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August 27, 2026

The Honorable President and Members
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C., USA

Via: <https://airtable.com/appsoTv7GcwMBf5QB/pagIL2YK3VJj2MEPQ/form>

Re: César Ricaurte's Candidacy for Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR/OAS

To Whom It May Concern,

We write to wholeheartedly support our colleague and friend Mr. César Ricaurte in his candidacy for Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR/OAS, during the public consultation period for candidates.

As founder and Executive Director of Fundamedios, based in Ecuador, Mr. Ricaurte confronts firsthand the very challenges he would be charged with addressing in this role. He has supported those navigating lawsuits aimed at harassment, state stigmatization, threats from those involved in organized crime, and the closing of civic space. This experience gives him an unusually direct and practical understanding, which will be of utmost value in his role as Special Rapporteur. Cesar's background has thus prepared him for directing an independent office, having never been beholden to serving a government. His analytical capabilities as to censorship in the Americas will be a decisive asset to the office. His experience over two decades building Fundamedios will help him build the office into a durable institution. The office will benefit from his credibility earned under pressure. Finally, his networks extends to the region as a whole, and so he is committed to and capable of a rapporteurship that serves every part of the hemisphere with equal rigor.

We write as attorneys at Searby PLLC, a Washington, DC boutique law firm known for representing individuals and organizations in complex civil and criminal matters. With experience in both the U.S. Department of Justice's Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Unit and as white-collar crime attorneys in the private sector, our work includes defending journalists and civil society actors against retaliatory litigation.

In that capacity, we have worked directly with César Ricaurte for the past three years as he sought and received our support for journalists targeted by SLAPP lawsuits. We can attest firsthand to his courage, intellectual rigor, and tireless diligence in defending press freedom even under significant personal and institutional risk. Cesar also an exceptionally kind and gentle person, whom we always look forward to seeing.

While we have done important work together during Cesar's time at Fundamedios, it would be wonderful for him to become Special Rapporteur to make the impact of his talents even greater.

We look forward to learning of your decision. If there is anything else we can do to assist, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

/s/Bruce H. Searby and Nicole Ledesma

Bruce Searby

Nicole Ledesma

Searby PLLC