

via fax: 011 57 1 337 5890/342 0592 Sr. Juan Manuel Santos , President of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 565 7682 Sr. Angelino Garzón , Vice-President of Colombia
via fax: 011-57 1 570 2000 (extension 2091) Viviane Morales , Attorney General of Colombia	via Fax: : 011-57 1 342.97.23 Sr. Alejandro Ordoñez , Prosecutor General of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 Sr. German Vargas , Minister of the Interior	

September 26, 2011

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are extremely concerned about the increased presence of paramilitaries in the south of Bolívar Department, especially in the municipalities and outlying areas of Tiquisio and Montecristo, hamlets of Malena, centre Quebrada, Tagual, Pinch, Tenche and other nearby cities. So far in 2011, over **40 murders** have been committed. The following recent events of violence and paramilitary advances have increased our concern:

- Sep 1-9: residents held protest actions in Arenal to demand that the national government immediately convene the Southern Bolivar Roundtable for Dialogue. Government representatives who had promised to meet with the residents failed to arrive. The people gathered to meet with them were the victims of harassment by police, army and paramilitaries.
- Sep 15: in Mina Caribe Township, graffiti on the school signed by AUC (the supposedly demobilized United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) said, "Out you informants, we do not want you here!". There were also footprints of military boots around the school.
- Sep 15-19: armed men without identification observed on the road from of Mina Caribe Township to San Luquitas Township;
- Suspension of private and public transportation in the territory because of strong fears from the threats and the presence of armed men;
- Rumors circulating of threats to kill **Miguel Analya Hoyos**, treasurer of the Agro-Mining Federation, as well as other agriculture and mining leaders in the area.
- Strong military presence, including the Batallón de Selva No. 48, which has a base located 15 minutes from the village of San Pedro Frio and who permanently patrol the whole area that includes the townships of San Luquitas and Mina Caribe, together with demobilized paramilitaries and masked armed personnel.

For the reasons outlined above, we demand that you

- immediately convene the Southern Bolivar Roundtable for Dialogue;
- stop and prevent paramilitary advances in the southern Bolivar region;
- protect the lives and physical integrity of the people of southern Bolivar;
- comply immediately with the Precautionary Measures granted by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to protect the leaders and members of the Southern Bolivar Agricultural-Mining Federation.
- investigate all public officials and members of the Armed Forces who, because of their actions and inaction, have allowed paramilitary groups to enter the region and continue to commit crimes against the local population.

Sincerely,

Brian Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Gabriel Silva Luján, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 P. Michael McKinley, US Ambassador to Colombia ~via fax: 011.571.315.0811
 Terry Steers-Gonzalez, 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 that you take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: