

via fax: 011 57 1 566 20 71

Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011-571-266-0414

Dr. Juan Manuel Santos Arana

Minister of Defense, Colombia

December 6, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are deeply concerned for the welfare and safety of **Guillermo Salas**, owner of the Waterloo farm in the village San Rafael in the municipality of Ibagué, Tolima. Guillermo Salas is the father of several children and a respected resident of the village of Islandia in the municipality of Rovira.

On November 25, 2008, at 3:30 p.m., he and another campesino, Wilson García, manager of the Waterloo farm, were intercepted and detained by the National Army (Bolívar Company). On November 26, at 7:00 a.m., Wilson García was set free. Members of the National Army told him that he would be allowed his liberty provided he not mention anything about his detention and that he claim to know nothing about Guillermo Salas. As of December 2, neither family, friends, nor the organization "Association Of Campesino Workers Of Tolima" (ASTRACATOL), know anything about the fate of Guillermo Salas.

In the Department of Tolima, farming regions are becoming strongly militarized through the clamp-down resulting from the "Policy of Democratic Security." This policy has left hundreds of campesinos displaced and murdered, including Israel Gonzales, father of several children, who was assassinated by the National Army and later displayed as a guerrilla fallen in combat.

Because of our concern over the disappearance of Guillermo Salas, and for the safety of the other campesinos in the Tolima Department, **we strongly urge** that you:

- immediately begin the investigative process concerning the whereabouts of Guillermo Salas;
- immediately release Guillermo Salas, guarantee his well-being and safe return to his land;
- take all measures necessary to stop the persecution, threats, assassinations and campaigns of displacement against the campesinos of the Department of Tolima.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197
Susan Sanford, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
Javier Hernández Valencia, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571. 658-3300
Paolo Carozza, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

CLR12/4/08Colombia

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