

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 489 3900 ext 2320 Sr. Rafael Pardo Rueda Minister of Labor of Colombia
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November 26, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about threats and attacks on **Óscar Arturo Orozco**, President of the Caldas Department branch of the Unitarian Workers' Confederation (CUT) and a member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE).

On November 13 at approximately 10:30pm, Óscar Arturo Orozco was driving near Olaya Herrera Park in the city of Manizales when an unknown object thrown at the driver's door window caused injuries to his face and hands from shattered glass. Following the attack, he called local police Coronel José David Benavidez to ask for protection. He also lodged a complaint with the Immediate Reaction Unit at the National Public Prosecutor's Office, where he handed over his vehicle for ballistic tests.

On November 16 Óscar Arturo Orozco received a threatening email to both his institutional and personal email accounts in which he was ordered to "sign the convention now, do not hold these big workers assemblies any more, the order has been given, you were saved on Wednesday night from the attempt on your life, the next time will be stronger. Sign the convention now, no to labor conflicts in the Chec."

This attack and threat are the latest in a series of incidents targeting Óscar Arturo Orozco. On April 9, he received an e-mail suggesting that information had been gathered relating to his wife and children. In August, criminal charges were brought against him and Wilson Jaramillo, Secretary General of CUT, accusing the two of staging an attack on their own lives on August 4, 2012 (cf our letter of Aug 11 2012). Despite the level of threat under which the human rights defenders continue to work, the protective measures put in place for them were discontinued approximately three weeks after that attack.

On August 30 of this year, a package containing threats was left in the car parking lot of the CUT-Caldas branch. On August 31, a similar package was found in the building adjacent to Óscar Arturo Orozco's home.

In light of these persistent attacks and threats, we believe that Óscar Arturo Orozco and his colleagues remain seriously at risk. We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a thorough, impartial and immediate investigation into the recent threats and the attack on Óscar Arturo Orozco's vehicle, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- guarantee the security of Óscar Arturo Orozco and his colleagues by reinstating the National Protection Unit's security scheme; and
- guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Colombia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Co-Coordinator

copies: First Secretary for Human Rights and Minorities, Embassy of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Andrew Bowen, Interim Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600
Olivia Franken, 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

Frontline 11/20_Colombia

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