

via Fax: 011 57 1 337 5890 <b>Sr. Alvaro Uribe Velez</b> President of the Republic of Colombia	via Fax: 011 57 1 565 7682 <b>Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon</b> Vice President of the Republic of Colombia
via Fax: 011 57 1 266 1003 <b>Dr. Juan Manuel Santos</b> Minister of Defense of the Republic of Colombia	

March 5, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of journalist **Hollman Morris** who has received numerous threatening e-mails accusing him of being a member of the FARC guerrilla group and saying that he should die. Hollman Morris directs and presents CONTRAVIA, an investigative television program. While he was carrying out his investigative work in late January, the FARC released three police officers and a soldier they had been holding hostage since 2007. Hollman Morris was able to be present for the release on February 1 because the FARC had previously told him about it.

A few days after the release, the authorities accused him of having links with the FARC. At a press conference on February 3, President Uribe, referring to Hollman Morris and another Colombian journalist who was also present during the release, said that it was "important to distinguish between friends of terrorists who act as journalists and those who are real journalists." He said that the actions of the two men were "deceitful and a glorification of terrorism." The same day in a radio interview, the Minister of Defense said that Hollman Morris' actions had "made a statement justifying violence" and that he "had a lot in common with the FARC."

Since then, the CONTRAVIA e-mail address has been swamped with messages accusing Hollman Morris of being a guerrilla and threatening him with death.

We have previously written to you about threats against Hollman Morris in 2005, 2007 and 2007. These are not isolated incidents. Journalists and human rights defenders in Colombia are often subject to serious human rights violation themselves.

Once more we **strongly urge** that you

- guarantee the safety of the journalist Hollman Morris, his family and the people who work with him on CONTRAVIA, using all measures deemed appropriate by those at risk;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the threatening emails sent to CONTRAVIA, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- refrain from making unfounded accusations linking journalists, human rights defenders and trade unionists with guerrilla groups, because these threats can lead to those they accuse being threatened or killed.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

CC: Morris Producciones, Hollman Morris's TV company ~ via US mail  
 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  
 Nan N. Fife, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628  
 Javier Hernández Valencia, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011-571. 658-3301  
 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 Boccheri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA46/09Colombia

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