

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 Señor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez President, Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 562 7822 Dra. Maria Carolina Barco Isakson Minister of Foreign Relations, Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Dr. Mario German Iguaran Attorney General, Colombia	

April 13, 2006

Dear Officials:

We are deeply concerned about the murder of **Nelly Johana Durango**, 18 years old, a member of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, Antioquia Department. Nelly was abducted at 5pm on March 4 by the Colombian Army, who had forced her from her house in the La Resbalosa area of the Community. Her family members identified her body after the Attorney General's Office established that a body matching Nelly's description was in the Tierra Alta morgue in Córdoba Department. The army had claimed that the body was that of a guerrilla killed in combat.

Several hamlets organized themselves in 1997 to keep all armed groups—army, paramilitaries and rebels—out of their community. Since then, over 150 Peace Community members have been killed or "disappeared," the vast majority at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitaries allies, and the remainder at the hands of the FARC rebels. We have written at least seven previous letters (November 2002-March 2005) to Colombian officials protesting the on-going persecution of the Peace Community.

At the time of Nelly's abduction, members of the Peace Community were making plans to return to the hamlets of La Esperanza and Mulatos. Earlier attempts to return to abandoned lands have triggered attacks by the government security forces or their paramilitary allies.

As a result of our deep concern over the death of Nelly and for the safety of other members of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, we strongly urge you to:

- Immediately conduct a full and impartial investigation into the abduction and murder of Nelly Johana Durango and into the army claims that the body was that of a guerrilla killed in combat, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- Take all measures necessary to guarantee the safety of the Peace Community, as deemed appropriate by the community members themselves;
- Respect the right of the entire Colombian civilian population, including the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, not to be drawn into the long-running conflict in Colombia.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Dr. Francisco Santos, Vice-President of Colombia ~ via fax
Colombian Ambassador Andrés Pastrana Arango ~ via fax
US Ambassador William B Wood ~ via fax
Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax
Dr. Michael Frulin, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax
US Senators DeWine & Voinovich ~ via email
US Representatives Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

2006/03/27-UA 48/05 update_Colombia

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