

via fax: 011 571 566 20 71 Señor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez Presidente de la Republica de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 414 9108 Dr. Mario German Iguaran Arana Attorney General, Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 560 4630 Dr. Carlos Holguin Sardi Minister of Interior and Justice, Colombia	

February 11, 2007

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, continue to fear for the safety of **inhabitants** of the **Comunidad de Paz de San Jose de Apartado** (Peace Community of San José de Apartadó) in the municipality of Apartadó in Antioquia Department. Our fears have been heightened by fresh threats against the civilian community by army-backed paramilitaries. A number of witnesses living in the area reported that on January 15, 2007, they were approached by a group of 10 armed men who identified themselves as paramilitaries belonging to the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC). These paramilitaries demanded information about the Peace Community, its leaders and individuals working with the Peace Community, and told the witnesses that they were setting up a special group to attack the community.

Since the Peace Community was created in March 1997, over 160 of its members have been killed or have "disappeared," the vast majority at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies; the remainder at the hands of the FARC. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States has called on the Colombian authorities (most recently in a Resolution of March 15, 2005) to take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of inhabitants of the Peace Community. However, the Colombian authorities appear to have taken little action to implement the Court's requests. Paramilitary forces continue to operate in Antioquia Department despite having supposedly demobilized as part of a government-sponsored process. Paramilitaries continue to maintain a presence in the region despite heavy permanent army and police presence in the area.

In seven previous letters (November 2002-October 2006) we have advised you that we (and people around the world) are aware of the brutal and lethal persecutions suffered by the people of the Peace Community and of your government's strange absence of determination to end them. This is our eighth letter.

Again we urgently call upon your humanity to:

- take all measures deemed appropriate by Peace Community residents to guarantee their safety, in line with the Resolution issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States on March 15, 2005;
- conduct a full and impartial investigation into the paramilitary threats against members of the Peace Community, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take decisive action, in line with repeated UN recommendations, to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and to break their links with the security forces.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1 202 232 8643
 Sr. Volmar Antonio Perez Ortiz, Human Rights Ombudsman ~ via fax: 011-571-640-0491
 William B Wood, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011-571-315-2197
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3992
 U.S. Senators Brown and Voinovich ~ via email
 U.S. Representatives Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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