

<p>via email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of the Republic of Colombia</p>	<p>via email: despacho.fiscal@fiscalia.gov.co <b>Sr. Fiscal General Néstor Humberto Martínez Neira</b> Attorney General of Colombia</p>
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July 21, 2018

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed by the recent email and social media communication from the paramilitary group **Águilas Negras** (Black Eagles) that threatened to kill a number of individuals, organizations and journalists. The message vowed to “exterminate” all human rights defenders and social leaders, calling them “guerrillas in disguise.” One of the groups included in the list is **Justapaz**, an organization of the Mennonite Church. Since its establishment in 1990, Justapaz has worked to promote nonviolence and peacebuilding. It has developed a broad range of initiatives in training, organization and action for nonviolent conflict transformation at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Journalists on the list from **Águilas Negras** included newspaper reporter **Jineth Bedoya**, deputy editor of the national newspaper *El Tiempo* and the **staff of the news website La Silla Vacía** (The Empty Chair). Other reporters also began receiving threats. On July 15, **María Jimena Duzán**, independent journalist and columnist for the weekly magazine *Semana*, received an explicit threat on Twitter which said she “should be raped, spit on, cut up with a chainsaw and hung in Bolívar Square, bring honor to the paramilitaries.”

In addition to Justapaz, the threat from **Águilas Negras** named 15 other organizations: **CODHES** (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement), **REDEPAZ** (National Network of Initiatives for Peace and Against the War), **SISMA MUJER**, **Fundación Humanitaria Nuevo Amanecer** (New Dawn Humanitarian Foundation), **Somos Defensores** (We Are Defenders), **Yira Castro** (legal corporation defending human rights defenders), **Humanidad Vigente** (Valid Humanity), **Tierra y Vida** (Land and Life), **ANDAS** (National Association of Solidarity Help), **FUNHUMANA** (Human Rights Foundation), **Colectivo Alvear Restrepo**, **Marcha Patriótica**, **Colombia Humana**, and **ASFAMIPAZ** (Colombian Association of Family Members of the Public Force).

These threats are causing increasing fear among the people and can lead to the dismantling of citizen efforts to overcome the wounds caused by the armed conflict. Therefore we **strongly urge** that you:

- take immediate action to clarify the origin and motivation of these threats
- take immediate action to protect the social leaders and journalists threatened, in strict accordance with their wishes
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary structures

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Camilo Reyes, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643 and email  
Rebecca Daley, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email  
Ryan Reid and Christine Russell, Desk Officers for Colombia, US State Dept ~ via email  
Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur for Colombia and Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
Edison Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email  
Justapaz ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Beatty, Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

7/19/2018\_JustaPaz\_Colombia

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