

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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June 23, 2026

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the lack of adequate protection for **members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace (CIJP)**, a human rights organization whose members face continuous surveillance, intimidation, and credible threats against their lives.

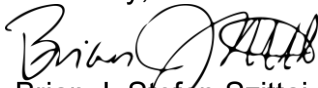
On March 27, 2026, **Juan Carlos Gaona**, a member of the CIJP, received a text message stating that an operation to murder him in Sincelejo, Sucre Department, had failed only by chance due to the presence of an Army truck near the place where he was holding a meeting. The message described his recent activities in detail, revealing that he was under surveillance, and warned that he would not be as fortunate next time, with the clear intention of attacking him and other members.

This death threat is part of an organized intimidation campaign against the Commission, putting Juan Carlos and his colleagues in direct danger. This incident is not an isolated occurrence but more a symbolic case of the danger faced by human right defenders in Colombia by illegal armed groups who directly target those who support and accompany victims of human rights violations. The failure of the state to fully implement the protection scheme ordered by of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Protection Measures 629-03) needs to be addressed now. When defenders are silenced through threats, fear, and violence, the protection of all victims is placed at risk.

We ask that the government of Colombia fully meet its international obligations to protect those who defend human rights. In light of the ongoing threat to the life and safety of Juan Carlos Gaona and other members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, we urge the following of Colombian authorities:

- the immediate implementation adequate protection for Juan Carlos Gaona, appropriate to the level of extreme risk he faces, in strict accordance with his wishes
- full compliance with Precautionary Measure 629-03 of the IACHR, including the long-delayed implementation of the structural protection scheme for the Caribbean Coast

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace ~ via email
Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio, Minister of Foreign Affairs ~ via email
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 ~ 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: