

**COLOMBIA** Carlos Hernán Sánchez Díaz (m)] trade unionists  
Antonio Zamanete (m)]

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Army-backed paramilitaries attempted to kill two trade union activists at around midnight on 3 May, in Yumbo municipality, Valle del Cauca Department. Other municipal employees and trade unionists in Yumbo are in grave danger.

Municipality employees Carlos Hernán Sánchez Díaz and Antonio Zamanete were doing the rounds of municipal buildings (schools, health centres and the municipal jail) in Yumbo, which is 14km from Cali. Both men are active members of the SINTRAMUNICIPO Yumbo trade union, which represents Yumbo's municipal workers. They were reportedly in the Trinidad neighbourhood, near an area known as "El Muelle" ("The Pier"), when they were shot and wounded.

The police have suggested that the attack was an attempted robbery, but none of the men's belongings, or their motorcycle, were taken. Local people say that armed men, believed to be members of paramilitary groups, frequent El Muelle, and have killed several others in the area.

Carlos and Antonio were taken to hospital and are reportedly in critical condition ("*estado grave de salud*").

SINTRAMUNICIPO members have reportedly received an increasing number of death threats in the past few weeks, while they have been negotiating with the municipal authorities for their annual salary increase.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Colombian trade unionists are regularly harassed, tortured and killed, as the security forces and their paramilitary allies often accuse them of helping the guerrillas who operate in a large part of the country. Some 67 trade unionists have been killed so far this year, the majority by army-backed paramilitaries, according to the national trade union confederation, *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (CUT).

During a May Day march in Cali, police reportedly beat the Director of the CUT's Human Rights Department, Jesús Antonio González Luna, so severely that he was hospitalised, and is still in intensive care.

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

- urging the authorities to order an independent, impartial and conclusive investigation into the attempted killing of Carlos Hernán Sánchez Díaz and Antonio Zamanete on 3 May, and bring those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of SINTRAMUNICIPO and CUT trade union activists in Valle del Cauca following the attack, and the beating of Jesús Antonio González Luna by the police;
- asking the authorities what they are going to do to guarantee the safety of SINTRAMUNICIPO and CUT members;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Valle del Cauca, and urging that the results are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;

- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Carrera 8 No.7-26  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
**Fax: + 57 1 566 2071**

**Salutation: Dear President Pastrana Arango / Excmo. Sr. Presidente Pastrana Arango**

Minister of Interior

Sr. Armando Estrada Villa  
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry  
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia  
**Telegrams:Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**  
**Fax: + 57 1 562 5298 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")**  
**Salutation:Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro**

Minister of Labour and Social Security

Sr. Angelino Gárzon  
Ministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social,  
Carrera 7 N°34-50,  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA  
**Telex: 45445 MITRA CO**  
**Fax: +57 1 285 7091**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro**

Governor of Valle del Cauca Department

Sr. Germán Villegas Villegas  
Gobernador del Departamento de Valle del Cauca, Gobernación de Valle del Cauca,  
Palacio de San Francisco, A.A. 8759, Carrera 6ª, Calles 9ª y 10ª, Santiago de Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia  
**Telegram: Gobernador Valle del Cauca, Cali, Colombia**  
**Fax: + 57 2 885 8813**  
**Salutation: Dear Governor Villegas Villegas / Sr. Gobernador Villegas Villegas**

**COPIES TO:**

Trade Union Confederation

Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia  
Calle 35 N° 7-25, Piso 9 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**