

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

August 25, 2016

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned that the National Federation of Agricultural Workers Unions (Fensuagro), their affiliate and allies in the Department of Putumayo, are in imminent danger from the Colombian Armed Forces. Fensuagro unionists and supporters in Putumayo began striking and blockading highways in late July. They are demanding that the Colombian government fulfill promises it made for the development of the rural infrastructure and crop substitutions to give farmers an alternative to coca cultivation. Colombian farmers frequently have no choice but to cultivate coca since a viable infrastructure does not exist for most campesino families (rural farmers) to get their crops to market or to compete with the flood of imported foods resulting from recent free trade agreements with the United States, Europe and Canada.

The crops are being eradicated both manually and with glyphosate, the Monsanto-developed herbicide (sold as RoundUp Ultra). In addition to destroying coca plants, this product kills legal crops and the natural foliage; it also causes severe health problems for the unprotected communities where spraying takes place. The Colombian government is amassing troops in the area and forcibly breaking the farmers' strike.

Because we fear that a potentially deadly assault on the people can occur, we **strongly urge** that you

- immediately withdraw troops from Putumayo
- fulfill the commitments made for rural infrastructure development and for legal crops to replace coca and for markets for their sale
- end the use of glyphosate for the eradication of crops
- meet and negotiate with the striking farmers and their supporters

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

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