

via fax 011 57 1 596 0631 <b>Excmo. Sr. Presidente Juan Manuel Santos</b> President of Colombia	via fax 011 57 1 286 2649 <b>Sr. Ministro Juan Camilo Restrepo</b> Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Colombia
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March 2, 2013

Dear Sirs,

We are deeply concerned for the safety of members of the Sucre branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE-Sucre) **Ingrid Vergara, Juan David Diaz, Adolfo Verbel, Verónica Montaña, Adil Melendres, Jorge Velásquez, Malena Martínez, Candelaria Barrios,**) for **Adriana Porras**, a member of the Network of Leaders of Montes de Maria which works closely with MOVICE-Sucre, and for **Iván Cepeda**, former MOVICE leader and now a member of the Colombian Congress.

On February 6 Iván Cepeda received an anonymous phone call warning him that an attempt to kill him was planned in Tolima Department. On February 12 the daughter of a member of MOVICE-Sucre in Sincelejo found a paper under the door of her home signed by the paramilitary group Aguilas Negras (Black Eagles): "you members of MOVICE are rats which have to be exterminated ...[you] who take the land away from the good people to give it to guerrillas who pretend to be peasant farmers we are going to kill your ringleaders in Sucre ... Ingrid Vergara and Juan David Diaz, ... followed by Adolfo Verbel, Verónica Montaña, Adil Melendres, Jorge Velásquez, Malena Martínez, Candelaria Barrios and Adriana Porras." It was the printout of an email threat sent on December 9, 2011 (cf our letter of January 2, 2012). It said that because the previous warning had been ignored, the Black Eagles would "go ahead with the respective families and see if it hurts."

Members of MOVICE-Sucre have been campaigning for the restitution of misappropriated lands. The death threat came days after they organized a meeting for peasant farmers in the Montes de María area to discuss the difficult human rights situation and the problems related to land.

Since 2008 we have written more than 20 letters to Colombian officials about the continued threats, abductions and assassinations of MOVICE members because of their work in exposing killings and enforced disappearances by the security forces and paramilitary groups. There have been several threats against members of the Verbel family and the assassination of one its members: Adolfo Vebel's brother Orlando Verbel in March 2011.

**We strongly urge** that you

- guarantee the safety of Ingrid Vergara, Juan David Diaz, Adolfo Verbel, Verónica Montaña, Adil Melendres, Jorge Velásquez, Malena Martínez, Candelaria Barrios, Adriani Porras and Iván Cepeda in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order full and impartial investigations into the death threats received by MOVICE members, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice; and
- ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

CC : MOVICE ~ US mail  
 Gabriel Silva Luján, Colombian Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643  
 P. Michael McKinley, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600  
 Mary Brett Rogers-Springs, Senior Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628  
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992  
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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