

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 President Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Sr. Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
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November 13, 2014

Dear Sirs:

We are very alarmed at the continuing death threats from the Black Eagles paramilitary group against human rights defenders. On October 22 the Central Command of the Black Eagles sent a written death threat to **Fernando Hernández Valencia**, Director of the New Rainbow Corporation in Bogotá, which stated, “you will see and suffer a real displacement in the afterlife.” It named about 100 human rights defenders, peace activists and social leaders.

One of those threatened was **José Aristizábal García** from the New Rainbow Coalition who recently returned to Colombia following more than a decade in exile. He and **Fernando Hernández Valencia** and **Adolfo Bula**, also named in the death threat, were negotiators and signatories of a peace agreement in 1994 between the government of Colombia and the Socialist Renewal Current (CRS), which split from the Colombian Liberation Front (ELN) to negotiate a peace deal.

This death threat follows similar ones sent on September 9 that named representatives of victims of human rights abuses who have traveled to Havana, Cuba, for peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (cf our letter of Sept. 25).

This year the non-governmental human rights organization *Somos Defensores* published a report naming 30 human rights defenders killed in the first six months of 2014; at least 70 human rights defenders were killed in 2013, including leaders of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. In light of the dramatically increasing frequency and severity of these threats described, above we **strongly urge** that you to

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- provide effective protection for those threatened, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- take action against paramilitary forces and break any links between them and security forces;
- fulfill your obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Co-Coordinator

copies: Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris ~ via US mail
 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
 Eric Falls, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via fax: 202.647.2628
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, 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, 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: