and declaring anyone considered an ally of rival groups a military target.

We denounce this culture of intimidation and armed control. Because of the wide circulation of hateful and controlling propaganda with threats of social cleansing of vulnerable social groups, including transgender women, we call upon your integrity and humanity to:

- (1) protect the rights of all the above inhabitants by having local, departmental, and national authorities all create protection plans for communities at high risk for prevention of harm and insecurity, especially for youth and transgender women
- (2) conduct effective and proactive investigations into all actors of the threats and hate speech.

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: 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: