

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890 <b>Senor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 414 9108 <b>Dr. Guillermo Mendoza Diago</b> Acting Attorney General of Colombia
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February 14, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are seriously concerned for the welfare and safety of the leaders and members of the Bogotá-based women's human rights organization, **Corporación Sisma Mujer**, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that has been working for more than a decade to support and empower women working with communities driven from their homes by the internal armed conflict. On January 27, they and other human rights organizations doing similar work, received an e-mail death threat from the paramilitary group Central Bloc of the Black Eagles Truth and Death.

The email declared the groups "military targets" and threatened to kill them all. It also accused guerrilla leaders of hiding "behind the facade of NGOs and organizations of displaced people . . . under the banner of the human rights paradigm," thus hindering "the government's policies." The email included specific threats for a list of more than 30 people.

In October 2009, Corporación Sisma Mujer provided support for women who had negotiated with government representatives for a national meeting of women driven from their homes. Some of the organizations involved in this meeting received a paramilitary death threat from the Black Eagles on October 29. Corporación Sisma Mujer issued a press release condemning the threats on November 17.

These threats are further evidence of systemic attacks against the internally displaced population, which numbers between three and four million, human rights workers and other social organizations. Because security forces and paramilitaries often label them as guerrilla collaborators or supporters, they are threatened, disappeared or killed.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you:

- immediately provide effective protection for Corporación Sisma Mujer, in accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the threats described above, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- adhere to your obligations regarding the situation of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Sr. Diego Andres Molano Aponte, Director of Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation ~ via fax: 011-571-596-0800  
 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  
 Christian Salazar Volkman, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571-658-3300  
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3650  
 Rodrigo Escobar, Colombian member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202-458-3650  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
 US Representatives Bocchieri, 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:**