

# I R T F

## InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: <a href="mailto:andres.villamizar@mininterior.gov.co">andres.villamizar@mininterior.gov.co</a> <b>Sr. Andrés Villamizar</b> Director of the National Protection Unit of Ministry of Interior
via Fax: 011 57 1 381 4742 <b>Sra. María Angela Holguín</b> Minister of Foreign Affairs	

April 5, 2012

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are extremely troubled because **David Rabelo Gutiérrez**, the son of a human rights defender who is on trial, received an email on March 8, signed by the paramilitary organization United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC) declaring him a military target and giving him 24 hours to leave: "Mr Rabelo Crespo David [sic], as it has been impossible to get justice in Colombia and legal proceedings have been delayed, you guerrilla son-of-a-bitch, you have been declared a military target. You have a maximum 24 hours to leave the nest in which you, your two children and your spouse are, as well as Mr Rabelo David senior, who has been locked up. And those not already on trial for insurrection will be killed, starting from today."

His father, named David Rabelo Crespo, is a member of the Regional Human Rights Corporation (CREDHOS), which campaigns for justice for victims of human rights violations committed by the security forces, sometimes in collusion with paramilitaries. He has been in custody since September 2010, charged with having links to guerrilla groups. The final stage of his trial started on March 20. We are very concerned that the prosecution of David Rabelo and the threat sent to his son are part of an effort to discredit and silence him and his work.

Based on these facts we strongly urge that you

- guarantee the safety of David Rabelo Gutiérrez and his family and protect them, in line with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats against David Rabelo Gutiérrez; publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- fulfill your obligations regarding the situation of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- 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.

On January 26, 2012 we wrote to President Santos and Defense Minister Pinzón concerning for the safety of CREDHOS staff member Abelardo Sánchez Serrano, who was threatened by an armed man in Barrancabermeja on January 13. We await a response on that case as well.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

copies: 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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 90/12\_Colombia

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