

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to express our serious concerns regarding the intended reinitiation of aerial fumigation in Colombia amid reports that the Trump Administration has encouraged Colombia to restart the program.¹ We are opposed to any U.S. financial or logistical support for the planned resumption of aerial fumigation, which has not been shown to be effective in reducing coca cultivation and poses a significant threat to human health and fragile ecosystems.

In 2015, Colombia's Constitutional Court banned the use of aerial fumigation after the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer classified glyphosate, which was the key ingredient in Colombia's fumigation program, as "probably carcinogenic to humans."² More than two decades of glyphosate aerial fumigation caused devastating health outcomes for communities already disproportionately affected by the armed conflict, Colombia's small holder farmers and Afro-descendent, and Indigenous communities and the local ecosystems they protect, including the Amazon rainforest.

Colombia's Constitutional Court has established strict conditions for any potential renewal of aerial fumigation, including scientific proof that it wouldn't harm human health or the environment, meaningful consultation with affected communities, and that it only be used as a matter of last resort following voluntary crop substitution and involuntary eradication.

The proposed pilot project would target an initial area of 1000 hectares, or 2,471 acres, in the Amazonian department of Putumayo. Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella has stated he would then eradicate 330,000 hectares of coca crops, which exceeds the UN estimate of land currently under coca cultivation.³ In addition to the vast area targeted for fumigation, the Colombian government is also proposing to use glufosinate ammonium, which is designated by

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/11/world/americas/colombia-aerial-spraying-coca-crops.html>

² <https://www.iarc.who.int/featured-news/media-centre-iarc-news-glyphosate/>

³ <https://elpais.com/america-colombia/2026-08-28/de-la-espriella-tumba-la-norma-que-frenaba-la-aspersion-aerea-con-glifosato.html>

⁴ <https://www.riotimesonline.com/cocaine-economy-latin-america-2026/>

the WHO as a more hazardous pesticide than glyphosate.⁵ In fact, the European Union banned the use of glufosinate ammonium in 2018.

On September 12, an administrative court in Mocoa temporarily froze the pilot project, stating that it must meet the conditions set by the Constitutional Court before proceeding, and that as of now sufficient information has not been provided.⁶ The Colombian government has appealed this decision. As many local communities, Indigenous peoples, environmental organizations, medical professionals, and Colombian Congresspeople are speaking out against the aerial fumigation pilot proposal, the Trump Administration should refrain from pressuring the Colombian government to double down on a failed counternarcotics strategy.

Meanwhile, we urge the Trump administration to learn lessons from the past and understand that only through providing meaningful alternatives to coca production will slow its spread. No action was more harmful to U.S. efforts than the administration's illegal dismantlement of USAID. Prior to January 2025, USAID financed a series of activities in the Colombian Amazon supporting sustainable alternatives to coca cultivation and production.⁷ These programs designed to address the underlying economic insecurity faced by rural communities and to undermine the lure of illicit economies, such as sustainable agro-forest production, green tourism, and enforcement against environmental crimes, were abruptly eliminated and have not been replaced. The Trump Administration also violated appropriations law by cancelling \$25 million appropriated to Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities, the very communities that will be disproportionately affected by the reinitiation of ineffective aerial fumigation.

Given the hazards to human health and the environment in a fragile and crucial ecosystem, we respectfully ask you to respond to the following questions no later than November 13, 2026:

1. What has been the nature of the Trump Administration's support for aerial fumigation, and has the State Department urged the Colombian government to restart the program?
2. What specific commitments has the U.S. government made to provide financial or logistical support to Colombia's renewed aerial fumigation program?
3. In the case that the Colombian government carries out the proposed pilot program, what would the U.S. government's position be on the use of glufosinate ammonium in the Colombian Amazon?
4. What plans does the State Department have to replace past programming for alternatives to illicit economies, as previously supported by USAID funding?

Two decades of aerial fumigation intended to reduce coca cultivation did not prove effective over the long-term. We continue to oppose U.S. financial or logistical assistance to resume ineffective

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/11/world/americas/colombia-aerial-spraying-coca-crops.html>

⁶ <https://colombiareports.com/judge-suspends-colombias-aerial-fumigation-pilot/>

⁷ <https://usaid.com/colombia/our-work>

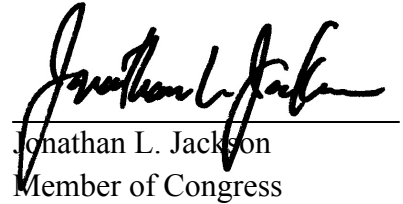
aerial fumigation programs, and strongly urge the Trump administration to respect Colombia's institutions and allow court challenges to proceed without intervention.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



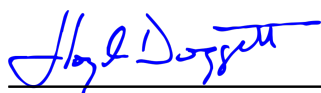
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



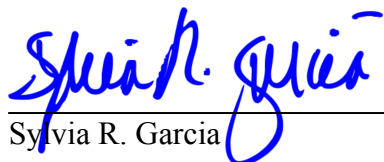
Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress