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| via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631<br><b>Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos</b><br>President of Colombia | via Fax: 011 57 1 562 7822<br><b>Minister Maria Ángela Holguín</b><br>Minister of Foreign Affairs |
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May 15, 2013

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of members of the communities of the Curvaradó River Basin in Chocó Department and for members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP). On April 28 CIJP learned that paramilitaries operating in the area of the Curvaradó River Basin have a list of six community members they intend to kill: **Gustavo Garcia, Adrián Pérez, Elkin Urango, Emiliano Velásquez, Guillermo Díaz** and **Enrique Cabezas**. On April 26 paramilitaries threatened Enrique Cabezas's brother at gunpoint, saying they would kill him. On May 2 paramilitaries entered the home of Guillermo Díaz but left when they discovered he wasn't there.

Members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission were kept under surveillance on May 2 in Bogotá. In the past, gunmen have kept human rights defenders under surveillance before attempts to kill them. **Father Alberto Franco, Danilo Rueda and Abilio Peña** of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission were under surveillance this year (cf our letter of March 5, 2013). They have learned that at least one of the people involved in the surveillance was linked to the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), the former civilian intelligence service. The government dismantled DAS in 2009 after finding it was behind many death threats against human rights defenders and illegal monitoring of their legitimate work.

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission has supported efforts by Afro-descendant and indigenous communities in and around the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River Basins to reclaim their lands. Paramilitaries have occupied the land of some communities and have attempted to force them to grow African Palm, a cash crop. (Despite the heavy presence of Colombian security forces, paramilitaries operate freely in the area.) Powerful mining interests are also trying to develop operations in these areas.

This is our seventh letter to officials in Colombia in the past two years regarding threats to community leaders in the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River Basins and to staff and members of CIJP. Because of these continuing threats, we **strongly urge you to:**

- order a full and impartial investigation into the threat to kill six leaders of the Curvaradó River Basin community and the attempt to kill Guillermo Díaz, publish the results of this investigation and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide effective protection to those who request it, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated United Nations human rights recommendations.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Comision Intereclesial Justicia y Paz ~ via fax: 011-571-346 36 13  
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 and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA: 117/13\_Colombia

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