

via fax 011 57 1 596 0631

Excmo. Señor Juan Manuel Santos
President of Colombia

via fax 011 57 1 286 8649

Señor Francisco Estupinan Heredia
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia

June 15, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about death threats to **Juan David Diaz**, leader of the Sucre branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), his wife and another person close to the family. Several other human rights defenders were copied in an anonymous email message sent on June 3 to Sucre Department's police commander. According to the email, those planning to kill Juan David Díaz are in prison in Baranquilla in Atlántico Department where paramilitaries convicted of the April 2003 assassination of his father, Eudaldo Díaz, are held. Juan David Díaz has filed several complaints against them, alleging that they have organized crimes from inside prison.

On May 23, soldiers who had been carrying out regular patrols around the farm perimeter since the May 2010 assassination of farmer Rogelio Martínez left the area without giving any warning to the community or the NGOs working with them. On May 28, six men, at least two of them armed, came to San Onofre Municipality in Sucre Department looking for **Julia Torres Cancio** but did not find her. She is the legal representative of the peasant farmers living on the La Alemania farm and widow of Rogelio Martinez. Rogelio and his family had returned to La Alemania in 2006, six years after paramilitaries initially entered the farm, killed several peasant farmers, forcibly displaced the rest, and set up a regional center for their operations.

We believe that these threats and intimidation tactics against human rights defenders in Sucre Department are a because MOVICE members have documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups. Since 2008 we have written more than 20 letters to Colombian officials about the continued threats, abductions and assassinations of MOVICE members. Our letter of March 2, 2013 describes a written death threat from the Black Eagles paramilitaries: "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, ..."

We therefore **strongly urge** that you

- ensure that Juan David Díaz Chamorro and his family members, Julia Torres Cancio and other peasant farmers from La Alemania are safe, following safety and protection measures in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order full and impartial investigations into the death threats to members of MOVICE, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- fulfill your obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: MOVICE ~ 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: 011.571.275.4600
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

UA 149/13_Colombia

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