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| Via fax: 011 57 1 565 7862 Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon Vice-President of Colombia | Via Fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 ext. 2017 Acting Attorney General of Colombia |
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August 13, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned because of the death threats emailed by the Black Eagles paramilitary group on July 31 to the following Colombian human rights defenders in the adjacent western departments of Risaralda and Quindio:

- **Guillermo Castano**, president of the Risaralda branch of the Permanent Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CPDH). He and other CPDH members in Risaralda have been the target of repeated threats and attacks in the past (See our letter of Mar. 23, 2008).
- **Mauricio Cubides**, a member of the Domingo Taborda Human Rights Collective, which makes documentaries on human rights issues. In early May 2009, he and a colleague were stopped by two men on a motorbike who took their camera and computer used in their documentary work.
- **Yezid Beltran**, director of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Early Warning System in the Eje Cafetero, the coffee growing region in Colombia. The Human Rights Ombudsman's Early Warning System is a government initiative aimed at preventing human rights abuses by those involved in Colombia's armed conflict. There have been a number of death threats against members of this organization.

The email of July 31 accuses the men of being "part of the subversive and terrorist structures in Quindio" and encourages supporters of the paramilitary group to "pursue them and kill them since we cannot allow the department of Quindio to become a focus for terrorist groups who, with documentaries and denunciations, want to disturb the peace of decent people."

In 2002 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) ruled that the Colombian authorities should take steps to protect members of CPDH in Risaralda. In light of the continued threats described above, we **strongly urge** that you

- guarantee the safety of Guillermo Castano, Mauricio Cubides, Yezid Beltran and other members of human rights organizations working in the Departments of Risaralda and Quindio, using all measures deemed appropriate by those at risk;
- conduct full and impartial investigations into the death threat received on July 31, 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: Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Risaralda ~ US mail
 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
 Nan N. Fife, 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 Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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