

# I R T F

## InterReligious Task Force on Central America

3606 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113  
tel: 216.961.0003 fax: 216.961.0002 e-mail: [irtf@irtfcleveland.org](mailto:irtf@irtfcleveland.org)

via fax 011 57 1 596 0631  
**Sr. Juan Manuel Santos**  
President of Colombia

via fax 011 57 1 266 1003  
**Sr. Juan Carlos Pinzón**  
Defense Minister of Colombia

March 3, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety of **Jesús Emilio Tuberquia**, the legal representative of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, Antioquia Department. On February 4 he escaped when two paramilitaries on a motorbike shot at him in the city of Apartadó. It was one of many situations that have made him fear for his life (cf our letter of May 2, 2011). The incident occurred only about 100m from a permanent police control post.

This is one of several attacks on the Peace Community this year. January 24-27 paramilitaries were in the hamlets of El Porvenir and La Esperanza threatening the peasant farmers and members of the Peace Community. The paramilitaries told them they would take away their cattle, kill them and “exterminate” the Peace Community. On January 28, members of the Colombian Army threatened the hamlet of Mulatos, Apartadó Municipality, saying they would “exterminate” them. The same day, paramilitaries entered the nearby community of El Porvenir, fired in the air as a young man was passing and detained him for a period of time. On February 2 soldiers destroyed a field of crops belonging to the Peace Community in the area of Mulatos.

Since 2002, we have faxed at least 19 letters to Colombian government officials regarding intimidation, harassment, threats and assassinations of residents of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó (1 in 2002, 3 in 2003, 2 in 2004, 3 in 2005, 2 in 2006, 2 in 2007, 2 in 2008, 1 in 2009, 1 in 2010, 2 in 2011).

We believe the Peace Community continues to be in danger. Therefore we again **strongly urge** you to

- order full and impartial investigations into the attack on Jesús Emilio Tuberquia and the threats against members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated commitments of your government and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

We remind you that civilians, including the members of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community, have the right not to be drawn into the armed conflict in Colombia. You have the power and the consequent responsibility to see that all the citizens of Colombia are protected. We strongly urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Peace Community of San José de Apartadó ~ via US mail  
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-Gonzalez, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173  
Dinah Shelton, Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
Rodrigo Escobar Gil, Second Vice-Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email  
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 42/12 Colombia

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