

Via fax: 011 57 1 599 8013 <b>Sr. Fabio Valencia Cossio</b> Minister of the Interior and Justice of Colombia	Via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 <b>Dr. Guillermo Mendoza Diago</b> Acting Attorney General of Colombia
--	---

February 16, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned about the intimidation of a woman [unnamed for her protection] who is a social worker and colleague of Ingrid Vergara of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparations for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. On the evening of February 5, two men on a motorcycle followed the woman as she was riding in a motorcycle taxi in Sincelejo, Sucre Department. When they caught up with the taxi, one of them drew a gun and aimed it at the woman for a few seconds before riding off.

The woman and Ingrid Vergara, who is the spokesperson of the Sucre branch of MOVICE, had spent most of February 4 and 5 together at meetings with colleagues and partners where they discussed recent paramilitary activities in Sucre. On February 4, they and other MOVICE members delivered a letter to the governor of Sucre, accusing him of having links with a paramilitary group.

Ingrid Vergara and other members of MOVICE have been subjected to repeated intimidation and death threats over the last few years (cf our letters of Dec 1, 2009 and March 23, 2008) because of their documentation and exposés of many cases of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances in Sucre Department. Government protection measures for Ingrid Vergara have been inadequate. Authorities have not told her or her colleagues of any advances in the investigation into previous death threats and acts of intimidation.

Because of our concern for the safety of Ingrid Vergara and other members of MOVICE, we again **strongly urge** that you:

- provide effective protection for Ingrid Vergara and those who have worked with her at the MOVICE branch in Sucre Department, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the February 5 act of intimidation and previous death threats against Ingrid Vergara, her daughter Cendy Torres, and her colleagues, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- fulfill your obligations regarding the situation of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Jaime Bermudez, Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs ~ via fax: 011 57 1 381 47 21  
 Carolina Barco Isakson, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 Nan N. Fife, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
 William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197  
 Christian Salazar Volkman, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Colombia office ~ via fax: 011 571 658 3301  
 Dina Shelton, US member of Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650  
 Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Colombia member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650  
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email  
 US Representatives Bocchieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA 301/09/Update/Colombia

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