

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890/ 342 0592 / 566 2071 <b>Señor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> President of Colombia	via fax: 011-571-570 2000 /570 2022 <b>Dr. Mario German Iguaran</b> Attorney General of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 560 4630/566 4573 <b>Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega</b> Minister of the Interior and Justice, Colombia	

March 15, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned by the recent increase in murders, threats and other activities by paramilitaries in the Cimitarra River Valley (where the departments of Bolivar, Santander and Antioquia intersect). On February 18, Colombian paramilitaries murdered **Guido Romero**, vice president of the Communal Action Board in La Victoria in Cantagallo municipality. The paramilitaries detained Romero and then murdered him in front of other community members. Undoubtedly, his murder is a result of the fact that he met with members of the Campesino Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (ACVC) to plan a community action.

In Contagallo, paramilitaries have announced that they will re-establish their Convivir paramilitary "security cooperatives," and that the community will have to finance them.

A number of other murders and disappearances have also been reported:

- On February 22, the body of **Robinson Alberto Gonzalez** was found with five bullet wounds – two in the head – at Cano Panela in Antioquia Department
- **José Gustavo Castañeda** disappeared February 15 from Remedios, Antioquia Department
- **Julio César Aparicio Díaz**, Communal Action Board member, was detained, tortured, and disappeared in Remedios, Antioquia Department.
- **Albeiro Meza** disappeared February 13 from Cantagallo, Antioquia Department

Based on the facts presented above, we strongly urge you to:

- ▶ see that full, public investigations are conducted into the murders of Guido Romero and Robinson Alberto Gonzalez and the disappearances of Jose Gustavo Castañeda, Julio Cesar Aparicio Diaz, and Albeiro Meza and
- ▶ protect the right of campesinos to organize democratically to pursue peace in the region of conflict where they live.

We find it reprehensible that the Colombian government fails to detain and prosecute paramilitary killers who, with impunity, violate the human rights of popular community leaders whose only "crime" is devotion to democratic forms and processes and a determination to seek and obtain justice. Rest assured that we will make certain that officials of the United States government are made aware of this situation.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

CC: **Andres Pastrana**, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax  
**William B Wood** US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax  
**Heather Merritt**, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax  
 US Senators **DeWine & Voinovich** ~ via email  
 US Representatives **Brown, Gillmor, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Tubbs Jones** ~ via email

March 5 WN

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