

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890/0592  
**Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon**  
 Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 ext 2017  
**Dr. Mario Germán Iguaran Arana**  
 Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 444 2158  
**Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon**  
 Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia

March 23, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We are seriously concerned for the safety of the members of organizations involved in demonstrations organized by the **National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE)**. On March 6, a coalition of human rights organizations, trade unions, indigenous groups and other organizations participated in a series of demonstrations in more than 24 locations throughout Colombia and in 70 cities in 60 other countries around the world. The demonstrations condemned human rights violations committed by the Colombian security forces and army-backed paramilitary groups. Those who belong to organizations believed to be involved in the demonstration have been threatened or killed, both before and since the march.

On March 1, several organizations who participated in the March 6 events, received a death threat via email from the paramilitary Metropolitan Front of the Black Eagles in Bogotá; it accused them of being "guerrillas," naming them "military targets." The email said: "You used the march on March 6 this year to bring us down and turn people against us, we will begin to kill you one by one ..." The threat, which included photographs of one of the marches said "we will start to disappear left-wing leaders such as..." and listed 28 individuals – 18 of whom are women, many of them members of human rights, indigenous and other organizations that participated in the march. The threat also included the names of several human rights organizations, trade unions, and other groups.

The following individuals who were closely involved in organizing events or whose organizations participated in them, were killed or threatened just before or soon after March 6:

- On March 4, Carmen Cecilia Carvajal, a member of the trade union ASINORT was killed in Ocaña, Norte del Santander Department.
- On March 8, Leonidas Gomez, of the UNEB banking union, was found dead in his apartment in Bogotá.
- On March 7, Gildardo Antonio Gómez of the teachers' union ADIDA, was killed in Medellin.
- On March 12, the body of Carlos Burbano, a leader from the health union ANTHOC and organizer of the march in southern Colombia, was found dead in San Vicente del Caguan, Caqueta department.
- On February 28, Adriana Gonzalez, a member of the human rights group CPDH and organizer of the march in Pereira, Risaralda Department, survived an attempt on her life when gunmen fired on her house.
- Ivan Cepeda, a leading member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) and an organizer of the demonstration, received email death threats before and after the march.

In light of these facts **we strongly urge** you to:

- ensure that all measures, deemed appropriate by the individuals and organizations named in the threat issued on March 11, are taken to guarantee their safety;
- order full and impartial investigations into the killings of social activists and the death threat issued on March 11, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups and investigate and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Sr. Fernando Araujo Perdomo, Minister of Foreign Affairs - via fax: 011 57 1 562 7822  
 Corporacion Colectivo de Abogados 'Jose Alvear Restrepo' – via mail  
 Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Ambassador William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197  
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives, Kaptur, Kucinich, Latta, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email  
 UA 77/08 Colombia

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