

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax 011 57 1 570 2000 ext 2023 Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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July 25, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned about the intensifying intimidation and harassment of **Claudia Julieta Duque**, journalist with the human rights organization Equipo Nizkor and with Radio Nizkor. This harassment occurred in advance of the trial of her case (which was scheduled to open June 24, 2015) against members of the now dissolved Administrative Department of Security (DAS). Former high-ranking members of the DAS are accused of aggravated psychological torture of Claudia Julieta Duque.

On June 16, a motorcycle and taxi followed the car in which Claudia Julieta Duque was traveling near the Specialized Penal Courts in Bogotá. The surveillance ended when the motorcyclist realized that members of the Peace Brigades International were accompanying her. She had received information of an impending direct attack against her, reportedly planned in response to investigations into the murder of journalist Jaime Garzón. She has been reporting on his murder since 2001, including the role of high-ranking DAS members in his killing.

Recently the family of Victor Velasquez, Claudia Julieta Duque's lawyer, has received phone calls in which the unidentified speaker makes reference to previous threatening and intimidating messages that were received in April 2014 and repeated in January 2015.

Claudia Julieta Duque has reported on human rights violations such as forced disappearances, recruitment of children into armed groups and the infiltration of paramilitary groups in government agencies. She has been a victim of kidnapping, murder attempts, multiple death threats, constant illegal surveillance and psychological harassment, including the targeting of her daughter. *Newsweek* magazine has ranked her one of the ten women journalists most at risk.

Because of our concern for Claudia Julieta Duque's safety and those associated with her, we **strongly urge** that you:

- take all necessary measures to guarantee the security of Claudia Julieta Duque and her family;
- carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the most recent acts of intimidation described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that human rights defenders can fully avail themselves of both national and international legal proceedings without fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez
 Co-Coordinator

cc: 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

Frontline 6/24/15_Colombia

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

