

# IRTF

InterReligious Task Force on Central America  
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via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 <b>Sr. Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> Presidente de la Republica de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Mario German Iguaran</b> Fiscal General/ Attorney General, Colombia
Via email: <a href="mailto:cefranco@presidencia.gov.co">cefranco@presidencia.gov.co</a> <b>Dr. Carlos Franco</b> , Director Presidential Program on Human Rights/DIH, Colombia	Via email: <a href="mailto:fsantos@presidencia.gov.co">fsantos@presidencia.gov.co</a> <b>Vice-President Francisco Santos</b> Colombia

September 22, 2005

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are deeply disturbed over news of the assassination of SINALTRAINAL leader **Luciano Enrique Romero Molina** in the city of Valledupar, Department of Cesar. On the morning of September 11, his dead body was found tied up, tortured and with 40 knife wounds.

Luciano, 47 years old, leaves 4 children and a partner, Ledys Mendoza. He had worked for 20 years at Nestlé–Cicolac in Valledupar. He was fired on October 22, 2002, for supposed strike activities declared illegal by the Ministry of Social Protection. A lawsuit for Luciano Romero's reinstatement is filed in the First Labor Court of the Valledupar Circuit against Nestlé de Colombia S.A., Cicola Ltda. and Dairy Partens Americas Manufacturing Colombia Ltda. (DPA Colombia Limitada).

Luciano was the current representative on the Foundation Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP) for SINALTRAINAL, the food and beverage workers union. He returned to Colombia in early 2005 after spending several months in Gijón, Spain, in a protection and solidarity program. He was living under the Protective Measures program of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States when he was assassinated.

We are aware that more labor activists have been assassinated in Colombia than all other countries combined (more than 4,000 since 1986), making it the most dangerous place to form a union in the world. We repudiate the assassination of Luciano Romero and all attempts by corporations to exterminate the trade union movement, ostensibly carried out within the strategy of state terrorism. In the past three years, we have written to Colombian officials in response to threats against other SINALTRAINAL leaders (July 30 2002, September 1 2003, March 14 2004.)

As adamant defenders of human rights, we are troubled by the efforts of the Colombian government to stifle political dissent and union organizing, and we question the "peace process" with the paramilitary groups who continue massacring unarmed people, while their crimes are protected by the total impunity of the "Justice and Peace Law."

Because of our distress at the assassination of **Luciano Enrique Romero Molina** and our concern for all members of all unions in Colombia, **we strongly urge you to:**

- Immediately conduct a full and impartial investigation into the assassination of **Luciano Enrique Romero Molina**, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Investigate all threats against union members and organizers, bring those responsible to justice, and initiate a meaningful dialogue with union members to determine how to protect them from attack;
- Work to improve the human rights situation for all union activists in Colombia.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos ~ via email; [cidhoea@oas.org](mailto:cidhoea@oas.org)  
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U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email  
U.S. Representatives Brown, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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