

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631

President Juan Manuel Santos
President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 489 3900 ext 2320

Sr. Rafael Pardo Ruedo
Minister of Labor of Colombia

January 23, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about threats to **Igor Diaz López**, president of the National Trade Union of Coal Industry Workers (SINTRACARBON) and **Aldo Raúl Amaya Daza**, treasurer of SINTRACARBON in La Guajira Department. On January 6, 7, and 8 a man who telephoned Amaya Daza's home in San Juan del Cesar said, "Tell Amaya to be careful, because he is in our sights." An armed man whom the family saw outside their home left the area when the family came out, and neighbors alerted the police. On January 10 Igor Diaz López's wife received a call to her mobile phone warning her that she and her family were being followed.

Both men have been members of the committee negotiating a labor agreement with a coal company on behalf of the mine workers. On January 19 a first phase of the negotiation ended and workers were deciding whether to go on strike.

Members of SINTRACARBON have received death threats while the union has been seeking improved working conditions. On July 18, 2012 Igor Diaz Lopez was told, while he was in a meeting of the union's negotiating committee, that he and his family should leave the country.

Colombia has one of the highest rates of killings of trade unionists who face repeated death threats or are killed during labor disputes and their campaign for improved pay and working conditions. They have been repeatedly threatened and many have been extrajudicially executed or subjected to enforced disappearance by paramilitaries, acting either alone or in collusion with the security forces.

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

- provide protection for those threatened, as agreed to by those in danger;
- launch a full and impartial investigation into the threats against Igor Diaz López and Aldo Raúl Amaya Daza, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

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
Mary Brett Rogers-Springs, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
SINTRACARBON ~ via U.S. mail
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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