

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 599 8961 Estimado Sr. Federico Renjifo Vélez Minister of the Interior of Colombia
via fax: 011 57 1 489 3900 ext 2320 Estimado Sr. Rafael Pardo Rueda Minister of Labor of Colombia	

August 11, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We are very concerned for the safety of **Oscar Arturo Orozco**, President of the Caldas Department branch of the Trade Union Congress (CUT), and **Wilson Jaramillo**, the secretary general of CUT. Both men are also members of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) and the Colombian Electricity Workers' Union (SINTRAELECOL). On August 4 they were on their way to a meeting with fishers of the Arauca River to discuss the impact of the Caldas Hydroelectric Power Plant on the livelihoods of the local fishers. Between Manizales and the municipality of Palestina in Caldas, two men on a motorbike and several persons standing at the side of the road fired shots at their car. Neither man was injured. This attack occurs at a time when there had been an order to remove the protection Oscar Arturo Orozco was receiving.

In recent years flyers containing death threats have been repeatedly left at the office of SINTRAELECOL, most recently in July when the death threat contained a picture of bullet cartridges. According to the CUT, twelve trade unionists have been killed this year. Trade unionists have faced repeated human rights violations in the context of labor disputes, campaigns against privatization or campaigns to support communities opposing the development of large-scale infrastructure projects that are likely to destroy their livelihoods. Almost 3,000 trade unionists have been killed since the mid 1980s, the vast majority directly by the security forces or by paramilitaries operating with the support of the security forces. Over 90% of these killings remain in impunity.

We are concerned about this dangerous situation and are following it closely. We **strongly urge** that you:

- take appropriate measures to protect the safety of Oscar Arturo Orozco and Wilson Jaramillo, in accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into the attack against them described above and other previous incidents against members of CUT in Caldas, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- dismantle paramilitary groups that continue to operate in the area and break any continued links with the security forces, in line with repeated United Nations human rights recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. 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: 011.571.275.4600
 Mary Brett Rogers-Springs, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.4173
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, 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 239/12_Colombia

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