

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 Minister of Defense, Colombia
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March 4, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned for the safety and welfare of **David Ravelo** and his cousin, **Maria Ravelo Grimaldo**, members of the Regional Human Rights Corporation (**CREDHOS**) in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, who have received new death threats from paramilitaries.

On February 1, Wilfran Cadena, vice-president of CREDHOS found several flyers left in CREDHOS's office that said: "Look son-of-a-bitch guerrillas, be careful - we are here to clean the city of guerrillas like you people hiding at CREDHOS." The flyers, which named David Ravelo and Maria Ravelo Grimaldo, had a picture of two skulls and were signed by a paramilitary group calling itself the "Urban Commands." The flyers also targeted the Peasant Farmers' Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (ACVC) saying: "you cousin of the gonorrhoea guerrilla David Ravelo, we know you go to the neighborhoods inviting people to take part in. . . human rights. . . Maria Ravelo, any moment things are going to change, we know about your pictures and that you are associating with those dogs . . . at the ACVC."

As president of the NGO Barrancabermeja Branch of the National Association of Solidarity Help (ANDAA), María Ravelo Grimaldi has been working with forcibly displaced persons in the Community Villa Dignidad, Barrancabermeja Municipality. On February 1 two armed men approached her daughter, Anny Lizeth Vera Ravelo, gave her a flyer and said that her mother should stop the "game."

These threats follow others that CREDHOS members received in January shortly after the organization participated in the commemoration of the 23rd anniversary of the killings on January 18 1989 of 12 judicial officials in Santander Department by paramilitaries operating with the support of the armed forces (cf our letter of January 26, 2012).

Because of our deep concern for the safety of David Ravelo, Maria Ravelo Grimaldo, and other members of CREDHOS and ACVC, we **strongly urge** that you

- ✓ take immediate steps to protect those mentioned above, in line with their wishes;
- ✓ order a full and impartial investigation into the threats against these persons and groups, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- ✓ take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with security forces, in line with government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations;
- ✓ carry out your obligations to ensure that human rights defenders do their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: CREDHOS ~ 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: 011.571.315.0811
 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 and Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email
 UA 14/12/Update_COLOMBIA

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