

via fax: 011 57 1 565 76820 Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Dr. Guillermo Mendoza Diago Attorney General of Colombia
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April 1, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Task Force, are seriously concerned for the welfare and safety of **Bayron Ricardo Góngora**, human rights lawyer for CJL (Corporación Jurídica Libertad, Liberty Legal Corporation) whose activities include representing political prisoners in Medellín, Antioquia Department. On February 9, a lawyer working in another organization told Góngora that he had been informed by a recently released prisoner about a plot to kill Bayron Ricardo Góngora.

According to his information, some of the prisoners had been instructed to provide information about Góngora's daily routine and his visits to the prison to an illegal armed group operating in the Campo Valdés neighborhood of northeast Medellín. According to the prisoners, the armed group has received money to kill Góngora. A close contact of the CJL in Campo Valdés told members of the organization that he had heard the same information about the murder plot.

Bayron Ricardo Góngora has also been working on cases of people extra-judicially executed by the Colombian security forces since 2007. Currently he represents relatives of the victims in 65 such cases. In February 2009 he filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office against two majors in the Colombian army who were allegedly involved in extra-judicial executions in 2004 and 2005. He also asked the Attorney General's Office to investigate the former Commander of the Colombian National Army, Mario Montoya Uribe, concerning extra-judicial executions in March 2009. Montoya Uribe was forced to resign in November 2008 because of his links to human rights violations. Góngora has presented several appeals in court in order to press the Attorney General's Office to begin investigating the cases of March 2009. As a result of his work on other cases, members of the security forces have been brought to justice for their involvement in extra-judicial executions.

Because of our deep concern for the safety of Bayron Ricardo Góngora and his colleagues at CJL, we **strongly urge that you:**

- immediately provide effective protection for them, in accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the allegations that there is a plan to kill Bayron Ricardo Góngora, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- adhere to your obligations as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders recognizing the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and defenders' right to carry out their activities without obstacles or fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Dr. Gabriel Silva Lujan, Minister of Defense ~ via fax: 011.571.266.10 03
 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
 Christian Salazar Volkmann, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Colombia office ~ via fax: 011.571.658.3301
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Colombia member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccheri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA 49/10/Colombia

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