

<p>via fax: 011 571 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira Attorney General of Colombia</p>
<p>via fax: 011 57 1 283 9876 Sr. Ministro Juan Fernando Cristo Minister of the Interior</p>	<p>via fax: 011 57 1 444 3100 Sr. Ministro Enrique Gil Botero Minister of Justice</p>

April 11, 2017

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the detention measures against **members of Congress of the Peoples and the Southern Bolivar Inter-Dialogue Commission, Center and South of Cesar (CISBCSC)** who were detained after coordinated actions by the police on March 21 and 22. During the state crackdown, Colombian authorities arrested and detained at least 12 social movement leaders, including members of FEDEAGROMISBOL (Agro-mining Federation of the South of Bolivar) and the People's Congress (cf our letter of March 26).

On March 29 a court in Cartagena imposed house arrest on **Milena Quiroz Jiménez**, spokesperson for CISBCSC, pending the judgement of her case. To prevent her from working, the judge determined that the house arrest must take place outside her community of southern Bolívar.

On March 31, the same judge imposed provisional "intramural detention" pending the judgement of the cases of the other nine members of the community who were arrested on March 21 and 22. They include **Isidro Alarcón Bohorquez**, a local leader in MicoHumado, and **Manuel Francisco Zabaleta**, the legal representative of the Association of Miners of Casa de Barro.

The arrest and detention of these social leaders is occurring in the context of the militarization of the urban center of Micohumado, the paramilitarization of the region, and increased threats against local leaders. The Colombian State has previously accused social leaders of being linked to guerrilla groups without concrete evidence.

We are further concerned that the measures imposed against members of the Congress of the Peoples and CISBCSC represent the ongoing stigmatization and criminalization of social leaders in Colombia.

We **strongly urge** that you

- release these social movement leaders immediately
- refrain from using the judiciary system to hinder the legitimate work of human rights defenders in Colombia

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

and

Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Juan Carlos Pinzón, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email DaleyRS@state.gov
Colombia Desk, US State Department (attention: Ian Arzeni and Gail Morgado) ~ via email
José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia and 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: