

PUBLIC

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28 September 2007

UA 251/07      Fear for safety

COLOMBIA      José Manuel Gómez (m), human rights defender  
His family  
Other staff of human rights NGO *Comité Permanente por los Derechos Humanos*,  
Permanent Human Rights Committee

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Human rights defender José Manuel Gómez received an email death threat from an army-backed paramilitary group on 11 September. He is a human rights activist with the national Colombian human rights NGO *Comité Permanente por los Derechos Humanos* (CPDH), Permanent Human Rights Committee.

The message read: "Terrorists like you deserve Death, don't think that shielding yourself in an NGO is going to save you, son-of-a-bitch guerrilla. We declare you to be a military target and we will be carrying out our threat." (*Los Terroristas como Usted merecen es la Muerte, no crea que escudándose en las ONG de Derechos Humanos se va a salvar HP guerrillero. Lo declaramos objetivo militar, y estaremos cumpliendo*). The death threat was signed by the paramilitary group Black Eagles (*Águilas Negras*).

José Manuel Gómez used to work for the CPDH branch in the city of Barranquilla (Atlántico Department), but was forced to leave the city by paramilitary death threats in 2006. In March 2005, a man approached José Manuel Gómez who said he was a member of the Anti-Kidnapping United Action Groups, *Grupos de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal* (GAULA), a joint security force unit which in the Atlántico Department is attached to the army's II Brigade. This man reportedly asked him to provide information and showed him a list of human rights activists in the city of Barranquilla. José Manuel Gómez refused to cooperate.

On 12 January 2006, a man who had refused to give false information to the GAULA against José Manuel and other human rights workers in Barranquilla survived an attempt to kill him which left two acquaintances shot dead. On 19 July 2006, José Manuel Gómez received email death threats from paramilitaries. His name was found on a death list of human rights activists on a computer in the possession of a paramilitary leader belonging to the Northern Bloc, *Bloque Norte*, of the supposedly demobilized United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) in March 2006. He subsequently left the city.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to protect José Manuel Gómez, his family and other members of the *Comité Permanente por los Derechos Humanos* (CPDH), in accordance with their wishes;
- calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats against José Manuel Gómez, to publish the results and bring all those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and to break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.
- calling on the authorities to produce policy and plans, in conjunction with human rights defenders, to guarantee their safety according to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and to make these plans public.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez  
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** +57 1 337 5890

+57 1 342 0592

**Salutation:** Dear President Uribe/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Vice-president of the Republic

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón

Vicepresidencia, Carrera 8A No 7-27, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** +57 1 565 7682

**Salutation:** Dear Vice-president Santos/Estimado Sr. Vicepresidente Santos

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax:** + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

**Salutation:** Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization

Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los DH (CPDH)

Carrera 6 # 12 - 21 piso 2

Bogotá

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 November 2007.