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### **Colombia: Killing of human rights defender Narciso Beleño**

On 21 April 2024, campesino social leader and human rights defender **Narciso Beleño** was shot dead while entering his house in the town of Santa Rosa, in the region of Bolívar, Colombia.

[Narciso Beleño](#), president of the Agromining Federation of the South of Bolívar and a member of the National Agrarian Coordinator (CNA), was a campesino leader and human rights defender. For more than three decades, he worked to defend the territory and campesino community of the south of Bolívar from the presence of paramilitary groups that isolated and forcibly displaced communities in the region. He was one of the leading advocates of agrarian reform in the country, promoting land restitution and the sustainable use of natural resources in the territory. In all of these roles, he tirelessly worked toward peacebuilding from and for the territories.

On the night of 21 April 2024, the human rights defender was entering his house in the town of Santa Rosa when an unidentified person shot him multiple times, killing him. Hours before his murder, he had spoken out against the continuous presence of paramilitary groups in the south of Bolívar, which had started a new incursion since 18 April 2024.

The Agromining Federation of the South of Bolívar had previously reported, on more than one occasion, that their leaders were receiving threats against their lives and safety. This federation has suffered attacks from paramilitary groups, including threats, disappearances, and killings, as well as persecution by state agents, including imprisonment attempts, investigations, and stigmatization by accusing them of being part of paramilitary groups. Since 2009, the leaders of the Agromining Federation of the South of Bolívar have been beneficiaries of precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) due to the high-risk situation they face.

After the killing of the human rights defender, more precisely on 22 April 2024, [the representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia condemned the murder](#) and acknowledged the importance of Narciso Beleño's work in defending human rights in San Lucas. The representative called on the authorities to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible for this killing. [The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia also condemned the murder](#) and called on the authorities to protect the social leaders working on peacebuilding efforts.

Front Line Defenders condemns the murder of human rights defender Narciso Beleño and expresses concern over the constant threats against human rights defenders, which are linked to their legitimate human rights work, particularly in the face of armed criminal groups in their territories. Front Line Defenders also expresses concern about the recurrent attacks against human rights defenders who are beneficiaries of protection measures and who had previously reported the high-risk situation they face.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the Colombian authorities to:**

1. Publicly condemn the murder of campesino social leader and human rights defender Narciso Beleño;

2. Launch an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the assassination of Narciso Beleño to identify those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal, and apply the sanctions provided by Colombian law;
3. Take measures to end attacks against human rights defenders in Colombia, allowing them to continue their activities in defense of human rights without fear of reprisals, in accordance with Colombia's international human rights obligations;
4. Provide effective protection measures to human rights defenders facing high-risk situations, adapted to their context, and respond swiftly to the concerning situation they face in the country.
5. Guarantee, in all circumstances, that all human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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