

Fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of Colombia	Fax: 011 57 1 489 3900 ext2320 <b>Sr. Rafael Pardo Rueda</b> Labor Minister of Colombia
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April 1, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of trade union leaders in the coal mining industry in Cesar Department, which is Colombia's main coal-producing region. Members of the La Jagua de Ibirico branch of SINTRAMIENERGETICA (Colombian Union of Workers of the Mining, Petrochemical, Agro-Fuels and Energy Industries) are at risk. Union president **Ricardo Machado** and treasurer **Wilder Martinez** were specifically threatened.

On March 3 Wilder Martinez received an anonymous text message that read: "Listen you. . .and that Ricardo you have your days numbered for sticking your noses where they don't belong stay put or we will shut you up. . . guerrillas have you already forgotten what happened to Horcasita [sic] first and last [warning]". Horcasita was a reference to Victor Orcasita, the Vice-President of SINTRAMIENERGETICA, who was tortured and killed by paramilitaries on March 12, 2001.

Ricardo Machado had been threatened by an armed man on February 12. Although the police were able to apprehend and question the armed man, his identity remains unknown because he falsely claimed to be working for the La Jagua mining project.

We believe these threats are because the two leaders have been defending their union against lawsuits filed by the coal mining companies Carbones de La Jagua and Consorcio Minero Unido (both owned by Glencore, a Switzerland-based company) concerning the legality of strikes that SINTRAMIENERGETICA held in 2012, 2011 and 2006. (In July 2012, after forty days of talks between the union and Glencore, workers went on strike to demand higher wages and better working conditions; a regional court issued a resolution declaring the walkout legal.) The union leaders have also campaigned to prevent the mining company from carrying out mining activities which they believed would have had a negative impact on a river in the region.

Because of these continuing threats, we **strongly urge you** to:

- provide protection as agreed with Ricardo Machado, Wilder Martinez and other members of the La Jagua de Ibirico branch of SINTRAMIENERGETICA;
- conduct a full and impartial investigation into the threats against Ricardo Machado and Wilder Martinez, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: SINTRAMIENERGETICA ~ via U.S. 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  
 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  
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 66/13\_Colombia

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