

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890/ 342 0592 / 566 2071 Señor Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez President of Colombia	via fax: 011-577-611-4262 Coronel Fernando Torres Police Department, Magdalena Medio Region
via fax: 011 571 560 4630 or 571-566-4573 Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega Minister of the Interior and Justice, Colombia	

March 16, 2006

Dear Sirs:

We are saddened and outraged that an army-backed paramilitary group killed **Héctor Díaz Serrano**, a member of the oil workers' union (USO), on his way to work on March 2 in the city of Barrancabemeja, Santander Department. Amnesty International believes that all trade unionists and other social activists in Barrancabemeja are in grave danger.

That morning the newspaper *Vanguardia Liberal* reported that the Magdalena Medio Regional Command paramilitary group had threatened to kill trade unionists and other social activists running for Congress, including members of USO, CUT (Trade Union Congress), ASTDEMP (Association of Departmental Workers), USITRAS (Santander Workers' Trade Union), and the Metropolitan Coordinating Body for Displaced Persons. The paramilitary group stated: "...we will continue with this fight until we have eliminated the last guerrilla terrorist and their auxiliaries."

Because of these serious threats, we strongly urge you to

- provide safety measures (according to their wishes) for members of USITRAS, CUT, USO and ASTDEMP trade unions, and the Coordinación Metropolitana de Desplazados,
- conduct a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Héctor Díaz Serrano, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: **Andres Pastrana**, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax
Dr. Mario German Iguaran, Attorney General of Colombia ~ 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

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