

via fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 President Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via email: despachoministro@minagricultura.gov.co Sr. Aurelio Iragorri Valencia Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
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February 1, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply concerned about a pamphlet that the paramilitary group Gaitan Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (*Gaitanistas de Colombia AGC*) delivered to several human rights defenders on January 21. Members of MOVICE (Movement of Victims of State Crimes) and its partner organisations in the Departments of Atlántico, Sucre and Magdalena Medio received death threats throughout the month of January in the form of pamphlets, phone calls and comments to members of their community.

The pamphlet named **José Humberto Torres** and **Franklin Castañeda**, members of CSSP (Political Prisoners' Solidarity Committee), and MOVICE-Atlántico member **Martha Díaz**. The pamphlet accused them of falsely representing victims of the armed conflict at the peace talks currently taking place in Havana.

Other recent threats:

Dec 18, 2014: a pamphlet was distributed in the Caribbean region containing threats against various members of MOVICE and CSPP, including **Rosario Montoya**, José Humberto Torres, and Martha Díaz.

Jan 11, 2015: a pamphlet signed by the Black Eagles (*Águilas Negras*) paramilitary group was delivered to the homes and offices of human rights defenders in the Departments of Atlántico and the Caribbean region, declaring the members of MOVICE in Sucre and Atlántico to be military targets. Named were Rosario Montoya, José Humberto Torres, Martha Díaz, **Ingrid Vergara Chávez**, amongst others (cf our letter of Jan 22).

Jan 11, 2015: **Lilia Peña Silva**, President of ASORVIMM (Regional Association of Victims of State Crimes in Magdalena Medio), received a threatening phone call attacking her for her human rights work.

Jan 12, 2015: **Carmen Mendoza**, a member of MOVICE in Sucre, was informed that two unknown men on motorcycles without number plates had been inquiring about her and making threats.

Members of MOVICE have been victims of death threats and other human rights abuses for many years. Threats to Ingrid Vergara alone have prompted us to write to officials in Colombia more than ten letters in the past five years. We are quite concerned that protection measures allocated by your government's National Protection Unit (UNP) to some of the above-mentioned human rights defenders have not been implemented.

We **strongly urge** that you

- order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately provide effective protection to those threatened (including members of partner organizations of MOVICE), in strict accordance with their wishes;
- take action against paramilitary forces and break any links between them and the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator

copies: MOVICE ~ via US mail
Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro ~via US mail
Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax 1 202 232 8643
Kevin Whitaker, US Ambassador to Colombia ~ via fax 011 571 275 4600
Eric Falls, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Dept. ~ via fax 1 202 647 2628
Jose de Jesus Orozco Henriquez, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, via fax 1 202 458 3650
US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

UA 09/15update_Colombia

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