

Via Fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of Colombia	Via Fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 <b>Sr. German Vargas Lleras</b> Minister of Interior and Justice of Colombia
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June 10, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Franklín Torres, Ingrid Vergara** and **Pedro Geney**, members of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) in Sincelejo, Sucre Department. On May 19 they received a death threat by email from a group calling itself the Fuerza Anti-Guerrillera (Anti-Guerrilla Force). The subject line, which said "...you are in the spotlight there will be blood next week," was followed by text accusing them of being members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Beneath pictures of each person was the text: "...if you see her denounce her or even better kill her."

MOVICE has been campaigning for the return of lands in the Montes de María area of Sucre stolen by army-backed paramilitary groups. This work has included campaigning on behalf of agricultural workers for the restitution of the "La Europa" farm in Ovejas municipality; they are asking local authorities to remove the staff of the company Arepas Don Juancho, who invaded the farm in 2008 and have remained ever since.

On May 16, a member of the Colombian armed forces told MOVICE members Jakeline Moguea and Adolfo Verbel that it would be better if they stayed at home because there was information that someone who had received threats in the past was going to be killed. A relative of one of the alleged paramilitary killers of MOVICE member Eder Verbel Rocha (cf our letter of 4/6/11) said they were going to kill his family with poison; on May 17 the Verbel family dog was poisoned at their home in San Onofre municipality.

On May 20, MOVICE member Candelaria Barrios Acosta received a threat via text message: "...there is a plan to kill those who speak out YOU AND YOUR NEPHEW..." Her nephew is Franklin Torres, who is also a member of the board of directors of ASOTRACDES (Association of Sucre Peasants and Agricultural Workers.)

Members of MOVICE are under constant threat of attack; some of their members have been killed in recent years. This is our ninth letter in three years urging the Colombian government to protect members of MOVICE. Again, **we strongly urge** that you

- take all necessary steps to guarantee the safety of Franklín Torres, Ingrid Vergara, Pedro Geney, Candelaria Barrios Acosta, Jakeline Moguea, Adolfo Verbel and other members of MOVICE, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the threats described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- 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: MOVICE ~ 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: 011.571.315.0811  
 Terry Steers-Gonzalez, 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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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