

<p>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego President of the Republic of Colombia contacto@presidencia.gov.co</p>	<p>Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo Attorney General of Colombia despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</p>
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September 26, 2024

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We are writing today expressing our sadness and outrage over the assassination of human rights defender **Carlos Andrés Ascué Tumbo**, a 30-year-old Nasa Indigenous guard and anthropology student at the University of Cauca. He was shot and killed at a gasoline service station in the El Pescador district of Caldono municipality, Cauca Department, at around 4:30 p.m. on August 29 while he was on his way to pick up his wife and daughter from a swimming class. "Lobo," as he was affectionately known by friends and family, had been serving as coordinator of the Indigenous guard and pedagogical coordinator of the Local Educational Council of the Pueblo Nuevo Indigenous Reservation in the Indigenous territory of Sa'th Tama Kiwe.


Carlos Andrés Ascué Tumbo had been receiving threats from illegal armed groups. The Ombudsman's Office had already issued early warnings about the dangers faced by human rights defenders because of criminal structures operating in Caldono, including the groups Dagoberto Ramos Ortiz, Jaime Martínez and others from the western bloc Jacobo Arenas. He had filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office, made a statement to the Public Prosecutor's Office, and requested individual protection measures from the National Protection Unit (UNP). To our knowledge, the UNP did not assess the seriousness of his situation and did not grant protective measures to Carlos Andrés Ascué Tumbo.

With continued high rates of violence against Indigenous leaders and other human rights defenders in Cauca, it is essential that the government respond to requests for protection. The Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz) has reported that 115 social leaders have been murdered in Colombia to date in 2024; northern Cauca is an especially dangerous region.

We urge that authorities in Colombia

- conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination of Carlos Andrés Ascué Tumbo, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice
- provide protective measures to Indigenous leaders and other human rights defenders in Cauca, in strict accordance with their wishes

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: Augusto Rodríguez Ballesteros, Director de la Unidad Nacional de Protección / Director of the National Protection Unit (UNP) ~ via email
Daniel García-Peña, 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
Arif Bulkan, Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email, US mail
CRIC: Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca / Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca ~ via email
Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy: Francisco Palmieri (Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Brown & Vance ~ via email
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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