

via Fax: 011 57 1 596 0631
Sr. Juan Manuel Santos
 President of the Republic of Colombia

via Fax: 011 57 1 266 1003
Sr. Luis Carlos Villegas
 Minister of Defense of Colombia

July 2, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply troubled to learn that **Berenice Celeita** (also spelled Celeyta), Director of the Research and Social Action Association (NOMADESC), was kept under surveillance at her home in Bogotá after returning from a visit to the United States and Canada.

From the evening of June 20 until early on June 21, she saw two unidentified individuals in a car parked outside her home taking flash photographs of her house. They immediately drove away when Berenice Celeita called the local police to report the incident.

She had just returned from a tour of the USA and Canada during which she spoke about the serious human rights violations in Buenaventura in Valle del Cauca Department. She emphasized the importance of bringing to justice international economic and other interests that have benefited from human rights abuses for which they have been responsible during Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict.

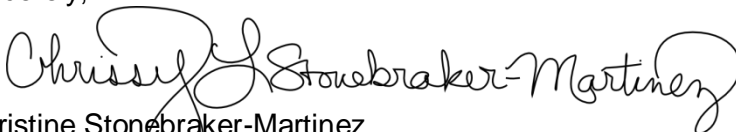
NOMADESC has campaigned for justice in cases of serious human rights violations implicating members of the armed forces—some of whom have been convicted of extrajudicial executions. They have also worked closely with Afro-descendant, indigenous and peasant farmer communities who have faced serious human rights violations committed by paramilitaries and the security forces in the context of large-scale economic projects, including projects in the mining, hydroelectric or agro-industrial sector.

Berenice Celeita and other members of NOMADESC have been repeatedly threatened over many years (cf our letter of Oct. 22, 2013). We believe her life is in danger. We know that human rights defenders who have been under surveillance, including by the security forces, have subsequently been physically attacked.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- ensure protection measures for Berenice Celeita and other members of NOMADESC in strict accordance with their wishes;
- order full and impartial investigations into the incident described above, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders.

Sincerely,



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez
 Co-Coordinator

cc: NOMADESC ~ via US mail
 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
 Tabatha Fairclough, Desk Officer for Colombia, US State Department ~ via email
 José de Jesús Orozco Hernández, Rapporteur for Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: 202.458.3650
 US Senators Brown & Portman and 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: