

<p>via fax: 011 571 314 7300 Dr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz National Human Rights Ombudsman, Colombia</p>	<p>via fax: 011 571 570 2000 Sra. Vivianne Morales Attorney General of Colombia</p>
<p>via fax: 011 571 565 9797 Hernán Jaime Ulloa Vanegas Director of the Presidential Program on Human Rights</p>	<p>via fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 Sr. German Vargas Lleras Minister of Interior and Justice of Colombia</p>

February 26, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the life of **environmental activist Sandra Viviana Cuellar Gallego**, who disappeared from Cali, in Valle del Cauca department on February 17. Sandra was wearing blue jeans and a black shirt when she disappeared shortly after leaving her parents' house. Her identity card and cell phone were found two days later near the place where she was supposed to take a public bus to Palmira University (where she had been invited to present a lecture), close to Puente del Comercio.

Sandra, age 26, is an environmental engineer who works on water, basin protection and wetland issues. She has been involving local indigenous communities in defense of the Cauca River, working in a natural reserve close to Yumbo municipality, and participating in environmental-themed cultural events in Cali.

For two years she worked for CENSAT Agua Viva, an environmental association affiliated with Friends of the Earth International. For the past few weeks she has been working with Asociación Escuela Ciudadana (Citizen School Association) of Valle del Cauca, an environmental management plan in the high zone of Yumbo. In recent days she had been meeting with community leaders of the Corporación Autónoma del Valle del Cauca-CVC (Autonomous Body of Valle del Cauca).

Because of the dangerous climate for human rights and environmental defenders in Colombia, we are extremely concerned for Sandra, and therefore demand that

- 1- fully engage authorities, her family and colleagues in the search for Sandra;
- 2- when she is found, develop a protection plan for Sandra, in accordance to her wishes;
- 3- find the parties responsible for Sandra's disappearance and bring them to justice;
- 4- create a safer climate for environmental defenders to conduct their important and necessary work to defend the physical environment and native lands of peoples throughout Colombia.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

Gabriel Silva Luján, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 P. Michael McKinley, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.315.2197
 Terry Steers-González, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
 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: 202.458.3992
 US Senators Brown and Portman
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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