

via fax: 011 57 1 444 2158 Sr. Angelino Garzon Vice President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 Sr. German Vargas Lleras Minister of the Interior and Justice of the Republic of Colombia
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December 12, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are again extremely concerned for **Ingrid Vergara**, a leader of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), and her family because of recent threats on their lives.

On December 1, two armed men entered the Vergara home in the city of Sincelejo, Sucre Dept, while Ingrid's mother and her 15-year old-daughter, **Cendy Torres Vergara**, were at home. The men forced Ingrid's mother into a room. One man grabbed Cendy by her throat and pointed an object, likely a weapon, into her back. One screamed, "...Don't look at me, don't look at me, we are going to kill you out here." The men removed the hard drive of a MOVICE computer with information on Vergara's work related to land issues, including documentation for a public meeting scheduled for December 3. The men took only the hard drive, monitor and 40,000 Colombian Pesos (approx 20 US\$) but no other valuables that were in plain sight.

This incident follows previous threats against Ingrid Vergara and her family. On November 20 Ingrid Vergara received a phone call from an unknown caller who told her "don't get into land issues." On November 25 two more calls were made from the same number. On April 2, 2008, unknown men threatened to kill Cendy Torres, supposedly in reprisal for her mother's work as a human rights defender. On October 26, 2009, Cendy Torres received a death threat addressed to her mother (cf our letter of Dec. 1 2009). On February 5, 2010, two men on a motorcycle followed Ingrid, pulled up beside her, pointed a gun at her, and then drove away (cf our letter of February 16, 2010). On May 18, 2010 Rogelio Martinez, one of the leaders of MOVICE in Sucre department, was shot dead (cf our letter of May 26, 2010).

Ingrid Vergara and her colleagues at MOVICE have documented and exposed many cases of killings and disappearances carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups in Sucre. The Colombian government has implemented some protection measures, including bodyguards, for her and her daughter, but restrictions on the use of fuel have limited her mobility.

In light of the new threats, we **strongly urge** you to:

- guarantee the safety of Ingrid Vergara and her family, in accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the December 1 incident and previous death threats against Ingrid Vergara, her daughter and her colleagues, and bring those responsible to justice;
- carry out your obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: MOVICE ~ via US mail
 Gabriel Silva Luján, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 William Brownfield, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197
 Terry Steers-Gonzalez, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the 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 and US Representatives Boccheri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA301/09Update/Colombia

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