

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 President Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax 011 57 1 283 9876 Sr. Juan Fernando Cristo Minister of Interior of Republic of Colombia
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January 22, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about a pamphlet that the paramilitary group Black Eagles-Northern Bloc Atlantic Coast sent to the homes of a trade unionist and a women human rights defender in Atlántico Department on January 11. It declares "human rights organizations, trade unionists, land claimants, victims' advisors [...] those who make human rights reports" as military targets. It states "start leaving the country or hiding like rats, because we are going to finish you off one by one".

The death threat named about 40 individuals, including human rights defenders, trade unionists, land claimants, a state official working on land restitution and a priest, as well as several human rights organizations. Those named have been involved in the land restitution process and on issues relating to the peace process in departments of Sucre, Bolivar, Cesar and Atlántico.

Persons named in the threat include members of the Atlántico and Sucre branches of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (**MOVICE**), including **Martha Díaz** and **Ingrid Vergara Chávez**.

Another person named in the threat is **Juan Martínez**, a leader of the Association of Land Workers (ASOTRACAMPO), which represents the El Tamarindo community, a group of peasant farmers in Atlántico Department. We wrote to officials in Colombia last year (cf our letter of June 26, 21014) when Juan Martínez received another death threat. A paramilitary group operating in the area has repeatedly threatened to kill the peasant farmers. Local civilian authorities have used the security forces to evict the peasant farmers. Between November 2013 and March 2014, the II Brigade of the Military Police set up a post on the El Tamarindo farm.

We **strongly urge** that you

- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately provide effective protection to those threatened, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- take action against paramilitary forces and break any links between them and the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: MOVICE ~ via US mail
Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax 1 202 232 8643
Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax 011 571 275 4600
Eric Falls, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept. ~ via fax 1 202 647 2628
Jose de Jesus Orozco Henriquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, via fax 1 202 458 3650
US Senators Brown & Portman
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, 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: