

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 342 05 92 <b>Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez</b> Presidente de la República de Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 565 76 82 <b>Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon</b> Vice-president of the Republic, Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Mario Germán Iguaran Arana</b> Fiscalía General de la Nación, Colombia	

January 11, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, continue to be seriously concerned for the safety and welfare of members of the **Peace Community of San José de Apartadó**, because we have once again received word of threats and murders committed during a two-week period in December 2007. While the Peace Community members continue to reject the use of arms and violence, paramilitary forces, often in coordination with units of the Colombian Army and Police, have carried out a series of actions against Peace Community members, including the following:

1. **December 10, 2007**, Army personnel threatened Peace Community member **Yurlandis Tuberquía** of La Union, charging that the child she is expecting is a little guerrilla and that she must leave the area at once.
2. **December 14**, members of the Peace Community found **Juan Javier Manco Molina** of Chigorodo murdered in la Balsa. Army personnel would not allow Peace Community members to come near Manco's body, which bore civilian dress. Later, they showed him with a gun in his hand and falsely alleged he was a guerrilla who had fired upon the Army unit. On December 22 paramilitaries threatened to kill the widow of Juan Javier if she did not leave the area.
3. **December 18**, police arrived at the hospital where Peace Community member **Alba Lucia Giraldo** was receiving medical attention for a cut finger and told her to get into their car because she was suspected of being a guerrilla. Instead, she returned to San José, accompanied by members of Peace Brigades International.
4. **December 19**, **Alfonso Usuga**, who brought supplies to the Peace Community, was murdered by paramilitaries at the place where the road to San José leaves the city of Apartadó
5. **December 20**, paramilitaries held a meeting at which they reiterated their intent to wipe out the Peace Community and massacre its members because the Community was "talking a lot about what they (the paramilitaries) are doing in the zone." Members of the Army installation in San José threatened to destroy the Peace Community.
6. **December 23**, in Arenas Altas, the Army detained Peace Community member **Maria Margarita Giraldo Usuga** as she harvested yucca near her home. They then murdered her and claimed she was a guerrilla who had died in combat with the Army. Her body showed signs of torture. That same day paramilitaries set up and operated a check-point at the point where the road to San José leaves the city of Apartadó,, a location barely 5 minutes away from a police checkpoint.

These are only the most recent examples of the ongoing victimization of the Peace Community, and we strongly protest these continuing attacks upon the Peace Community and its members. Therefore, **we urge** you to:

- investigate the wrongful conduct of Army and Police personnel, present those responsible for prosecution for their crimes, and report publicly on your findings;
- act consistently with the responsibility assigned to the Colombian government by the Inter-American Court to protect the Peace Community and its members.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Carolina Barco Iskson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Ambassador William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197  
 Heather Merritt, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
 Dr. Michael Frulin, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571. 658-3300  
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
 US Representatives, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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