

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 011 57 1 342 05 92 <b>Sr. Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> Presidente de la Republica de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1565 7682 <b>Sr. Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon</b> Vicepresidente de la Republica de Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Mario German Iguaran</b> Fiscalia General/Attorney General, Colombia	

October 14, 2005

Dear Sirs:

The tragic history of the murders and “disappearances“ suffered by trade union people in Colombia justifies our very serious concern for the safety of **Mario de Jesus Castañeda**, a leader of the Huila Department branch of the Colombian Trade Union Confederation (CUT).

In this year alone, 37 trade unionists have been killed in Colombia. The vast majority of human rights abuses against trade unionists are committed by army-backed paramilitaries and the security forces. So there was immediate and ample cause for alarm when on September 22 the CUT office in Neiva, Huila, received an ugly and obscene letter addressed to Señor Castañeda containing a death threat signed by the Bolivia Central Bloc of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).

On September 20 Señor Castañeda had been searched and detained by police in Neiva. Documents he was carrying were photocopied. They contained information about an alleged rape committed by paramilitaries. People who report human rights violations by the security forces or paramilitaries are frequently the target of human rights abuses.

We urge the authorities to:

- ▶ implement all measures to guarantee the safety of Sr. Castañeda and all members of CUT in Huila
- ▶ initiate a full and impartial investigation into the threat against his life
- ▶ take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the U.N. and other intergovernmental agencies to break their ties to the security forces

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  
 Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los derechos humanos, non-governmental human rights organization ~ via U.S. mail  
 U.S. Senators DeWine and Voinovich ~ via email  
 U.S. Representatives Brown, Kaptur, Kucinich, La Tourette, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

UA 257\_05\_Colombia

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