

via fax: 011 57 1 565 7682 Dr. Francisco Santos Calderon Vice Presidente of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 266 1003 Dr. Juan Manuel Santos Minister of Defense of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Dr. Mario German Iguaran Arana Fiscal General of Colombia	

April 5, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are once again seriously concerned for the safety of **members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Antioquia Department** because members of the Colombian armed forces and paramilitaries are continuing to threaten people.

Between March 1 and 3, armed paramilitaries dressed in military fatigues and with armbands of the AUC (main paramilitary umbrella) set up road blocks leading out of Nuevo Antioquia in the neighboring municipality of Turbo towards La Esperanza, another Peace Community hamlet. There are now over 100 paramilitaries in the Nuevo Antioquia area.

On March 9 and 10, pamphlets signed by paramilitaries were distributed in the municipal capital of Apartadó and in San José de Apartadó; the "social cleansing" pamphlet listed people who had been ordered to leave the area or be killed.

From March 7-13, members of the army entered La Resbalosa, another Peace Community hamlet, destroyed the community's crops and stole food from residents' homes. They accused various members of the community of being guerrillas and said that they were going to destroy the Peace Community.

On March 14, members of the XVII Brigade of the Colombian army attempted to rape a 15-year-old female member of the Peace Community. During the attack, they threatened her companion with a machete. The rape attempt failed when the girl fought off the soldiers. Soldiers released them and warned them not to tell anyone.

We have been writing to Colombian officials since 2002 urging protection for members of the Peace Community. Because of our continued concern for their safety, **we strongly urge** that you:

- order full and impartial investigations into the attempted rape of a 15-year-old member of the Peace community by members of the armed forces, and the attacks against other members of the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartadó, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take all measures necessary to guarantee the safety of these people, as deemed appropriate by the community themselves, in line with the Resolution issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States on March 15, 2005;
- immediately take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region, investigate and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartado ~ 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: 202.647.4173
 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 Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson, Space ~ via email

UA 81/09_Colombia

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