

Excmo. Sr. Presidente Iván Duque Márquez President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co	Sr. Fiscal General Francisco Barbosa Delgado Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co
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September 11, 2021

Dear Sirs:

We are saddened to learn of the assassination of student leader and journalist **Esteban Mosquera**, age 26, on August 23 in Popayan, Cauca Department. The assassination occurred just several yards from the Humanitarian Refuge for Life meeting, which had been organized by social activists and former combatants with the aim of strengthening human rights and peace.

During the past several months, Esteban Mosquera had played an organizing role in the protests over inequality and state violence. Demonstrators drew links between these protests and the massive demonstrations in November 2019 over a host of issues: earlier tax increases, assassinations of social leaders, official corruption, inequality, and weak implementation of the November 2016 Peace Accords.


Because of his social activism, Esteban Mosquera had been placed in harm's way on previous occasions. He lost an eye in 2018 when, during student mobilizations demanding a larger budget for public universities, he was attacked by ESMAD (*Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios*, or Anti-Riot Squad police unit). In the three months of the national strike this spring, Institute for Peace and Development Studies (INDEPAZ) reports that 83 protesters suffered eye damage, along with at least 44 citizens murdered, and 1,832 people arbitrarily detained by police.

Video footage obtained from security cameras marks 5:46 in the afternoon on August 23 when Edwin Mosquera left his house in the La Pampa neighborhood to walk with his dog. Armed men on a motorcycle followed him. One of them was dressed in torn pants, a cap and a black jacket. The video shows passersby watch in amazement when they hear the gun shots, and in the background it is observed how the motorcycle turns where the hitmen escaped. We understand that three suspects were captured a few days later: Breiner Alexander Narváez Ruíz, Esteban Narváez Ramírez, and one minor.

We **urge** that you

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the killing of Esteban Mosquera, publish the results, and bring the perpetrators—including the intellectual authors—to justice
- continue official talks with the National Strike Committee (CPN), which represents various groups including indigenous people, unions, environmentalists and students, to discuss key demands
- stop stigmatizing protesters and suggesting that they are linked to armed rebel groups

Sincerely,


 Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator


 Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Francisco Santos Calderón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail
 Daniel Palacios Martínez, Minister of the Interior ~ via email
 IACHR: Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email, US mail
 UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
 US Embassy: Kristen Farrell (human rights) and Mariel Chatman (vulnerable populations) ~ via email
 US State Department: Christine Russell, Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 US Representatives Beatty, Gibbs, Gonzalez, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Ryan ~ via email

24 AUG 2021_Telesur_Colombia

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