

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631

Excmo Sr. 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

February 14, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about continuing death threats from the paramilitary group Black Eagles (*Aguilas Negras*). A list of 39 names issued by *Aguilas Negras* on January 11 (cf our letter of January 22, 2015) labeled a number of prominent Colombian church leaders "military targets" and stated their intention to eliminate them. Among those listed are Reverend **Milton Mejia**, Reverend **Jairo Barriga**, and Elder German Zaraten from the Presbyterian Church in Barranquilla in Atlántico Department; **Agustin Jimenez** from the Teusaquillo Menonite Church; Father **Fernando Sanchez** from the Anglican Church on the Caribbean Coast; and **Father Fernando Gary Martínez** from the Roman Catholic Church.

The threat states: "...if you believe that because you work with the son of a b*** gringos and the thieving churches that they are going to save you piece of ***, we are right behind you... We know where you live and your organizations are also in our sights... Barranquilla churches... know that we are coming for you."

These church leaders have worked tirelessly for human rights and public support for the peace process now taking place in Havana, Cuba. We believe the recent threats clearly interfere with their free practice of pastoral and humanitarian work with those suffering the consequences of the armed conflict and the furtherance of the peace process.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- take all necessary measures to effectively protect the life and physical integrity of the church leaders mentioned above, as well as of all other human rights defenders under threat, in accordance with their wishes;
- carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the authors of these threats with due trial and appropriate penalties;
- take immediate and effective measures to ensure that these church leaders and human rights advocates can continue their work of defending human rights and human dignity without danger.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Presbyterian Peace Fellowship in Colombia ~ via email: colombia@presbypeacefellowship.org
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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: