

Via fax: 011 571 337 4667 Dr. Carlos Franco Vice-presidency of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 571 428 0659 Coronel Efraín Oswaldo Aragón Director of Human Rights Programs of Police, Colombia
via email: alie@ejercito.gov.co Coronel Enrique Garay Saleg Head Office of Human Rights of Colombian Army	via fax: 011 571 640 04 91 Dr. Volmar Perez Ortiz National Human Rights Ombudsman, Colombia
via fax: 011 571 342 97 23 Dr. Edgardo Jose Maya Villazón National Solicitor General, Colombia	

February 16, 2007

After reports from the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT), we are extremely concerned for the safety of **Katherine Gonzalez Torres**, age 20, the sister of **Sandra Gutierrez Torres**, member of the leadership team of the Women's Popular Organization (Organización Femenina Popular - OFP). The OFP is an important partner in CPT's work in Barrancabermeja (Santander Department) and throughout the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia. Along with CPT, we ask for your help in resolving the disappearance of Katherine Gonzalez Torres.

On February 12, unidentified members of the army were involved in a presumed attempt to abduct **Aryan Alberto Pumarejo**. This attempt was denounced publicly by the Space for Workers of Human Rights in Barrancabermeja (ESPACIO). Because of these actions, we fear for the life and the physical integrity of **Katherine Gonzalez Torres**.

At 1:00 PM on February 13, **Katherine Gonzalez Torres** left her house in Barrancabermeja and called someone to report that she had arrived safely at work. Nothing more is known of her whereabouts. Currently the OFP, with the assistance of CPT, has exhausted their search for her.

We have written several letters urging Colombian officials to protect OFP members:

- June 13, 2002: the oil workers union (USO) was informed of a plot by paramilitaries (AUC) to kill Yolanda Becerra
- June 26, 2003: several OFP members, including Yolanda Becerra, were threatened
- October 26, 2003: Yolanda Becerra received a death threat in September, and paramilitaries murdered OFP member Esperanza Amaris Miranda on October 16
- February 13, 2004: armed men fired upon an OFP delegation as they sailed from Barrancabermeja to San Pablo, and OFP member Ines Peña was abducted and tortured by paramilitaries
- January 23, 2005: Yolanda Becerra, President of the Documentation Center at OFP, was again threatened
- June 26, 2006: threat to OFP by Colombia Free of Communists group
- July 2, 2006: threats to Gloria Amparo Suarez

Because of the pattern of threats, attacks and murders against OFP members, we demand that you:

- urge all competent government authorities (Police, Army, SIJIN, and DAS) to begin an immediate effort to locate and return Katherine Gonzalez Torres to her family alive and unharmed;
- take all measures (deemed appropriate by OFP members) to guarantee their safety;
- conduct full and impartial investigations into the threats made against Yolanda Becerra and other OFP members, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- conduct a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Santander Department and make the results of the investigation public.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

Copies: Organización Femenina Popular ~ via U.S. mail

Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 1 202 232 8643

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

US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Reps Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

CPT Feb 14 Colombia

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