

URGENT ACTION

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

In late March, human rights defender Juan Carlos Gaona, a member of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace in northern Colombia, received a text message stating that an operation to murder him in Sincelejo, Sucre department, had been frustrated by chance due to the presence of an Army truck near the place where he was holding a meeting, but warned he would not be as lucky next time. This death threat highlights the urgent need for stronger protection for members of this organization across the country. We call on Colombian authorities to comply with international measures ordering it to protect the organization.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **Second UA 105.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio

Palacio de San Carlos, Calle 10 # 5-51, Bogotá

Email: contactenos@cancilleria.gov.co

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

**CC: Colombian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Daniel García-Peña Jaramillo**

1724 Massachusetts Ave, NW,
Washington, DC 20036

Email: eeestadosunidos@cancilleria.gov.co

Dear Mrs. Minister,

I am concerned about the serious risks to life, safety, and security of the **members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace**. This human rights organization, with teams deployed across different regions of Colombia, has faced serious security incidents in recent months whose gravity is overwhelming the protection currently provided by the Colombian authorities.

At the end of 2025, the organization denounced several serious security incidents threatening both the safety of its members and the continuity of their human rights work. On March 27, 2026, human rights defender **Juan Carlos Gaona**, a member of the Inter-Church Commission, received a text message stating that an operation to murder him in Sincelejo, Sucre department, had been frustrated by chance. The message described Gaona's recent activities, revealing that he was under surveillance, and warned that he would not be as lucky next time, constituting a death threat. While some attacks were prevented by members of the National Protection Unit (UNP) assigned to protect the organization, further security incidents continue to occur, even on territories left out of the current protection measures. This demonstrates the urgent need to strengthen and adapt the organization's protection measures to the nature and geographical scope of its work.

I urge you to ensure that Colombia complies with its international obligations, as established in the Precautionary Measure 629-03 of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, requesting Colombia adopts all necessary measures, in coordination with the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, to protect the life and safety of the organization's members, and enable them to continue their human rights work throughout different high-risk areas of Colombia.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The [Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice](#) has defended human rights in Colombia for more than three decades. Working in several regions of the country, located in the departments of Antioquia, Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Putumayo, and Meta, most of them among those affected the most by armed conflict, inequality, discrimination, and other systemic issues. The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice has supported individuals, families, and communities in their calls for the respect and fulfilment of their civil, political, economic, cultural, and environmental rights.

Defending human rights in Colombia is a high-risk endeavor. The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice's history is a testament to it. Because of their work, the organization and their members have been subject to threats and attacks both by State and non-State actors. The organization has documented all these events and demanded protection by Colombian authorities and received precautionary measures via the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Despite this and a recent request for the strengthening of the security measures provided by the National Protection Unit, the Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice has reported several failures in the vehicles assigned to them and delays in their maintenance and the general weakening of the protection measures. The protection provided by the authorities fall short of covering the entire team of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace, which is deployed across different areas of Colombia and constantly on the move due to the organization's work with communities affected by violence.

The Inter-Church Commission for Peace and Justice work in some of the most marginalized regions in Colombia. Not having guarantees for their safety not only negatively impacts the exercise of their right to defend human rights but also impacts people and communities who benefit from engaging with them. It is also part of a wider trend of closure of the space to defend human rights in the country that needs to be urgently addressed by a government who vowed to protect human rights defenders.

Despite [public denunciations](#) by the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace regarding the threat against Juan Carlos Gaona, as well as direct requests to the Colombian authorities, the organization is still awaiting an effective response in accordance with the level of the threat.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: August 7, 2026

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/colombia-the-inter-church-commission-for-justice-and-peace-must-be-protected/>