

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890 Sr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez President, Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 560 4630 Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega Minister of the Interior and Justice
via fax: 011 571 414 9108 Dr. Mario Iguaran, Attorney General	

June 26, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the lives of the members of human rights organizations who work on issues relating to communities forcibly displaced by the armed conflict. On May 20, an email from a group calling itself Colombia Free of Communists was sent to 20 organizations, including the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), labeling them communists and supporters of the left-wing guerrilla organizations FARC and ELN. Among the organizations that have received similar death threats are the human rights organizations COMPROMISO and the Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo," National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), Popular Women's Organization (OFP), and students and staff at the University of Antioquia and the Industrial University of Santander.

The email warns the organizations that "...we are to continue in power ... along with the legitimate Colombian armed forces clearing our countryside and cities of grovelers like you....with your issue of human rights..." The death threat also makes reference to the theft of computers on April 25 from the offices of various NGOs including the office of CODHES.

We believe that these threats and those received by CODHES and 25 other organizations prior to the presidential election are coming from army-backed groups that have supposedly demobilized but are continuing to operate under new names

We therefore **urge that you**

- take effective action, as deemed appropriate by the members of these organizations themselves, to protect them so they may safely continue their legitimate and important work in the defense of human rights;
- order full and impartial investigations into all threats against human rights defenders, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- in line with the human rights recommendations of the UN, order a full and impartial investigation into the links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, make the results public and bring to justice those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups;
- produce policy and plans, in conjunction with human rights defenders, to guarantee their safety according to the principles of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and make these plans public.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these grave concerns.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Andres Pastrana ~ via fax
William B Wood, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax
Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via fax
COMPROMISO ~ via US mail
U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email
U.S. Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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