

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 Sr. German Vargas Lleras Minister of Interior and Justice of Colombia
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January 1, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the threats by paramilitaries to kill four women human rights defenders working in the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, as well as the paramilitaries' threats to other human rights organizations and a trade union. The threats followed events organized in the municipalities of Cali and Zarzal in Valle del Cauca Department to mark International Human Rights Day on December 10.

On December 11 **Martha Lucia Giraldo**, a member of the Valle del Cauca branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), which campaigns on behalf of victims of human rights violations, received a text message on her mobile phone which read: "You are the ones that do not allow development in this country, supporting families of guerrillas and depressing them with those stupid ideas of freedom; therefore you are on our death list." The message, signed by the paramilitary group Black Eagles New Generation, also threatened the human rights organizations Social Research and Action Association (NOMADESC), Committee of Solidarity for Political Prisoners (FCSP), and other human rights NGOs and indigenous leaders.

Cristina Castro of the FCSP also received a death threat on her phone, signed by the Black Eagles New Generation. Similar death threats were also sent to the mobile phones of NOMADESC director **Berenice Celeyta** and **Ayda Quilcue**, a former leader of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (CRIC), whose husband Edward Legarda was assassinated in December 2008. One of the text messages also threatened the Colombian University Workers and Employees Trade Union (SINTRAUNICOL).

These are the latest threats by paramilitaries against human rights defenders in Cauca and Valle del Cauca, including threats to CRIC leaders about which we wrote in 2009 (cf our letters of Jan 22, May 24, May 26, and July 2, 2009). We are again **urging that you**

- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats against members of MOVICE, NOMADESC, CSPP, CRIC, and SINTRAUNICOL who are working in the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide protection for those threatened, as agreed upon with those in danger;
- fulfill your obligations regarding the situation of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; and
- 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: Asociación de Investigación y la Acción Social (NOMADESC) ~ via US mail
 Gabriel Silva Luján, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 P. Michael McKinley, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197
 Terry Steers-González, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
 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 and Portman
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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