

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1570 2000 ext 2023 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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June 2, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed at the recent harassment and threats to human rights defenders associated with two prominent human rights cases: La Combinada and Palace of Justice. The La Combinada case refers to the forced disappearance of James Holguin and four other men by paramilitaries operating in collusion with the police in the municipality of Monterrey in Casanare Department on August 16, 2003. The Palace of Justice case happened on November 6, 1985 when the guerrilla organization 19 April Movement (M-19) tried to take over the Palace of Justice. More than 100 people died during the siege, including 11 Supreme Court judges; twelve people were forcibly disappeared.

On April 21 and May 21, **Jacqueline Ramírez**, the wife of James Holguin and a witness in the La Combinada case, received threatening phone calls.

On April 22 a woman called the office of human rights organization Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista (FNEB) and left a message for **Andrea Torres Bautista**, Jacqueline Ramírez's lawyer, saying they would kill her. A few minutes later the woman called again saying "we are going to kill you all."

On May 17 **Luis Carlos Ramírez** escaped an attack in Bogotá by two men who threatened to cut him into pieces. Luis Carlos Ramírez assisted in the January 2014 capture of Bernardo Garzón Garzón, a former intelligence agent of the Colombian army, who was implicated in the Palace of Justice case. He also helped authorities locate the body of Nydia Erika Bautista de Arellana, a student activist and member of M-19 who was forcibly disappeared, tortured and killed in August 1987. FNEB, which represents La Combinada victims and other enforced disappearances, was created in 1997 after the family of Nydia Erika Bautista was forced into exile after receiving threats for their human rights work.

These threats come at a time when criminal proceedings in the La Combinada case are advancing and as the Supreme Court of Justice is due to rule on an appeal in the Nydia Erika Bautista case, which could lead to dozens of members of the armed forces, including high ranking officials, being held criminally responsible for her enforced disappearance.

We therefore **strongly urge** that you

- take measures to guarantee the safety of Jacqueline Ramírez, Luis Carlos Ramírez, Andrea Torres Bautista and other members of FNEB, in strict accordance with their wishes and needs;
- order full and impartial investigations into the threats and the attack described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider communications on this and other cases from or on behalf of victims or other states that are parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista ~ via US mail
Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Adam Lenert, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email
Tabatha Fairclough, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 82/15_Colombia

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