

Francisco Palmieri, Chargé d'Affaires, *ad interim*  
US Embassy in Colombia  
Carrera 45 No. 24B-27  
Bogotá, D.C. Colombia

June 26, 2024

Dear Chargé d'Affaires Palmieri,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the recent assassination attempt on **María Eugenia Mosquera Riascos**, a renowned human rights defender, on May 22 in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department.

María Eugenia Mosquera Riascos is a member of the Mesa de Acceso a la Justicia, Víctimas, Protección y Memoria (Roundtable for Access to Justice, Victims, Protection and Memory), which participates in the Comité del Paro Cívico de Buenaventura (Buenaventura Civic Strike Committee). She serves as the legal representative of Comunidades Construyendo Paz en Colombia (CONPAZCOL), a network of grassroots organizations composed of victims of Colombia's armed and social conflict, dedicated to building peace across 12 departments. CONPAZCOL has many international partners, including the US-based Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective and Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) Peace Presence.

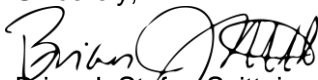
For over a decade, María Eugenia Mosquera has been accompanying peace-building efforts in the Pacific region of Colombia. With leaders of the Community Council for the Afro-Colombian communities on the Naya River, she has documented testimonies for the Truth Commission about the impacts of the armed conflict in ethnic communities. She has monitored and documented cases of forced recruitment by armed structures in the urban area of Buenaventura. In 2020, she helped to facilitate community activities in Buenaventura for the restitution process of collective territory for the La Esperanza Community Council.

This recent attack on María Eugenia Mosquera Riascos is not an isolated incident. Over the past year alone, five leaders and members of CONPAZCOL have been murdered, underscoring the grave dangers faced by those striving for peace and justice in Colombia. Many more have received threats for their unyielding efforts to support victims and foster peace in their communities. María Eugenia Mosquera Riascos has been threatened before.

As members of CONPAZCOL call upon their government for urgent implementation of collective protection measures, we urge the United States Embassy in Colombia to:

- publicly condemn the assassination attempts and murders of CONPAZCOL members, emphasizing the urgent need for their protection and the importance of their work in the peace-building process
- press the Colombian government to implement comprehensive and effective collective protection measures for human rights defenders, especially those involved with CONPAZCOL and other vulnerable organizations.
- increase support and resources for programs that strengthen the security and capacity of grassroots organizations in Colombia, ensuring they can continue their vital work without fear of violence or intimidation.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego, President of Colombia ~ via email  
Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo, Attorney General of Colombia ~ via email  
Luis Gilberto Murillo Urrutia, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via email, US mail  
José Luis Caballero Ochoa, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail  
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email  
US Embassy: Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email  
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email  
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance and US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

25 JUN 2024\_WitnessForPeace\_Colombia

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