

PUBLIC

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UA 129/07 Fear for safety/ death threat

COLOMBIA **Members of staff at the non-governmental organization *Corporación Jurídica Libertad*, CJL (Liberty Legal Corporation) in Medellín, Antioquia Department**

Members of staff at the Colombian non-governmental human rights organization, *Corporación Jurídica Libertad*, CJL (Liberty Legal Corporation) in the city of Medellín, Antioquia Department, have received a death threat. Their lives may be in danger.

On 24 May, a letter addressed to the CJL was reportedly found by the porter of the building where the CJL offices are housed in Medellín.

The letter stated: "Under threat of being declared our military target, (...) do not get your CVs and consciences dirty, and above all do not make us get our consciences and our hands dirty with your blood" (*so pena de ser declarados nuestro objetivo, (...) no ensucien sus hojas de vida ni sus conciencias y sobretodo no hagan que nosotros ensucemos las nuestras de nuestras manos con la sangre de ustedes*).

CJL has reported the threat to the authorities. At the time of writing Amnesty International is not aware if the Colombian authorities have taken any measure to protect those under threat.

The CJL recently published a report on extrajudicial executions in the Antioquia department allegedly carried out by security forces and is campaigning for an end to impunity in these cases. In the past those campaigning for justice in cases of human rights violations have often been the target of serious human rights violations committed by the security forces and their paramilitary allies.

Concern for the safety of members of CJL has been raised by the fact that over the last year members of the organization have been accused of being guerrilla members by security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights organizations campaigning for justice are frequently labelled as guerrilla collaborators or supporters by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. As a result they often suffer "disappearances", killings or torture at the hands of army-backed paramilitary groups, or members of the security forces. Armed opposition 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:

- expressing concern for the death threat sent to members of the *Corporación Jurídica Libertad*;
- urging the authorities to take effective action, as deemed appropriate by the members of these organizations themselves, to protect them so they may continue their legitimate and important work in the defence of human rights without fear of reprisal;
- calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into all threats against human rights defenders, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice, in line with the human rights recommendations of the UN;

- 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 Recognised 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 / 342 0592

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

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Dr. Carlos Holguín Sardi

Ministro del Interior y Justicia

Ministerio Del Interior Y De Justicia, Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá D.C. Colombia

Fax: +57 1 560 46 30

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Sir

Director of the Regional Office of the Attorney General in Antioquia

Dr. Carlos Mario Escobar Alvarez

Director de la Dirección de Fiscalías de Antioquia

Carrera 44 No15 sur- 31 Edificio Mónaco, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Fax: + 57 4 314 06 29

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Director/Dear Mr. Escobar

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

Corporación Jurídica Libertad

Carrera 47 No 53-45 piso 8

Edificio Vicente B. Villa

Medellín, 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 13 July 2007.