

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 Sr. Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez Presidente de la Republica de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 560 9946 Dr. Luis Carlos Restrepo Alto Comisionado Para la Paz de Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Dr. Mario German Iguaran Fiscalia General de la Nación de Colombia	

September 23, 2005

We are deeply concerned about the abduction by army-backed paramilitaries of **Olver Montoya Caceres**, **Evert Bonet Quintero** and **Cirro Navarro**, peasant farmers from the hamlets of Playas Ricas and El Paraiso in the municipality of El Carmen in Norte de Santander Department. They were abducted during raids on the area in which at least three others were killed. The lives of the three are in grave danger. Other inhabitants of the municipality may be at risk of attack and "disappearance" at the hands of paramilitaries.

In the early hours of August 30, a large number of paramilitaries ransacked homes in the hamlets of Playas Ricas and El Paraiso in the Catatumbo area of northeastern Colombia. In El Paraiso the paramilitaries killed **Dover Jaimes**, and abducted **Cirro Navarro**, who is still missing. In the adjacent hamlet of El Descanso the paramilitaries killed peasant farmer **Eduardo Garcia**. During the incursion into Playas Ricas the paramilitaries forced a man called **Omar** out of his home, shot him in the legs, stoned him to death and then sexually abused his wife.

Also in El Descanso, the paramilitaries abducted 11 children and 13 adults to act as human shields. The group was forced to walk for several hours to Los Corazones in the municipality of Curumani, Cesar Department. Once there, the paramilitaries released everyone except Olver Montoya Caceres and Evert Bonet Quintero, who remain missing.

These human rights abuses continue, despite the supposed demobilization of paramilitary units in the Catatumbo region, which took place between December 2004 and January 2005 as part of ongoing government dialogue with the paramilitary forces.

We strongly urge you to:

- Immediately conduct a full and impartial investigation into the "disappearances" described above, take all necessary action to find out where the abductees are and bring those responsible to justice;
- Conduct a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups in the Department of Norte de Santander, make the results public and bring to justice those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups;
- Immediately reveal steps being taken to protect the civilian population in the municipality of El Carmen in Norte de Santander
- Take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Luis Alberto Moreno, 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
 MINGA, non-governmental human rights organization ~ via U.S. mail
 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: