

via FAX: 011 57 1 596 0631

Exmo. Señor Juan Manuel Santos
President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876

Estimado Señor Fernando Carrill
Minister of the Interior of Colombia

October 22, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned about recent death threats that have been sent to **human rights defenders working on land restitution issues and women and children's rights**. On October 2 the paramilitary organization Anti-Land Restitution Army sent an email to **Humanidad Vigenti, the Happy Childhood Foundation (FIF), the Women's Rights Collective and other NGOs**. It said, "Death to all members of associations, like the snitches who work on land restitution." The same day, they sent a text message to human rights defenders and leaders of peasant groups in Carmen de Bolivar. All are accused of being guerrillas by labeling them "FARC and ELN narco-terrorists". "Guerrillas" is a label frequently given to human rights organizations by security forces and paramilitary groups who have subsequently threatened, abducted or kill them.

The aforementioned messages follow earlier threats and attacks. On August 24 **Rosario Montoya Hoyos**, a member of FIF, received a condolence card for her own death. On August 28 two hooded men came to the FIF office, beat **Sandra Manjarras**, the director, and demanded that she hand over documents and information.

On October 11 the Anti Land Restitution Army emailed a death threat to **the National Coordination of Displaced People (CND)**. The death threat was also intended for **Alfonso Castillo** of the National Association of Solidarity Help (ANDAS). Both organizations are members of the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (**MOVICE**). The email named several other individuals and organizations who are members of MOVICE who had also been mentioned in the death threat sent on October 2. It accused them of being collaborators of the guerrilla, saying they were "advising victims and displaced people to sue the Colombian state for recovery of lands from which they were displaced". . . "we have received all the addresses of the offices, of your homes and the places you frequent daily, because we are going after the following organizations and people" The email mentioned unspecified regions where they exercise control.

We **urgently demand** that you

- protect Alfonso Castillo and the organizations named in the death threats, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order full and impartial investigations into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces;
- fulfill your obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;

Sincerely

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: Humanidad Vigente ~ via US mail
 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: 011.571.315.2197
 Mary Brett Rogers-Springs, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez., Rapporteur for Colombia, 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: