

URGENT ACTION

PROTECT JOURNALIST AT RISK

On 7 July 2021 a local civil society organization received confidential information about a plan to kill journalist José Alberto Tejada. Since 28 April, he has faced more than 14 security incidents including surveillance by unidentified men and a security forces official had treated with killing him. José Alberto Tejada's work has been crucial in denouncing human rights violations and crimes under international law by the security forces during the Colombian National Strike, in the city of Cali (West). We urge the National Protection Unit of the Ministry of Interior to provide him with appropriate protection measures with his agreement.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Alfonso Campos Martinez
Director of the National Protection Unit
Address: Carrera 63 # 14 – 97 / Primer Piso
Puente Aranda / Bogotá D.C. Colombia
Email: director@unp.gov.co

Dear Mr. Campos,

I am writing to express concern for the safety journalist José Alberto Tejada, director of the Colombian media outlet Canal2. José Alberto's work has been crucial in denouncing the human rights violations and crimes under international law committed by the security forces in the context of Colombian national Strike.

On 7 July, the Inter-ecclesial Commission of Justice and Peace (Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz) received confidential and credible information about an ongoing plan to kill José Alberto Tejada, including the fact that unidentified men collected 30 million of Colombian pesos to pay for his assassination.

Due to his work, José Alberto Tejada, has faced at least 14 different security incidents since national strike started, including surveillance by unidentified men and direct threats against his life. For example, on 4 June, a member of the Group of Special Operations (GOES) of the National Police threatened Tejada while he was covering the humanitarian situation in the area called "Paso del Aguante" in Cali saying: "you are good enough to shoot you" ("está bueno como para pegarle un tiro"). On 20 July, while José Alberto was covering the demonstrations on person of his protection team was shot three times, allegedly by an agent of National Police Mobile Anti-riot squad (ESMAD), wounding his shoulder, thigh, and knee. Also, José Alberto Tejada has been victim of stigmatization by high level public officials who have publicly accused him of spreading "fake news" to incite violence in Cali.

On 9 July 2021 José Alberto Tejada requested your office protection measures for him, his team and the premises of Canal2, that have not been issued yet, despite the serious risk faced by all these people.

Therefore, we urge you grant José Alberto Tejada appropriate protection measures that are result of a comprehensive risk assessment and that are agreed upon with him.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

José Alberto Tejada is a journalist and director of the Colombian media outlet Canal2. Since the beginning of the national strike, José Alberto has denounced the irregular and improper actions committed by the public forces against those who demonstrate peacefully in the city of Cali, epicentre of the national Strike.

Between June and August 2021 journalist José Alberto Tejada has been victim of security incidents that have put his life and physical integrity at serious risk. On 4 June, a member of the Group of Special Operations (GOES) of the National Police threatened Tejada while he was covering the humanitarian situation in the area called "Paso del Aguante" in Cali saying: "you are good enough to shoot you" ("está bueno como para pegarle un tiro"). On 20 July, while José Alberto was covering the demonstrations on person of his protection team was shot three times, allegedly by an agent of National Police Mobile Anti-riot squad (ESMAD), wounding his shoulder, thigh, and knee. On 7 August, around 1:30 am, members of his protection team observed a man on a red motorcycle drawing a gun near José Alberto Tejada's residence, the motorcyclist fled, dissuaded by the men providing voluntary protection to José Alberto.

José Alberto Tejada has been victim of stigmatization by high level public officials and armed groups who have publicly accused him of spreading "fake news" to incite violence in Cali. On 6 June, Senator María Fernanda Cabal shared on her Twitter account the publication of an account called "*Destructo II*" showing the image of José Alberto Tejada and accusing him of being responsible for the violence in Cali for spreading "fake news". On 20 August, a pamphlet declaring José Alberto Tejada as one military target, signed by people that identify themselves as "Black eagles- Bogotá DC Capital Block" (Águilas Negras, Bloque Capital D.C) was circulating in social networks and instant messaging applications.

Since 4 June, José Alberto has a self-procured protection scheme, staffed by former members of the Colombian security forces, who voluntarily donate their time to protect the journalist.

On 9 July, José Alberto requested precautionary measures to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and protection measures from the National Protection Unit (UNP) for him, his team, and the premises Channel 2. On 23 August, the UNP partially responded to the request. Nevertheless, the scheme proposed does not meet the security needs of Jose Alberto, his family, and his team.

On 19 August, [35 members of the Colombian Congress](#) asked the Ministry of the Interior and the UNP to provide protection measures for journalist José Alberto Tejada.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 22 October 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: José Alberto Tejada (he,him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a