

via Fax: 011 571 596 0631 Sr. Juan Manuel Santos President of the Republic of Colombia	via Fax: 011 57 1 570 2000 Sr. Eduardo Montealegre Attorney General of Colombia
via Fax: 011 57 1 596 0631 General (r) Oscar Adolfo Naranjo Trujillo Minister-Counsellor for Post Conflict, Human Rights and Security	

March 26, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are very disturbed at escalating and violent death threats against fourteen individuals and two human rights organizations.

On March 9, the Black Eagles South Bloc paramilitary group sent an email to the **José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (CCAJAR)** and the **Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners (CSPP)** which stated, "Communist guerrillas...your days are numbered, your blood will be as fertilizer for the fatherland...This message is also for your children and women."

The email named human rights defender **José Humberto Torres** of CSPP and political analysts **Leon Valencia** and **Ariel Avila** of the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation (PARES). It also named three members of the New Rainbow Corporation: **José Aristizábal García**, who returned to Colombia in 2014 following a long exile, **Fernando Hernández Valencia** and **Adolfo Bula**. The death threat also mentions several politicians, including Senators **Claudia López** and **Iván Cepeda**, Mayor **Gustavo Petro** of Bogotá and his colleague, **Gloria Flórez**, all of whom have been active on human rights and peace-related issues.

According to the non-governmental organization Somos Defensores, at least 55 human rights defenders were killed in 2014. Since the second half of 2014 there have been repeated mass death threats by paramilitaries against human rights defenders and those involved in the peace process taking place in Havana (cf our letter of September 25, 2014). Although the Colombian government has a protection program for human rights defenders, the perpetrators of human rights crimes operate mostly with impunity. As long as they are confident that they will not be brought to justice, they will continue to commit human rights crimes.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the death threats described above, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to those threatened, in strict accordance with their wishes and needs;
- 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: Luis Carlos Villegas, Ambassador of Colombia to the US ~ via fax: 202.232.8643
Adam Lenert, Human Rights Officer, US Embassy in Colombia ~ via email: faircloughTL@state.gov
Tabatha Fairclough, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email: faircloughTL@state.gov
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

UA 229/14 Update_Colombia

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