

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

via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 ext 2023
Sra. Viviane Morales
 Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia

February 6, 2012

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are deeply concerned about the attempted kidnapping in Bogotá of **Blanca Nubia Díaz**, a member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE). On January 23 a woman got out of a car that had been following her and told her that "Doctor Irene has sent us to tell you to come with us... she is handling your case." Ms. Díaz replied that she did not know this person, but the woman repeatedly ordered her into the vehicle and even tried to force her inside. The woman left when Ms. Díaz started to call for help.

Blanca Nubia Díaz has been seeking justice for the torture, rape and killing of her daughter, Irina del Carmen Villero Díaz, a member of the Wayúu indigenous community, by paramilitaries in May 2001; the paramilitaries had been operating with security forces in Albania Municipality, La Guajira Department. After the killing Ms. Díaz reported the crime to the local Office of the Attorney General in Maicao, La Guajira. However, no progress was made in the case until 2008 when the Constitutional Court ordered the authorities to investigate over 180 conflict-related sexual crimes against women and girls, including that of Irina del Carmen Villero Díaz.

Irene López Garzón, Ms. Díaz's lawyer and director of the human rights NGO Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro, which is also part of MOVICE, denies having sent someone to pick her up. Irene López Garzón has also received repeated death threats over the years because of her work campaigning against impunity.

Based on these facts **we strongly urge** that you

- guarantee the safety of Blanca Nubia Díaz, her family, her lawyer Irene López Garzón, and other members of MOVICE, in accordance with their wishes;
- launch a full and impartial investigation into the attempted kidnapping and threats against Blanca Nubia Díaz, her family and Irene López Garzón, as well as the rape, torture and killing of her daughter, Irina del Carmen Villero Díaz, in 2001, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations;
- follow up on the recommendations and conclusions of international and regional structures for protection of women's rights and combating violence against women.

We have written at least twelve letters to Colombian officials over the past four years on behalf of members of MOVICE in various departments of the country. We expect the government of Colombia to do all it can to protect members of MOVICE and other defenders of human rights.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: MOVICE ~ 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-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 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: