

via FAX: 011 57 1 596 0631
Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos
 President of Colombia

via FAX: 011 57 1 489 3900 ext 2320
Sr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
 Labor Minister of Colombia

June 16, 2013

Dear Sirs:

We are outraged at the assassination attempt on trade union leader **Rubén Morrón Guerrero**, Secretary General of the Chiriguaná Municipality Branch of the Colombian Union of Workers of the Mining, Petrochemical, Agro-Fuels and Energy Industries (SINTRAMIENERGETICA) in Cesar Department. On May 28 two gunmen on a motorbike opened fire on the taxi in which he was travelling in Barranquilla in Atlántico Department. The bullets hit the back of the car but he escaped unharmed.

Rubén Morrón Guerrero is part of a union delegation negotiating a new labor agreement with the mining company Drummond Ltd, based in Birmingham, Alabama, USA. The attack comes in the wake of several recent death threats against members and leaders of SINTRAMIENERGETICA. On April 1 Rubén Morrón Guerrero was named in a death threat against several trade union leaders by the paramilitary group "Rastrojo Urban Commands" (cf our letter of April 1). Because of the attack, Rubén Morrón Guerrero did not participate in a negotiation meeting scheduled on May 29. He and his family have left Barranquilla fearing for their lives.

For many years members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA have been killed and have received death threats by paramilitaries. During recent months they have been the target of paramilitary death threats in the context of labor disputes.

In January 2013 a Colombian judge sentenced Jaime Blanco, a former contractor for Drummond, to 37 years in prison for being the mastermind of the killing of two union leaders in 2001. The assassinations of Valmore Locarno and Victor Orcasita (chairman and vice-chairman of the union) in front of fellow workers drew considerable attention because Blanco and several others allege that senior managers of Drummond ordered the killings. Drummond officials say they are innocent of any involvement in the killings. A related lawsuit in U.S. federal court in Birmingham, Alabama, alleges Drummond aided and abetted in war crimes because the killers were members of paramilitary groups allegedly contracted by the company.

We **strong urge** that you

- conduct a full and impartial investigation into the attack described above as well as previous threats, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide protection for Rubén Morrón Guerrero in accordance with his wishes;
- take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

CC: SINTRAMIENERGETICA ~ 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 ~ via email
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 66/13Update_Colombia

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