

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 Excmo. Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 266 1003 Sr Juan Carlos Pinzón Defense Minister of Colombia
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August 12, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our deep concern for the safety of human rights defender and member of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (CIJP) **Jacob Jenezen**. The CIJP accompanies the Afro-descendant community of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca Department, in their initiative to create a humanitarian space for nearly 300 families at risk of human rights violations and abuses.

On July 18 in the La Playita neighborhood close to the Humanitarian Space of Puente Nayero in Buenaventura, paramilitaries warned him: "Jacob we are going to kill you [...] we are going to cut you up and throw you into the sea."

This is the latest violent threat to leaders of those living in the Humanitarian Space of Puente Navero (cf our letter of July 1). On July 3 the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission received information that a former member of the armed forces said he was going to force the organization to leave the Humanitarian Space. This person had recently coordinated the demobilization of a group of paramilitaries in Buenaventura for the Ministry of Defense. Despite this supposed demobilization, paramilitary groups remain active in the city.

There have been reports of numerous killings, forced displacements and forced disappearances carried out by paramilitary groups which seem to be operating with impunity in Buenaventura. This is happening despite the presence of large contingents of government security forces in the area. Why have the security forces taken no decisive action against the paramilitaries? Knowing that large-scale infrastructure projects are being developed in the city, we can only conclude that human rights violations are a consequence of powerful economic interests running roughshod over the poor and powerless.

Because of these continuing threats, we **strongly urge you to:**

- provide effective protection for Jacob Jenezen, other members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission, and inhabitants of the Humanitarian Space of Puente Nayero—in accordance with their wishes;
- order a full and impartial investigation into paramilitary threats against the human rights defenders and inhabitants of Buenaventura, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- 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
Co-Coordinator

CC: Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission / Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz ~ via fax
Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador 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

UA: 104/14 Update_Colombia

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