

via fax: 011. 571. 444.2158 <b>Vice-President Francisco Santos</b> Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011.571.566.2064 <b>Dr Carlos Franco</b> Director of the Presidential Program for Human Rights
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April 2, 2008

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned that the Colombian government has not taken effective measures in response to the break-ins, information thefts and subsequent death threats suffered by civic peace and human rights organizations, including Justapaz (June 2007), Fellowship of Reconciliation (June 2007), Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro (June 2007) and Corporación Reiniciar (November 2007). In three letters last year we urged the Colombian government to protect members of these organizations so that they may continue their legitimate and important work in the defense of human rights, without fear of intimidation.

Some these organizations work closely with the Ecumenical Council of the Churches of Colombia (CEDECOL), a highly respected national organization. We expect that the Colombian government would protect the legitimate human rights work conducted by CEDECOL and its partner organizations, such as Justapaz (the Christian Center for a Just Peace and Nonviolent Action).

We have not seen evidence of progress by the government of Colombia in identifying the material or intellectual authors, nor of steps taken to make highly visible its rejection of these actions or to implement campaigns to put an end to the crimes. Failure to address these political crimes implicitly permits impunity. The lack of effective action by the government to investigate, to publicly disavow and to promote respect of human rights work sends a message to the perpetrators that speaks louder than the formal "guarantees" the government offers.

We affirm the recommendations put forth by Justapaz and other affected organizations last July and **strongly urge** that you

- distribute widely via press, television and radio media, a highly visible public statement on the part of the government of Colombia rejecting the continuing pattern of burglaries and information thefts and supporting the human rights and peace work being carried out by the religious and non-governmental community;
- conduct swift investigation and prosecution of both the material and intellectual parties responsible for the break-ins mentioned above;
- consolidate, through the Human Rights Division of the Attorney General's Office, the handling of these cases and give them appropriate and urgent treatment as human rights abuses.

We are eager to know your response to these urgent matters.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

copies: Justapaz via e-mail  
 Carolina Barco Isakson, 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  
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Latta, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email  
Justapaz 3/08 Colombia

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

