

via fax 011 57 1 596 0631 or 011 57 1 337 5890/342/0592

Señor Juan Manuel Santos

President of Colombia

October 22, 2011

Dear President Santos:

We are extremely concerned for human rights activist **Principe Gabriel González Arango**, Regional Coordinator of the Colombian Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (CSPP), who was arrested August 18 in Pamplona, Norte de Santander Department, and is being held in the city's prison. He was with his sister in Bolívar plaza when he was approached by two armed men in plain clothes who said they were from the SIJIN, the national police's intelligence and investigation division. When they asked to see Gonzalez's identification, he told them he would go home to get it. The men replied they knew who he was and where he lived.

As they unsuccessfully tried to make González's sister leave, an unmarked white SUV arrived, with two more armed, non-uniformed men. When he refused to get in the car (fearing the men were from a paramilitary gang) and he was about to be "disappeared," one of the men kned him twice in the stomach and handcuffed him. A half hour later, a police patrol car took González and his sister to the police station where his lawyer informed him he had been arrested on an outstanding warrant from the Eighth Circuit Criminal Court of Bucaramanga.

This is the latest episode in a history of malicious prosecution against Gabriel González for his work with CSPP, as evidenced in the following events:

- **2006:** arrest on politically motivated charges of rebellion and association with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). After 15 months in detention awaiting trial, he was acquitted of all charges on the basis that they were entirely unfounded;
- **March 2009:** Acquittal overturned by Superior Tribunal of Bucaramanga on appeal from the prosecution. Principe Gabriel González Arango sentenced to seven years imprisonment;
- **December 2010:** Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal, despite false accusations from two witnesses, one of whom could not identify González and the other admitted to providing a statement under duress.

We fear that González will be moved to a maximum security prison where he risks attack or murder by inmates from paramilitary groups. **We demand that you back your pre-election promises to promote human rights by granting a presidential pardon to Principe Gabriel Gonzáles Arango.**

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai,
Coordinator

CC: 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-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 & Portman ~ via email
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: