

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890/342 9592 Sr. Alvaro Uribe Velez President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011-571-570-2000 (ext 2017) Dr. Guillermo Mendoza Diago Acting Attorney General of Colombia
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July 15, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are **once again** deeply concerned about the situation in the **Peace Community of San José de Apartadó**, which consists of 28 small towns in the Urabá region of Antioquia Department. In the past two months, the following events have been reported to us from various towns in the Peace Community:

- May 23: Army soldiers entered the Resbalosa community's cane field and destroyed all the crop.
- June 26: A group of 200 paramilitaries from the Batata district entered the towns of Murmullo Alto and Alto Joaquin.
- June 28: The paramilitaries met with the people of Murmullo Alto and Medio, took the names, ages and location of the farms of all present, the names of their workers, their neighbors and their families. They informed them that they would now have to submit to the paramilitaries' orders. Those who refused would die.
- June 30: Four families from Murmullo Alto were displaced. Others are afraid because paramilitaries have set up checkpoints and can be seen on several roads.
- July 5: Army soldiers conducted a day-long "census" in the town of Porvenir. When told it was illegal, they laughed and said they could do whatever they wanted. Paramilitaries also held a meeting in the town of Osa adjoining Alto Joaquin, again took a "census" saying that if the Peace Community refused, they would kill the leaders and destroy the community.
- July 7: A paramilitary went to every house in Alto Joaquin, saying there would be a meeting in the next few days at which they would lay down the rules of how everybody would have to work for them.

Since 2002, we have faxed at least 16 letters to Colombian government officials regarding intimidation, harassment, threats and assassinations of residents of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó (1 in 2002, 3 in 2003, 2 in 2004, 3 in 2005, 2 in 2006, 2 in 2007, 2 in 2008, and 1 in 2009).

Now, in our 17th letter in 8 years, and because of our deep concern for the welfare and safety of all Peace Community members in San José de Apartadó, **we strongly urge that you:**

- start negotiations with the community leaders to protect its rights, its crops, and its community;
- order the Ministry of Interior and Justice; and the Human Rights Office to guarantee the physical security and welfare of **all** members of the Peace Community;
- publicly condemn the military and paramilitary structures that threaten the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all members of the Peace Community and create a strategy of concrete actions that will guarantee that they refrain from any further activity in the area.

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
 Nan N. Fife, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
 Christian Salazar Volkmann, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011.571.658.3301
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Colombia member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

7/13/10/CSN_Colombia

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