

via fax: 011 57 1 342 0592 Sr. Alvaro Uribe Velez President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: : 011 57 1 342 0592 Sr. Fernando Araujo Perdomo Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Sr. Mario Iguaran Arana Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia	

May 15, 2007

We are extremely concerned about paramilitaries' threats to kill indigenous leaders in Riosucio municipality in Caldas Department. On May 5, a man called and asked to speak to **Dario Edgardo Tapasco**, the mayor of Riosucio. He said he was "Jhonatan," commander of the Cacique Pipinta Front, part of the paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). The civil official who answered told the man that the mayor was not available. The caller voiced death threats unless the mayor resigned by May 7.

At 7:30am on May 8, four men and a woman, thought to be paramilitaries, went to the house of **Carlos Alberto Gonzalez**, a well-known trade unionist and indigenous leader on the indigenous reservation of Canamono in Riosucio. They questioned him about the movements and activities of Tapasco.

In the following days, members of a paramilitary group went into the Canamono indigenous reservation, and told a member of the community to trick the reservation's governor, **Hector Jaime Vinasco**, into coming with him to a solitary place so they could abduct him.

Paramilitaries have spread rumors in the municipality that "no more indigenous people will be allowed in the mayor's office."

Even though the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights urged the Colombian government to provide protection to Riosucio residents, paramilitaries killed three indigenous leaders and seriously injured four others in June 2003. These recent incidents attest to the fact that paramilitary groups continue to operate, often using new names, although they have supposedly been demobilized under a government-sponsored process.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** you to:

- take effective action to protect Dario Edgardo Tapasco, Hector Jaime Vinasco and other indigenous leaders in Caldas Department who have been threatened by paramilitary groups;
- conduct full and impartial investigations into the death threats, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations;
- work with the United Nations and international organizations to implement a humanitarian and human rights plan in this area of the country that addresses the needs of Afro-Colombian rural and urban communities.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Carolina Barco Iskson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax
 William B Wood US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: (202)458-3992
 Corporacion Reiniciar ~ via US mail
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA110/07 Colombia

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