



Concern over death threats against lawyers Alirio Uribe, Yessika Hoyos Morales and three MOVICE members

The undersigned organisations, members of the IX International Caravana of Jurists to Colombia, express their serious concern about death threats against human rights lawyers Yessika Hoyos Morales and Alirio Uribe, and three members of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MVICE), Candelaria Barrios Acosta, Malena Martínez Montoya and Juan David Díaz Chamorro. The threats appear to be linked to their involvement in proceedings concerning the killings of three men in La Guaripa, Sucre. We call on the Colombian authorities to promptly and effectively investigate the threats, ensure the safety of those targeted and guarantee that lawyers can carry out their professional duties without intimidation or reprisals.

Background

Yessika Hoyos Morales and Alirio Uribe are human rights lawyers with the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (CAJAR), who have dedicated their careers to represent victims of state crimes. Among other cases, they have represented the family of three men killed on 25 January 2018 in La Guaripa, Sucre. In September 2026, the Higher Tribunal of Sincelejo convicted the former director of the Sucre Family Compensation Fund (Comfasucre) and sentenced him to 27 years' imprisonment for ordering the killings.

Following the conviction, on 18 October 2026, Yessika Hoyos Morales, Alirio Uribe and Candelaria Barrios Acosta [received a message](#) on their mobile phones containing death threats against them and two other MOVICE members, Malena Martínez Montoya and Juan David Díaz Chamorro. The message warned that, if the convicted former official were sent to prison, they should “buy the coffins” and remain silent. It also stated that they were being monitored.

Risks faced by lawyers in Colombia

Since 2008, our organisations have repeatedly documented the risks and obstacles faced by lawyers in Colombia in carrying out their professional duties independently and safely through the biennial fact-finding missions of the Colombian Caravana of Jurists. During the 2026 mission, lawyers [reported](#) continued stigmatisation based on the people, communities and causes they represent, as well as threats, territorial restrictions imposed by armed actors, surveillance and digital violence. The Caravana also documented concerns about the lack of effective investigations into threats and attacks against lawyers and human rights defenders.

The risks faced by human rights defenders in Colombia have also been recognised by the Constitutional Court. In Judgment SU-546 of 2023, the Court declared an unconstitutional state of affairs in response to persistent, widespread and serious violations of the fundamental rights of social leaders and human rights defenders, as well as the inadequacy of the State's institutional response to protect them. The judgment recognised the structural nature of the challenges faced by those defending human rights and the need for effective measures to address them.

CAJAR members have faced violence, harassment and threats since the 1990s, including extensive monitoring by the former Administrative Department of Security. Between 2002 and 2010, several of its lawyers went into exile to protect themselves and their families. On 18 March 2024, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights [held](#) Colombia internationally responsible for the harassment and persecution



of CAJAR members over several decades, finding violations of, among other rights, their rights to life, personal integrity and privacy. The Court's judgment recognised the serious and sustained impact of these acts on CAJAR members and their work defending human rights, and underscored Colombia's obligation to provide redress and adopt measures to prevent similar violations from recurring.

Violation of international obligations

Colombia is bound by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR). These instruments require the State to protect the rights to life, liberty and security of the person (ICCPR Articles 6 and 9; ACHR Articles 4 and 7) and to provide effective remedies for violations (ICCPR Article 2(3); ACHR Articles 8 and 25). Where the authorities are aware of credible threats, they must take appropriate measures to protect those at risk and conduct prompt, effective and impartial investigations.

Furthermore, the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers further provide that governments must ensure that lawyers can perform their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (Principle 16); adequately safeguard lawyers whose security is threatened as a result of their professional activities (Principle 17); and refrain from identifying lawyers with their clients or their clients' causes (Principle 18).

Similarly, Article 12(2) of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders calls on States to protect human rights defenders against violence, threats, retaliation and other arbitrary action resulting from their legitimate exercise of human rights.

The threats against the lawyers and the three MOVICE members, which appear to be linked to their involvement in the La Guaripa proceedings, raise serious concerns regarding Colombia's compliance with these international obligations. Such threats not only endanger the individuals concerned but also undermine the independence of the legal profession and the right of victims to access justice and an effective remedy.

Call on the Colombian authorities

In light of the above, the undersigned organisations express their solidarity with Yessika Hoyos Morales, Alirio Uribe, Candelaria Barrios Acosta, Malena Martínez Montoya and Juan David Díaz Chamorro, and call on the Colombian authorities to:

1. **Promptly, thoroughly, independently and effectively investigate** the death threats reported on 18 October 2026, including their connection to the individuals' involvement in the La Guaripa proceedings, and bring those responsible to justice in accordance with due process guarantees.
2. **Adopt immediate and appropriate protection measures** for Yessika Hoyos Morales, Alirio Uribe, Candelaria Barrios Acosta, Malena Martínez Montoya and Juan David Díaz Chamorro, in consultation with those affected, including by activating relevant prevention protocols and convening the appropriate territorial protection and guarantee bodies.
3. **Guarantee the safe and independent exercise of the legal profession**, in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, and ensure that lawyers can represent victims of human rights violations without intimidation, stigmatisation or reprisals.

Our organisations will continue to monitor this situation and urge the Colombian authorities to ensure that all lawyers and human rights defenders in Colombia can carry out their professional duties without



fear of threats, harassment, reprisals or undue interference, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Signatories

Colombian Caravana UK Lawyers Group

Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L)

Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE)

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC)

International Observatory of Lawyers at Risk (OIAD)