

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax 011 57 1 570 2091 or 011 57 1 570 2000 ext 2023 Sr. Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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February 22, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed about the latest threat to **Ivan Madero Vergel**, President of the Regional Human Rights Corporation (CREDHOS) in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. CREDHOS provides training and education on human rights issues and International Humanitarian Law. It collects complaints regarding human rights violations by paramilitary groups and members of the security forces.

On January 23, while Ivan Madero Vergel was meeting with members of CREDHOS and Peace Brigades International (PBI), one of those present received a phone call: "Tell . . . Iván Madero that because he has not respected the 48 hours that were given to him to leave Barranca we are going to kill his wife and the children...and the guerrilla fighter sister he has." This threat is similar to one Iván Madero Vergel received in a telephone call on January 9.

CREDHOS has been aware of paramilitary's plans to assassinate Ivan Madero Vergel. On December 21, 2013, we wrote about a break-in at the CREDHOS office while Ivan Madero Vergel was inside.

Other human rights defenders are also being threatened. On January 9, **Lila Peña**, the President of the Barrancabermeja-based Regional Association of Victims of State Crimes of Magdalena Medio (ASORVIMM) found a bullet and a threatening note at her office. The threat named ASORVIMM, Lila Peña, and **Melkin Castrillon Pena** (member of the Peasant Farmer Association of the Cimitarra River Valley, ACVC), accusing them of being guerrilla fighters.(cf our letter of Jan 23).

For many years there has been an organized attack on CREDHOS to weaken the organization and silence its members. In court in December 2012, after false and contradictory testimonies by prosecution witnesses, **David Ravelo Crespo**, a founding member of CREDHOS, was sentenced to 18 years in prison for a murder he did not commit.

This is our third letter in the past two months about threats to CREDHOS members. We **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation of the death threats, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take action to guarantee the safety of all these persons, in strict accordance with their wishes; and
- reverse the unjust verdict against David Ravelo Crespo and set him free from prison.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

Copies: CREDHOS ~ via US mail
 Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
 Andrew Bowen, Interim Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy to Colombia ~ via fax: 011.571.275.4600
 Olivia Franken, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
 José de Jesus Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

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