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| <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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March 25, 2025

Dear President Petro and Attorney General Camargo:

We write you in anger and sadness over the assassination of labor leader and environmental defender **Jaime Alonso Gallego Gómez**, age 57, in the El Jabón region of the municipality of Vegachí, Antioquia Department.

On March 3, Jaime Gallego, better known by his nickname Mongo, and his bodyguard Didier Berrío were reported disappeared when the GPS tracker of their National Protection Unit (UNP) vehicle was deactivated as they were traveling to a meeting in Vegachí. Six days later, after gunshots were reported in the early morning of March 9, Jaime Gallego was found dead. Many suspect that the illegal armed group Clan del Golfo (also known as Gaitanista Army of Colombia, or EGC) could be responsible.

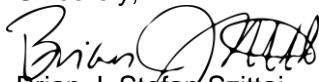
Jaime Gallego, a native of Segovia, was committed to preserving artisanal mining in Colombia. He began working as a *baharequero* (gold picker) at age 12. As an adult, he became a union leader, advising mining workers and helping to form unions in 45 municipalities in Antioquia. He was also part of a departmental committee seeking to propose reforms to the Mining Code. As a founding member of the Segovia and Remedios Mining Roundtable, Jaime Gallego led the ancestral mining movement in his hometown for decades, working to defend his community against the multinational, profit-oriented mining companies like Frontino Gold Mines that control and exploit the natural resources in northeastern Antioquia.

The assassination of Jaime Gallego is only one of the many violent attacks and murders of social leaders in efforts to silence their voices and continue exploiting environmental resources. Despite previous threats of assassination, Jaime Gallego persisted. Tragically, on March 9 he became the 33rd social leader assassinated in Colombia during the first quarter of 2025.

We strictly condemn the assassination of Jaime Alonso Gallego Gómez and urge that you:

- conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Jaime Alonso Gallego Gómez, publish the results and bring the perpetrators to justice
- provide protection measures for environmental defenders in northeastern Antioquia, in strict accordance with their wishes
- make efforts to remove illegal armed groups that are harming communities in Vegachí
- cease the operations of multinational mining companies that are causing environmental harms

Sincerely,


Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinators


Christine L. Stonebraker-Martinez

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
UN: Juliette De Rivero, Representative in Colombia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy: John McNamara (Chargé d'Affaires); Adam Levy (human rights) ~ via email
US State Department: Desk Officer for Colombia ~ via email
US Senators from Ohio: Husted and Moreno ~ via email
US Representatives from Ohio: Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Rulli, Sykes ~ via email

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