

via fax: 011 57 1 337 58 90/ 011 57 1 342 05 92 Sr. Presidente Alvaro Uribe Velez President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 7 633 98 89 Sr. Horacio Serpa Uribe Governor of the Department of Santander
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Dr. Mario German Iguarán Arana Attorney General of the Republic of Colombia	

July 16, 2008

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply concerned for the safety of members of the following trade unions: Association of Professional and Technical Workers of Companies of the Petroleum Industry of Colombia (**ADECO**), Oil Workers' Trade Union (**USO**), and for members of the following non-governmental organizations: Popular Women's Organization (**OFP**), the Regional Human Rights Committee (**CREDHOS**), the Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (**ACVC**), and the Association of Displaced Persons Settled in the Municipality of Barrancabermeja (**ASODESAMUBA**). All of these organizations work in the city of Barrancabermeja in Santander Department.

On June 18 a death threat, signed by the paramilitary group United Black Eagles of Colombia, was delivered by an unknown man to the offices of CREDHOS. It accused the six organizations of being guerilla sympathizers and of promoting and financing guerrilla groups and names them as "military targets." The death threat follows complaints by human rights organizations that, in recent weeks, armed and hooded Black Eagles paramilitaries have been patrolling at night in two Barrancabermeja neighborhoods, the Comunas 3 and 7, despite the fact that the city is heavily militarized. On November 15, 2007 we wrote to you about paramilitary threats to OFP and the attack on the OFP president in her home. In February 2008, the Secretary General of CREDHOS was informed that paramilitaries were planning an attempt on his life. Despite these threats, the government security forces have denied that illegal armed groups are present in Barrancabermeja.

You have the authority to produce policy and plans to guarantee the safety of the members of the organizations mentioned above, according to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. We therefore, once again, **strongly urge you to**

- do everything necessary to protect members of ADECO, USO, OFP, CREDHOS, ACVC and ASODESAMUBA in the department of Santander;
- order full and imparital investigations into the death threat received on June 18, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take decisive action, in line with repeated UN recommendations, to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups and investigate and break their links with the security forces.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Organizacion Femenina Popular ~ via email
 Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 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
 Javier Hernández Valencia, 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 and US Representatives Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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