

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631

**Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos**  
President of the Republic of Colombia

via fax: 011 57 1 381 4742

**Estimada Sra. María Ángela Holguín**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia

March 22, 2014

Dear President Santos and Minister Holguín:

We are very troubled about recent threats to three members of the Inter-Church Commission for Justice and Peace (CIJP, Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz) in Bogotá (**Janeth Hernández, Abilio Peña, José Rocamora**) and CIJP National Coordinator **Danilo Rueda**.

February 16: Danilo Rueda was in another city, being interviewed about the Inter-American Court for Human Rights' recent decision to sanction Colombia for the 1997 forced displacement and killing of Marino López. That day, Rueda's family received a warning letter: "Tell your brother to be careful...They are not joking. They are paying attention..." The National Protection Unit (UNP) had not responded to a request to implement a protection plan for Rueda while he was in that city.

February 27: José Rocamora was followed by three men followed as he left his residence. He entered a nearby building and hid while the men following him waited outside for thirty minutes. Meanwhile, his personal computer, which contained sensitive information concerning research into the prison system, cultural questions and young people in several conflict zones, was stolen from his home.

February 28: Danilo Rueda was left a death threat in his mailbox by a man and a woman.

February 28: Janeth Hernández and Abilio Peña were warned by their bodyguards that they were being followed by unknown men on a motorbike. The men fled when they realized the bodyguards were about to confront them.

The CIJP is a church-based NGO which works to expose human rights violations committed by state security forces and paramilitaries in conflict zones. CIJP's work includes accompanying Afro-descendant and indigenous communities peacefully affirming their land rights in the Curvaradó, Jiguamiandó, and Cacarica River Basins in Chocó. Because of their work, several members of the CIJP have been subjected to death threats and harassment (cf our letters from 2013: Mar 5, May 15, Aug 15).

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out a thorough, impartial and immediate investigation into the death threat against Danilo Rueda, identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of Janeth Hernández, Abilio Peña, José Rocamora, Danilo Rueda, and all members of CIJP, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- guarantee that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities free of all restrictions and without fear of reprisals.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator

copies: Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz ~ via fax  
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 fax

Frontline 3/4/14\_Colombia

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