

PUBLIC

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13 December 2007

Further Information on UA 256/07 (AMR 23/036/2007, 5 October 2007) Death threats/ Fear for safety

**COLOMBIA**                      **Javier Correa (m), President of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos*, SINALTRAINAL)**  
**José Domingo Florez (m), a leader of the Santander branch of SINALTRAINAL**  
**Members of their families**  
**Other members of SINALTRAINAL**

**New name:**                      **Luis Eduardo García (m) leader of the Santander branch of SINALTRAINAL**

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Javier Correa, President of the National Union of Food Industry Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos*, SINALTRAINAL), and SINALTRAINAL leaders José Domingo Florez and Luis Eduardo García have been threatened with death by army-backed paramilitaries. They, their families, and other members of SINALTRAINAL are in grave danger.

On 6 December, a letter containing death threats signed by the paramilitary group the Black Eagles Front (*Frente Aguilas Negras*) was received at the home of SINALTRAINAL leader José Domingo Florez in the municipality of Bucaramanga, Santander Department. The letter accused José Domingo of being a member of a guerrilla group and declared him and his family to be "military targets". The letter also told them to leave the region or face being buried in a mass grave with other trade unionists and their families.

The next day, another letter signed by the Black Eagles Front was received at SINALTRAINAL's offices in Bucaramanga. This letter contained threats to the lives of Javier Correa and Luis Eduardo García, accusing them of being spokespeople for guerrilla forces and declaring them to be "military targets".

The most recent threat was received on 10 December, again from the same paramilitary group. Again the threat was sent to the home of José Domingo Florez. The threat mentioned Javier Correa, José Domingo Florez and Luis Eduardo García, saying that their families were in danger and all of them would be cut up into pieces. The threat also said that time to leave the department was running out and if they did not leave the only place where they would go would be a common mass grave for them and their families. (*... El tiempo para que se fueran de Santander ya se acabó ahora se van es para una fosa común junto con su familia... José Domingo Florez- Javier Correa- Luis Eduardo aleas el Chile ya se van a morir sus familias están en peligro todos van a ser descuartizados y enterrados*).

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In the context of Colombia's 40-year armed conflict, trade unionists are frequently labelled as "subversive" by the security forces and paramilitaries. Such criticisms frequently coincide with periods of labour unrest or negotiations over working conditions. The labelling of union members as "subversive" is often followed by violations of their human rights, including threats and killings.

In recent years, members of SINALTRAINAL have been involved in a number of labour disputes, often with large multinational companies. These disputes have often coincided with reports of human rights violations against union members. SINALTRAINAL members have received repeated paramilitary death threats in recent months.

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

- urging the authorities to protect Javier Correa, José Domingo Florez, Luis García, their families, and other members of SINALTRAINAL, in accordance with the wishes of those at risk;
- calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats against SINALTRAINAL members; 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 fully apply the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders (including trade unionists) and protects their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

**APPEALS TO:**

Vice-president of the Republic

Dr. Francisco Santos Calderón

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

**Fax: +57 1 444 2158 (ask for fax tone: me da tono de fax por favor)**

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

Minister of Social Protection

Dr. Diego Palacio Betancourt

Ministro de Protección Social

Ministerio de Protección Social, Carrera 13 No 32-76, Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax: +57 1 330 5050**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Sir**

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:**

SINALTRAINAL

Carrera 15# 35-18

Bogotá, Colombia

Human Rights Ombudsman

Sr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz, Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 oficina 301, 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 24 January 2008.