

<p><b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Gustavo Petro Urrego</b> President of the Republic of Colombia <a href="mailto:contacto@presidencia.gov.co">contacto@presidencia.gov.co</a></p>	<p><b>Sra. Luz Adriana Camargo</b> Attorney General of Colombia <a href="mailto:despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co">despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co</a></p>
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October 24, 2024

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are deeply distressed over the recent assassination of **Roxenda Sanguino Aguilar**. An active social leader, she had served as president of the Community Action Board of the Santa Rosa neighborhood of Barranco de Loba, Bolívar Department. She remained active supporting their work despite having stepped down from that position. She had also previously served as president of the Community Action Board of the Buenos Aires neighborhood of El Banco, Magdalena Department, which was her original hometown.


At the young age of 43, Roxenda Sanguino Aguilar became the 123rd social leader assassinated in Colombia this year. Roxenda, who was not known to have any enemies, had been missing since the morning of September 28. Her body was found the following day in the El Torito sector. There were several gunshots to her body and face.

Barranco de Loba has been the site of violence against other social leaders. This area, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Second Division of the Army, has at least two illegally armed groups active in armed conflict: the National Liberation Army (ELN, Ejército de Liberación Nacional) and the Gaitanista Army of Colombia (EGC, Ejército Gaitanista de Colombia, formerly known as the Clan del Golfo). The region has been plagued by violence and insecurity; social leaders are often targeted by the violence. In March 2022, a former Community Action Board president, Eduardo Emilio Vanegas Mendoza, was assassinated there.

Because of the assassination of Roxenda Sanguino Aguilar and concern for the safety of other social leaders in Colombia, we call upon your integrity and humanity to:

- carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into the intellectual and material actors in the assassination of Roxenda Sanguino Aguilar, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice, in accordance with international standards
- destroy the culture of impunity of crimes against social leaders
- guarantee that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of restrictions or reprisals in Colombia

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

  
Christine L. Stonebraker-Martínez

copies: 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  
Roberta Clarke, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women and LGBTI Persons, 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: 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:**