

via fax: 011 571 596 0631
Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos
 President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000
Sr. Fiscal General Eduardo Montealegre
 Attorney General of Colombia

December 12, 2016

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply troubled by recent death threats made by paramilitaries to seven human rights defenders in the Magdalena Medio region.

On November 26, a pamphlet signed by the paramilitary group Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) was distributed. It offered a financial reward to anyone who kills any of seven human rights defenders, social leaders of Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. The pamphlet also named and threatened their families. The human rights defenders are labeled as collaborators and sympathizers with the armed group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The human rights defenders threatened in the pamphlet are: **Iván Madero Vergel**, President of CREDHOS (Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights); **Lilia Pena Silva**, Coordinator of ASORVIMM-Magdalena Medio (Magdalena Medio Association of Victims of State Crime); **Melkin Hernán Castrillón Pena** of the National Secretariat for Human Rights of Rebellious Youth and Treasurer of ACVC (Peasant Association of the Cimitarra River Valley); **Miguel Cifuentes**, advisor to ACVC and to ANZORC (National Association of Rural Reserve Areas); **Eladio Morales**, a campesino leader member of ACVC. The pamphlet also threatened two members of the social and political movement Marcha Patriótica: **Himat Abdalá** and former senator **Piedad Córdoba**.

These human rights defenders are recognized activists who have campaigned in favor of the peace process and the implementation of the peace agreement between the government of Colombia and the FARC. A revised peace agreement between FARC rebels and the government was signed on November 24, two days before the AGC paramilitaries issued the threat.

To date in 2016, no less than 70 human rights defenders and social leaders have been killed in Colombia, in addition to 28 assassination attempts and 279 registered threats against these groups. Shot and killed in recent weeks were land and environmental rights defenders Erley Monroy, Didier Losada and Rodrigo Cabrera (cf our letter of November 24, 2016).

We continue to be gravely concerned for people carrying out legitimate human rights defense activities. We condemn this recent intimidation against these seven human rights defenders. We strongly urge you to:

- take immediate action to safeguard the safety and integrity of all human rights defenders named in the pamphlet, consulting them on the measures that are most adequate for their situation;
- take immediate action to investigate the origin of these threats and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinators

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 Andy O'Neal, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email onealRA@state.gov
 John Brandt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia and Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline_12/12/16_Colombia

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: