

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631  
**Sr. Juan Manuel Santos**  
President of the Republic of Colombia

via email: [andres.villamizar@mininterior.gov.co](mailto:andres.villamizar@mininterior.gov.co).  
**Sr. Andrés Villamizar**  
Director of National Protection Unit of the Ministry of Interior

January 2, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the latest **death threats to members of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) in Sucre Department and other non-governmental human rights organizations in northern Colombia**. On December 9 members of MOVICE-Sucre branch received an email signed by the Black Eagles paramilitaries which read, "it seems like the death of your comrades **Rogelio Martinez** [2010], **Eder Verbel** [2011] and the jailing of **Carmelo Agámez** [2009] is not enough...you members of MOVICE are rats which have to be exterminated...we are going to kill your ring leaders in Sucre...**Ingrid Vergara and Juan David Diaz**, followed by **Adolfo Verbel, Verónica Montaña, Adil Melendres, Jorge Velásquez, Malena Martínez, Candelaria Barrios**." A former leader of MOVICE, **Iván Cepeda**, who is now in the Colombian Congress, was also mentioned.

On the same day in Barranquilla, Atlántico Department, MOVICE and other human rights NGOs received a death threat signed by a paramilitary group calling itself "Group for a Barranquilla clear of guerrillas," which listed the names of human rights defenders working for MOVICE-Atlántico Branch, Happy Childhood Foundation, Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners-Atlántico Branch, Association of Families United by a Single Pain (AFUSODO) and the Permanent Human Rights Committee (CPDH).

MOVICE, a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict, has documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups. The preceding threats come less than two weeks after a Constitutional Court ruling in favor of the peasant farmers of La Alemania, Sucre Department, who, with the support of MOVICE, have been campaigning for the return of their land after their forcible displacement by paramilitaries. The death threat appears to make reference to the ruling, which represents an important step toward securing the restitution of the farmers' lands.

We have written at least eleven letters in the past four years to Colombian officials (including five letters last year) urging protection for MOVICE members and investigations into the human rights crimes perpetrated against them. We believe the lives of MOVICE members in Sucre and Atlántico are once again in danger. Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- guarantee the safety of all those named above, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order a full, impartial investigation into the death threats described above and previous threats, 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: 011.571.275.4600  
Terry Steers-Gonzalez, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
Dinah Shelton, Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Second Vice Chair, 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:**