

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

COLOMBIA

Lina Paola Malagón Díaz (f), lawyer

Her family

Other members of the Colombian Commission of Jurists (*Comisión Colombia de Juristas*)

The Colombian Commission of Jurists (*Comisión Colombiana de Juristas*), an NGO working on legal human rights issues, has received a paramilitary death threat declaring that one of its lawyers, Lina Paola Malagón Díaz, is a "military target." The text threatens to kill her unless she leaves the city of Bogotá immediately.

The Colombian Commission of Jurists' office in Bogotá received a fax on 2 March signed by the paramilitary group Black Eagles - Capital Bloc (*Bloque Capital Aguilas Negras*). It accused Lina Paola Malagón Díaz of being a "bitch guerrilla working for the defence of trade unionists" (*puta guerrillera que trabaja defendiendo a los sindicalistas*), and said that the paramilitaries were looking for her and for members of her family. It also included Lina Paola's personal details, including her mobile phone number, which they said they had tapped, and her home address, which they said was under surveillance. It also gave a final warning: "Leave or we will kill you bitch. You have one day to leave Bogotá and do not come back." (*Se va o la matamos zorrilla. Le damos 1 día para que se vaya de Bogotá y no vuelva*).

The threat also accused the Colombian Commission of Jurists of being "full of communist fighters" (*combatientes comunistas*) and mentioned the threat that had forced one of the organization's members to leave the country at the end of 2008.

In the last few months Lina Paola Malagón Díaz has been working on a report on human rights violations committed against Colombian trade unionists by both sides in Colombia's 40-year internal armed conflict. The report and the information included were used in a 12 February hearing in the US House of Representatives, called to evaluate the human rights situation of trade unionists in Colombia. Colombian trade unionists, representatives of international NGOs and relatives of the trade unionist victims of human rights abuses all participated. The evidence they presented challenged Colombian government claims that there had been an improvement in the human rights situation facing the country's trade unionists.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During Colombia's internal armed conflict, the security forces and paramilitaries have often labelled human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations as guerrilla collaborators or supporters. This has led to members of these organizations being threatened, abducted or killed. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders they consider to be siding with the enemy.

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

- calling on the authorities to do everything necessary to protect Lina Paola Malagón Díaz, her family and her colleagues at the Colombian Commission of Jurists, in accordance with their own wishes;
- calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats received on 2 March, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on them to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups, and investigate and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations; and
- 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

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890

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

Vice-President

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón
Vicepresidencia, Carrera 8A No 7-27, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 565 7682 (ask: me da tono de fax por favor)

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: Dear Mr Iguarán/Estimado Sr. Fiscal

COPIES TO:

Colombian Human Rights NGO

Comisión Colombiana de Juristas
Calle 72 No. 12-65, piso 7
Bogotá, Colombia

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 23 April 2009.