

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 / 566 20 71
Señor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez
 Presidente de la Republica de Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 560 4630
Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega
 Ministro del Interior y de Justicia

November 27, 2004

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the safety of **Francisco Ramirez Cuellar**, president of the trade union of the National Mining Industry (SINTRAMINERCOL) and **Ludivia Giraldo**, head of SINTRAMINERCOL's human rights department. On October 10 at 1:30 pm when he and his nieces were walking to lunch in the Palermo district of Bogotá, two men on a high-powered motorcycle without number plates came towards him. Ramirez took cover immediately because the motorcycle stopped, and the passenger, who had a gun in his lap, was staring at him. Other vehicles honked, prompting the motorcycle to leave before they shot Ramirez. (Ramirez has survived other assassination attempts.)

On May 1 two men and a woman in a white Renault car kept watch on Francisco Ramirez and other people going into and out of the union's office in Bogotá. His bodyguards found out from the police that the people in the car were members of the national police intelligence unit on an assignment. The next day two bombs exploded at the SINTRAMINERCOL offices.

Ms. Giraldo was followed by four men in a yellow taxi on September 29 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.; this is the kind of surveillance and harassment which often precedes assassination attempts. Attacks are made against trade unionists who file complaints with the authorities about human rights violations committed in mining areas by security forces and their paramilitary allies. The Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists has not been effective.

Therefore we **urge you to**

- Take all necessary steps to ensure the protection and safety of Francisco Ramirez, Ludivia Giraldo and other SINTRAMINERCOL leaders;
- Conduct a full and impartial investigation into the threats and attempt on Francisco Ramirez's life, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Provide adequate resources for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists so they can provide more effective protection.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

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

