

JULY 2021: Rapid Response Network

Please see below a summary of the letters we sent to heads of state and other high-level officials in **Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico**, urging their swift action in response to human rights abuses occurring in their countries. We join with civil society groups in Latin America to:

- protect people living under threat
- demand investigations into human rights crimes
- bring human rights criminals to justice

IRTF's Rapid Response Network (RRN) volunteers write six letters in response to urgent human rights cases each month. We send copies of these letters to US ambassadors, embassy human rights officers, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, regional representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and desk officers at the US State Department. To read the letters, see <https://www.irtfcleveland.org/content/rrn> , or ask us to mail you hard copies.

Rapid Response Network (RRN) letters this month

JUL 1 2021

COLOMBIA

community leader Diana María Jaramillo Henao assassinated in Bello, Antioquia

We wrote to the president and attorney general of Colombia about the alarming rate of assassinations of social leaders across Colombia, now at 80 for this year. **Diana María Jaramillo Henao** became one of the latest victims on June 20. Diana Jaramillo (age 49) was dedicated to community work in the 5 Estrellas neighborhood of La Gabriela, municipality of Bello in Antioquia Department. She was murdered along with a married couple: Wilson Alfonso Zapata Guisao (age 51) and Nubia Isleny Pérez Cárdenas (age 50). Police reported the discovery of their bodies put in bags and sealed with tape. We are urging authorities in Colombia to: (1) conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the killing of Diana María Jaramillo Henao, Wilson Alfonso Zapata Guisao, and Nubia Isleny Pérez Cárdenas, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice, (2) seek all necessary strategies to guarantee the life and integrity of social leaders in Antioquia, in strict accordance with their wishes

JUL 2 2021

COLOMBIA

Assassinated: campesino coffee farmer and community leader Ángel Miro - disappeared, tortured, killed

In a letter to the president and attorney general of Colombia, we expressed our outrage at the alarming rate of assassinations of social leaders across Colombia, especially in Antioquia Department. Social leader Ángel Miro Cartagena Correa, a member of Community Association of High Quality Coffee Producers of Dabeiba (APROCAD), went missing on June 14. His tortured body was found in the Urama River in the rural area of Dabeiba municipality, Antioquia, on the afternoon of June 20.

We are urging authorities in Colombia to (1) conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination of Ángel Miro Cartagena Correa, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice; (2) seek all necessary strategies to guarantee the life and integrity of social leaders in Antioquia, in strict accordance with their wishes; (3) join with the National Commission of Security Guarantees to establish and implement policies that will identify, prosecute, and dismantle the intellectual authors, financiers, and members of the neo-paramilitary and other criminal groups that are continuing to interfere with the implementation of the peace process.

JUL 3 2021

MEXICO (Oaxaca)

assassinated: journalist Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera shot dead in front of his teenage son

The climate for journalists in Oaxaca is extremely dangerous. There is documentation of six journalists killed throughout Mexico in 2020; five of those were in Oaxaca. Journalist **Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera** is the latest victim. On June 17, two unidentified people driving a car near the town of Morro Mazatán, Oaxaca, crashed into him while he was traveling on a motorcycle with his 15-year-old son. Gustavo Sánchez and his son fell from the motorcycle. The attackers then exited their car and shot and killed Gustavo Sánchez, riddling him with bullets. The municipal police in Tehuantepec reported that at least 15 9-millimeter bullet casings were found at the scene of the crime. The journalist received at least one gunshot to the head.

We are urging officials in Mexico to

-carry out a thorough, exhaustive and impartial investigation into the assassination of Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators to justice

- review protection programs for reporters and human rights defenders, and take all necessary protection measures to guarantee the safety of journalists in Oaxaca, in strict accordance with their wishes
- conduct an internal investigation into why Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera had not yet received the protection assigned to him by the *Mecanismo de Protección de la Secretaría de Gobernación*

JUL 4 2021

HONDURAS

assassination plot: Dr. Ligia Ramos, president of the Medical Association of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS)

We wrote to officials in Honduras regarding ongoing death threats to Dr. Ligia Ramos, who as president of the Medical Association of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS), has been publicly critical of the government, especially its disinvestment in the public health system. Now living in exile with her children, Dr. Ligia Ramos is campaigning for a seat in the national legislature.

We are urging that authorities in Honduras:

- carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into the threats to the life of Dr. Ligia Ramos, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice
- implement the necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Dr. Ligia Ramos, in direct consultation with her
- protect the democratic process by working to immediately halt all threats and assassinations of political candidates, poll workers, and journalists, as have been well documented since the military coup in 2009.

JUL 5 2021

COLOMBIA

police violence: riot police beat two radio journalists documenting police violence as popular demonstrations continues

On June 29, the Bogotá-based Foundation for Freedom of the Press (FLIP), announced that it was investigating 240 attacks on members of the press amid demonstrations that have been ongoing for the past two months, including 138 attacks by police. Two of those assaults happened on that very day. In Bogotá, police officers of the ESMAD unit (*Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios*, or Anti-Riot Squad) assaulted two journalists while they covered protests for the independent broadcaster RCN Radio. **Katy Sánchez**, a reporter, and **Alexandra Molina**, an intern, were attacked by police officers while they were filming ESMAD police beating and kicking a youth during the demonstration. One officer

shoved Katy Sánchez to the ground with his shield, kicked her in the back, and hit her with his nightstick, leaving her with a badly sprained left ankle and bloodied knees—injuries that would prevent her from working for at least a week. We demand that the government of Colombia protect both the demonstrators and journalists who are reporting on their legitimate activities—activities that should be protected by their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

JUL 6 2021

MEXICO (Chiapas)

assassinated: 35-year-old Indigenous human rights defender Simón Pedro Pérez
***"This peace that we long for is not to remain silent, quiet or calm, it is pronouncement and denunciation; it is collective action."* - Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Center for Human Rights** #JusticiaParaSimonPedro @AbejasDeActeal

At around 10:00am on July 5, Indigenous human rights defender **Simón Pedro Pérez López** was shopping with his youngest son at the outdoor market in Simojovel, Chiapas State, when an attacker riding on a motorcycle shot him in the head.

The 35-year-old father of four was a catechist at Santa Catarina Catholic Church in Pantelhó municipality. Long active as a human rights defender in the highlands of Chiapas, last year he served as president of the board of directors of *Las Abejas de Acteal*, a Christian, pacifist, anti-neoliberal grassroots organization. He recently accompanied Maya Indigenous Tzotzil residents who are requesting action from their local government to hold back armed groups who are extorting families and forcing some off their land.

We are urging authorities to

- investigate the assassination of Simón Pedro Pérez López, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- adopt protection measures for members of Las Abejas de Acteal (including members of the family of Simón Pedro Pérez López), in strict accordance with their wishes
- in consultation with members of Las Abejas de Acteal, take measures to dismantle criminal organizations that are operating in the Los Altos de Chiapas region

Rapid Response Network

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