

International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger

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<https://protect-lawyers.org/>



Press Statement

24 January 2022,

24 January 2022 : The Observatory takes action for the International Day of the Lawyer in Danger dedicated to Colombia

Every year on the 24th of January, the International Day of the Lawyer in Danger mobilises the international community to call on civil society to address the situation of lawyers at risk in a given country. Colombia was chosen because of the numerous abuses suffered by Colombian lawyers in their professional practice

In Colombia, lawyers are threatened by the State, cartels and paramilitary groups. Insecurity and impunity jeopardise the work of the defence. Lawyers, who face these extremely serious threats, are not protected by the state. *"During my career, I have been the victim of various attacks: surveillance, tracking, threats and even violent raids on my place of residence. I am not aware of any sanction for these acts. The murders of my colleagues have also gone unpunished,"* said Zoraida Hernandez, a Colombian lawyer in exile since 2019.

Francesco Caia, president of the Observatory, stresses that *"it is essential that Colombia establishes a bar association to protect its lawyers"*. The Colombian State shall consider the creation and regulation of an official and autonomous professional institution to promote and protect the independence of lawyers. The absence of a structured bar association prevents the collective representation of lawyers' interests.

The Observatory calls on the Colombian authorities to ensure the protection and support of lawyers.

Additional information:

The Observatory invites you to consult its leaflet on the situation of lawyers in Colombia available in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Italian](#) and [German](#) as well as the [report of the Coalition](#) for the Day of the Endangered Lawyer. Do not miss the video testimonies of Colombian lawyers: [Adil Meléndez](#), [Germán Romero](#), [Zoraida Hernández](#) and [Daniel Prado](#).

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Who are we ?

The International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger (OIAD for its french acronym) is an initiative of the French National Bar Council, the Consiglio Nazionale Forense, the Consejo General de la Abogacía Española and the Paris Bar. Launched in 2015, the aim of the OIAD is to defend lawyers threatened in the practice of their profession and to denounce situations that infringe the rights of the defence.