



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES  
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES MAGISTRATS  
UNIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE MAGISTRADOS  
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG DER RICHTER  
UNIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI MAGISTRATI

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*Grupo Iberoamericano – IBA - International Association of Judges – IAJ*

## Statement

### **On the Assassination of Magistrate Víctor Hugo Claire Hinojosa and the Serious Threat to Judicial Independence in the Plurinational State of Bolivia**

The Ibero-American Group of the International Association of Judges — an organization that brings together judges' associations from 94 countries around the world — expresses its firmest repudiation and deep institutional concern over the assassination of Magistrate **Víctor Hugo Claire Hinojosa**, a member of the Agro-Environmental Tribunal of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which took place in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

This crime cannot be understood merely as an act of individual violence. The assassination of a judge — and, even more so, of a high-ranking magistrate in the exercise of his public function — constitutes a direct attack on judicial independence, the Rule of Law, and democracy.

The national, regional, and international judicial community cannot remain indifferent in the face of an event of such gravity. When an attack is made against the life of a judge or magistrate, it is not only a person who is violently killed: a message of intimidation is sent to the entire judiciary, potentially conditioning the independent exercise of the judicial function and thereby weakening one of the fundamental pillars of every democratic society.

We express our solidarity with the family of Magistrate Claire Hinojosa, with the Bolivian judiciary, with the Association of Magistrates of Bolivia, and with all judges who currently perform their duties under conditions of fear, exposure, or vulnerability.

It is particularly alarming that this crime occurs in a context in which other acts of violence against justice operators in Bolivia have been reported, **without any serious effort by the Bolivian authorities to address the situation, to protect judges and**

**guarantee safe conditions for the exercise of their duties. In a short period of time, two judges have been killed. This recurrence reveals a grave and ongoing and unaddressed risk situation, tolerated by those who bear the responsibility to address it, and intolerable for justice.**

Judicial independence is a guarantee for citizens. It protects every person against abuse of power, arbitrariness, and any form of undue pressure. Therefore, every attack against the judiciary directly compromises the fundamental rights of the population and the effective validity of democracy.

Accordingly, the Bolivian State has an immediate and unavoidable obligation to adopt all necessary measures to prevent, investigate, punish, and redress acts of violence or intimidation against members of the judicial system. The lack of an effective response to events of this nature not only aggravates the vulnerability of the judiciary, but may also give rise to the international responsibility of the State which has the duty to guarantee real conditions of security.

**Likewise, it is essential that all public authorities, including judicial and administrative authorities linked to the governance of the Judiciary, refrain from acts, statements, or practices that may unduly expose judges, stigmatize them, or place them at greater risk before public opinion or pressure groups.**

Such practices are incompatible with international standards for the protection of judicial independence and must be eradicated with absolute responsibility.

For these reasons, we respectfully but firmly urge the Plurinational State of Bolivia — and, in particular, the Ministry of Government, the Office of the Attorney General of the State, the Council of the Judiciary, and all other competent authorities — to immediately adopt the following measures:

- 1. Conduct a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, and transparent investigation into the assassination of Magistrate Víctor Hugo Claure Hinojosa.**
- 2. Identify, apprehend, prosecute, and punish all material and intellectual perpetrators of this crime.**
- 3. Guarantee urgent and effective protection measures for the family of the murdered Magistrate.**
- 4. Adopt a comprehensive security plan for judges, magistrates, and other justice operators who are at risk.**

- 5. Refrain from any form of public exposure, targeting, pressure, intimidation, or delegitimization of judges by reason of the exercise of their judicial functions.**
- 6. Publicly report, with transparency and institutional responsibility, on the concrete actions adopted to protect the Bolivian judiciary.**

The gravity of these events demands an immediate, verifiable, and proportionate response by the State. Expressions of regret are not enough. The protection of the judiciary requires concrete, sustained, and effective action.

The International Association of Judges will continue to monitor with special attention the situation of the Bolivian judiciary and will promote the submission of these events to relevant international mechanisms including the Inter-American and universal human rights protection systems, as well as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

Finally, we reaffirm that the defense of judicial independence is the defense of democracy itself. Without independent, secure judges who are free from intimidation, there can be no impartial justice. And without impartial justice, the Rule of Law becomes an empty promise.

The life, dignity, integrity, and independence of those who administer justice must be protected as a matter of the highest institutional priority.

**San José, Costa Rica, May 2, 2026.**

**Mrs. Adriana Orocú Chavarría**  
President  
Ibero-American Group  
International Association of Judges

**CC:**

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights  
International Association of Judges  
International Organizations

