



Gabriela Panchana-Briones

+593-999-462929 gaby.pb@me.com gabypb.com causayefecto.com @EnVozAlta Ecuador

August 5, 2026

Honorable Members of the
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Washington, DC

To the Honorable Members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,

I am writing to express my strongest support for the candidacy of **César Ricaurte** as the next Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

I do so not only because of his long and widely recognized trajectory defending freedom of expression in the Americas, but also because I have personally witnessed the integrity, courage, and consistency with which he has stood alongside those whose rights have come under attack.

Since December 2025, I have been the target of an escalating pattern of state harassment in Ecuador. What began with stigmatization by public officials and coordinated campaigns of defamation evolved into criminal complaints, judicial harassment, digital attacks, threats, attempts to discredit my work, and ultimately a criminal conviction sentencing me to thirty days in prison for expressing an opinion on the social network X about a matter of undeniable public interest. Independent observers were prevented from accessing the hearing, and the case has become a troubling illustration of the growing misuse of criminal law to silence critical voices.

Throughout this process, **Fundamedios** documented these developments through successive public alerts, recognizing that they were not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of retaliation against freedom of expression. Those alerts reflected, with rigor and independence, how the attacks intensified over time, from stigmatization and judicial intimidation to criminal sanctions carrying a custodial sentence.

Behind that institutional response has been **César Ricaurte's** unwavering commitment to the defense of fundamental freedoms. His support was never conditioned by political convenience or ideological affinity. It was grounded on a simple but essential democratic principle: **no one should face persecution for expressing opinions on matters of public interest.**

For those of us who have experienced the progressive dismantling of constitutional guarantees through the instrumentalization of state institutions, that commitment is not an abstract virtue. It has tangible consequences. **When many choose silence in the face of intimidation, the willingness to speak clearly and consistently in defense of universal principles becomes an indispensable form of protection.**

The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression requires precisely those qualities. It demands technical expertise, profound knowledge of Inter-American standards, independence from political pressures, and, above all, **the moral conviction to defend freedom of expression regardless of who is responsible for violating it.**

Throughout his career, **César Ricaurte** has demonstrated those qualities consistently. His work has contributed not only to documenting violations but also to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting regional standards that protect journalists, communicators, activists, and citizens throughout the Americas.

For these reasons, and **based on my own direct experience as a survivor of escalating state harassment**, I firmly believe that **César Ricaurte** possesses the professional qualifications, independence, credibility, and ethical commitment required to serve with distinction as the next Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression.

I respectfully urge the Commission to give his candidacy its highest consideration.

Truthfully,

Gabriela Panchana-Briones
Political Communicator and Civil Rights Activist
@EnVozAlta Ecuador