

# URGENT ACTION

## ELECTION CANDIDATES RECEIVE DEATH THREATS

**In recent days several candidates standing in Colombia's legislative elections in March have received death threats from paramilitaries.**

On 4 February the Black Eagles Capital Bloc (Aguilas Negras Bloque Capital) sent a death threat by email to the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, **CCAJAR**) and **Iván Cepeda**, a member of the Colombian Congress and of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, **MOVICE**). Iván Cepeda and **Alirio Uribe Muñoz**, the former president of CCAJAR, are standing for the left-wing Polo Democrático Alternativo in the legislative elections that will take place on 9 March. The death threat also named the mayor of Bogotá, **Gustavo Petro**, who has been ordered by the Procurator General to leave office, a decision that is currently being contested in the courts. The threat called on the candidates to withdraw from the election in order to save their lives.

**Aída Abella**, a candidate for the left-wing Unión Patriótica (UP), is also named in the death threat. In recent days, death threats have been sent by paramilitaries to election candidates and members of opposition parties and movements, such as the UP and the Marcha Patriótica, in different parts of Colombia.

On the day the death threat was sent, Colombian media broke the news that military intelligence was reportedly carrying out illegal surveillance and wiretapping against a number of targets, including the peace negotiation teams in Cuba, as well as Colombian NGOs and political leaders. In previous years, illegal surveillance operations of this kind have been carried out in close co-operation with paramilitaries.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Expressing concern for the safety of Iván Cepeda, Alirio Uribe Muñoz, Aída Abella, Gustavo Petro, members of CCAJAR and MOVICE and other candidates to the legislative elections, and calling on the authorities to take action to guarantee their safety, in line with their wishes;
- Urging the Colombian authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces in line with repeated United Nations human rights recommendations.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 MARCH 2014 TO:**

#### President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos  
 Presidente de la República,  
 Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631

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

#### Attorney General

Eduardo Montealegre  
 Fiscalía General de la Nación  
 Diagonal 22B No. 52-01 (Ciudad Salitre)  
 Bloque C Piso 4  
 Bogotá, Colombia

Fax +57 1 570 2000 (when recorded  
 voice answers, dial ext 2023)  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/  
 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Human Rights Ombudsman

Jorge Armando Otálora  
 Defensoría del Pueblo  
 Calle 55 No. 10-32  
 Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 314 7300 (when recorded  
 voice answers, dial ext 4000)  
**Salutation: Dear Human Rights  
 Ombudsman/  
 Estimado Sr. Defensor**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict between left-wing guerrillas and the security forces, which at times operate in collusion with paramilitaries, members of opposition parties, human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been threatened, subjected to enforced disappearance or killed. Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2005, but there is overwhelming evidence that they are still operating and committing human rights violations.

Formal peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have been taking place in Havana, Cuba, since 2012.

Since the late 1980s, thousands of UP politicians and activists have been killed. The UP is again contesting elections, after having lost its official status as a political party. There have also been reports that dozens of candidates and activists belonging to Marcha Patriótica, which was formally established in 2012, have been killed and threatened.

In 2009, the media revealed that the civilian intelligence service, the DAS, which operated under the direct authority of the president, had been involved in massive, long-standing, illegal espionage against human rights defenders, opposition politicians, judges and journalists to restrict or neutralize their work. The operation was reportedly carried out in close co-operation with paramilitary groups. Members of the diplomatic community in Colombia and international human rights defenders were also targeted. Although some members of the DAS were gaoled, and the DAS disbanded, many of the alleged perpetrators have yet to be brought to justice.

Name: Iván Cepeda (m), Alirio Uribe Muñoz (m), Aída Abella (f), Gustavo Petro (m), members of CCAJAR and MOVICE, other candidates to the legislative elections

Gender m/f: both

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