

via fax: 011 571 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876 Sr. Ministro Juan Fernando Cristo Minister of Interior of Colombia
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August 13, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about the recent **death threats issued by the paramilitary group Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC)** against human rights defenders. On the evening of July 25, AGC circulated a pamphlet on social media stating their opposition to the peace process and issuing death threats to activists, union leaders, and public officials who support it.

The pamphlet was sent directly to the Facebook page of the Regional Corporation for the Defense of Human Rights (CREDHOS) and to one of its members, **Andrés Ortiz**, with a note saying, "We are following you." The pamphlet was also sent directly to human rights defender **María Ravelo** and to the civil society organization Marcha Patriótica–Magdalena Medio. The paramilitary group pledged to attack any civil society demonstration that is in favor of the peace process.

This threat follows the ones that CREDHOS President Iván Madero Vergel received on July 18 (cf our letter of Aug 2). We have been writing to you since 2013 about similar death threats against Iván Madero Vergel and his family (cf our letters of August 13, 2015 and January 23, 2014) and surveillance of the CREDHOS offices (cf our letter of December 21, 2013).

We condemn the death threats by the AGC paramilitary group against CREDHOS and members of Marcha Patriótica–Magdalena Medio described above. We **strongly urge** that you:

- take immediate action to investigate these events and bring the responsible persons to justice;
- provide, in consultation with the human rights defenders, adequate protection measures that will guarantee their physical and psychological integrity together with that of their family members.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker-Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Andy O'Neal, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email onealRA@state.gov
John Brandt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia and for Human Rights Defenders, 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 8/2/2016_Colombia

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