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Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders Annual Report 2009 - Colombia

Political context

In 2008, the Colombian population continued to suffer the consequences of the internal armed conflict that has ravaged the country for the last 40 years. The different actors in the conflict, the regular forces (army and police), paramilitary groups and the guerrilla groups committed violations against human rights and international humanitarian law in the form of, inter alia, extrajudicial executions, disappearances and forced displacements, torture and kidnapping against the civilian population. In this context, at the end of September 2008, a scandal was unveiled concerning the extrajudicial execution by the police of poor young people, who were later described by the army as guerrilla fighters killed in combat.¹ This practice, commonly known as "false positives", falls under the "democratic security" policy promoted by President Uribe in the fight against the guerrilla. It includes a reward system for soldiers, depending on the number of deaths of alleged guerrilla fighters. As a result of these events, an investigation was opened at the end of 2008 and up to forty soldiers were dismissed² but very few were prosecuted. In a Press Release on October 29, 2008, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights repeated its recommendation, formulated in her 2007 Annual Report handed over to the Government and to the armed forces commanders, to continue with their efforts to eradicate extrajudicial executions, adopt measures to prevent, investigate, sanction such acts, and make them public.

The guerrilla of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* – FARC) continued to carry out numerous violations of international humanitarian law, although they seem to have been weakened by the Government's operations in 2008, which resulted in the capture and execution of various important members. On March 2, 2008, the Colombian army executed the second in command of the FARC, Mr. Raúl Reyes, during an operation in Ecuadorian territory, which created political tensions with Ecuador and Venezuela. In addition, on different occasions in 2008, 27 hostages held by the FARC were freed, both in the framework of unilateral releases or releases resulting from Government operations. For instance, in Operation "Jaque" on July 2, 2008, 15 people were released.³

There were a few advances in the Colombian judicial system regarding the fight against impunity, such as the detention and the opening of trials against more than 70 members of the Congress of the Republic, linked to investigations into alleged connections with paramilitary groups, carried out by the Supreme Court of Justice. This laudable work by the Court was nonetheless discredited by President Alvaro Uribe Vélez.

At the beginning of 2008, President Uribe had lodged a complaint against the President of the Supreme Court, Mr. César Julio Valencia Copete, for "libel and slander" in the framework of an investigation and a trial held by the Supreme Court of Justice to dismantle the paramilitary structures infiltrated in the Colombian State.⁴ On this occasion, President Uribe also accused the Supreme Court of Justice of organising a "conspiracy" against him and on June 26, 2008, he reproached judges for "applying selective justice" and "falling into the trap of agonising terrorism".⁵ Then, at the end of June 2008, the Minister for Social Protection and the Commissioner for Peace demanded that the Accusation Committee of the Chamber of Representatives investigate the magistrates of the Supreme Court in connection with drug trafficking and for false charges.

On May 13, 2008, the Government authorised the extradition of thirteen paramilitary group leaders and one drug dealer to the United States, where they face charges of drug trafficking. In total, 17 paramilitary group leaders were extradited in 2008. These individuals were extradited after they had begun to confess their participation in serious human rights violations, in the framework of the implementation of the Justice and Peace Law. This thwarted the course of these trials and promoted the impunity for these violations, preventing the victims from having access to their right to truth, justice and reparation. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR)⁶ and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed their concern regarding these extraditions.⁷

Along with the Afro-Colombian population, indigenous peoples make up the majority of those displaced within Colombia. This is one of the country's main problems, which greatly contributes to the lack of respect of their rights and the failure to recognise their communities. Towards the end of 2008, the Colombian Government recorded more than 2,8 million internally displaced persons in the country. NGOs such as the Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* – CODHES) consider that the figure is much higher, exceeding four million persons displaced by the internal armed conflict since the mid 1980s.⁸ In a recent report, CODHES stated that forced displacement increased by 24.47% in comparison with 2007. According to the same report, at least 76,172 family groups were compelled to leave their homes in 2008.⁹

Colombia was considered under the United Nations Universal Periodic Review on December 10, 2008. During the review, various subjects requiring special attention from the Colombian Government were highlighted by other countries. These included impunity for human rights violations, human rights violations by public forces, paramilitary groups and guerrilla groups, the worrying situation of human rights defenders, the need to take complementary steps to reinforce internal legislation on enforced disappearances, and the need to adopt necessary measures to reduce the number of displaced persons within the country.¹⁰

Wave of repression and threats against defenders following the March 6, 2008 rally

As a result of the rally that was organised on March 6, 2008 by various organisations to pay tribute to victims of paramilitarism and State crimes, high-ranking Government officials publicly declared that it had been organised by the FARC. Furthermore, the rally led to a strong wave of repression through threats, attacks and even the murder of human rights defenders and union leaders between February and April 2008, for having organised the rally.¹¹ As a result of these accusations, four people were murdered.¹² Human rights violations against defenders were encouraged, inter alia, by public declarations such as the ones made by Mr. José Obdulio Gaviria, principal advisor to President Uribe, in an interview to Caracol Radio, on 10 February 2008, in which he claimed that the rally had been organised by the FARC. In this context, Ms. Adriana González Correa, Executive Secretary of the section of the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (*Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos* – CPDH) in the department of Risaralda, was the victim of an assassination attempt on February 29, 2008. On the same day, Mr. Guillermo Castaño Arcila, President of the CPDH in Risaralda, Mr. Mauricio Cubides, member of the Agricultural Worker's Union (*Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Agrícolas* – FENSUAGRO), and Mr. Diego Macías, member of the Peasants' Corporation for Sustainable Development (*Corporación Campesina para el Desarrollo Sustentable* – CORPOCAM), received threats that

designated them as military targets. Moreover, Mr. Iván Cepeda Castro, the representative of the National Movement for Victims of State Crimes (*Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado*), was criticised and discredited following his rejection of the allegations of the presidential advisor Mr. José Obdulio Gaviria on Caracol Radio on February 10, 2008, and his restatement that the members of his movement and the organisers of the rally were against all illegal armed group, "whether they be FARC or paramilitary groups". He also explained that the date of March 6 was chosen since it coincided with the opening of the Fourth National Gathering of Victims of Crimes against Humanity, Genocide and Human Rights Violations, to be held in Bogotá. On February 11, 2008, the National Movement of Demobilised Self-Defence Groups (*Movimiento Nacional de Autodefensas Desmovilizadas*) criticised the rally planned for March 6 in a statement that discredited Mr. Cepeda Castro and suggested that there were links between the March 6 rally organisers and FARC.

Threats and harassment against defenders from paramilitary groups

In 2008, human rights defenders continued to be subjected to threats and acts of harassment, particularly from paramilitary groups. For instance, on April 10, 2008, a threat was sent to various email addresses signed by the paramilitary group "Black Eagles, northern block of Colombia" (*Águilas Negras, Bloque Norte de Colombia*), in which it declared that members of the Farmers and Mining Federation of Southern Bolívar (*Federación Agrominera del Sur de Bolívar – FEDEAGROMISBOL*), the Corporation Sembrar, the Programme for Development and Peace in Magdalena Medio (*Programa de Desarrollo y Paz del Magdalena Medio*), as well as the priests of Regidor and Tiquisio were declared as military targets. In all threats, it was stated that "their names are on the national Government's list of undesired persons who must be eliminated" and it designated them as helpers or members of guerrilla groups. Those defenders and organisations were not only threatened, but also followed in the municipalities of Tiquisio, Arenal, Morales, Aguachicha, La Gloria and Regidor.

Human rights defenders and organisations working in the Nariño region were often the victims of threats and their activities declared illegitimate on several occasions. On February 12, 2008, the Indigenous Unity for the Awa People (*Unidad Indígena del Pueblo Awá – UNIPA*) organisation, in the department of Nariño, which belongs to the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (*Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia – ONIC*), along with 13 other social organisations in Nariño, received threats via email from the paramilitary group "New Generation" (*Nueva Generación*). In addition, on October 23, 2008, various organisations such as the CPDH, the Nariño branch of the National Movement of Victims and the Judicial Corporation Humanity in Force (*Corporación Jurídica Humanidad Vigente*), as well as organisations for the defence of indigenous rights, received a statement via email from the paramilitary group "Gaitanist Self-Defence Forces of Colombia" (*Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*), which accused them of having connections "with the guerrilla terrorist groups operating in the Nariño region". For this reason, the paramilitary group felt obliged to continue with what they called "the antisubversive fight in defence of the States' interests". They also urged "all persons, communities and other so-called human rights organisations in Nariño to begin an internal purge to end their connections with guerrilla terrorist groups for once and for all ...". On another occasion, on November 11, 2008, the aforementioned human rights organisations and the Foundation for Development and Peace (*Fundación Desarrollo y Paz – FUNDEPAZ*), the Nariño section of the CPDH, UNIPA and the Judicial Corporation Humanity in Force received telephone threats in which they were warned that they had 30 days to leave the region. Although the authors of these threats remained unidentified, the threatened human rights organisations believe that they were linked to the threats received on October 23, 2008. Likewise, on November 11, 2008, various human rights defenders received threats. These people included Ms. Jahel Quiroga, Director of the Corporation for the Defence and Promotion of the Human Rights (*Corporación para la Defensa y la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos – REINICIAR*), Mr. Fernando Escobar, Spokesperson for the municipality of Soacha, Mr. Gustavo Petro, Senator of the Republic, Mr. Jorge Rojas, Director of CODHES, and Mr. Iván Cepeda, who had all reported the forced recruitment and subsequent extrajudicial execution of 11 young men from Soacha, who had been identified by the Colombian army as "guerrilla fighters killed in combat" (in the case of above-mentioned "false positives").

Defamation by the authorities and criminalisation of the activities of defenders fighting against impunity and denouncing human rights violations

Throughout 2008, civil society organisations and human rights defenders were subjected on numerous occasions to slanderous declarations by the Colombian Government, coming from both the President of the Republic and his presidential advisers and ministers. Apart from the incendiary declarations made by Mr. José Obdulio Gaviria after the March 6, 2008 rally, on May 6, 2008 whilst in the city of Montería, President Uribe totally discredited human rights activities, thereby putting defenders and human rights organisations at risk. The President stated that "there are people in Colombia, like Dr. Iván Cepeda, who hide behind and thrive on the protection of victims to lead NGOs in order to ask funds from the international community. They use the protection of victims to instigate human rights violations against the people that do not share their ideas. And nothing happens to them. They make use of the protection of victims to travel abroad and discredit the Colombian Government and institutions ... ". In the afternoon of the same day, whilst repeating some of the statements made in Montería, President Uribe again referred to and criticised human rights activities during the commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the Superior School of War in Bogotá. Similarly, on September 9, 2008, on National Human Rights Day, the Defence Minister, Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, used his speech to discredit both the report of the International Observation Mission on Extrajudicial Executions (*Misión Internacional de Observación sobre las Ejecuciones Extrajudiciales*) and the Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination in front of the media and the commanders of all ranks of the armed forces. The Minister proceeded to make dubious allegations about a report that had not yet been made public and he announced its future publication, raising questions about the way in which the Defence Ministry obtains or uncovers information pertaining to NGOs and social organisations. A few days before, information was circulated amongst different communication channels that claimed that intelligence units had established that people linked to the PC3,¹³ the FARC political organisation, were "behind the Final Report of the International Observation Mission on Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity in Colombia". On November 1, 2008, during a community council in Envigado (Antioquia), the President referred to the work carried out by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and particularly to the Director for the Americas of the latter, Mr. José Miguel Vivanco, by saying "I simply want to tell Mr. Vivanco and Amnesty International fellows that they do not need to teach us about human rights, Christian values or democratic convictions ... I would like to remind Mr. Vivanco that he is not our human rights teacher, we do not accept him as such, and here we have lost all respect for him a long time ago".¹⁴

Human rights defenders saw also the criminalisation of their activities and were subjected to judicial harassment and arbitrary detentions. On November 4, 2008 for instance, national police and district units of the Prosecutor's office carried out massive arrests in the municipality of Arauquita, in the Arauca department. Mr. Martin Sandoval, President of the CPDH for that department, was arrested along with thirteen social leaders of the region, and charged with rebellion. They had all reported numerous human rights violations committed against the population during the implementation of the "democratic security" policy. At the end of 2008, Mr. Sandoval remained under arrest and his trial for "rebellion" was awaiting further elements for the investigation.

Murders, serious acts of repression and attacks against defenders of trade union rights and worker's rights

In Colombia, trade unionists are amongst the activists who suffer most repression and, for many years, they have been subjected to repeated threats, acts of harassment, as well as murders. In 2008, the situation did not improve: murder statistics showed an increase in comparison with 2007. According to the Central Workers Union of Colombia (*Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia* – CUT),¹⁵ there were 49 murders of trade union members and leaders, which represents a 25 % increase compared with the figures recorded in 2007 (which amounted to 39). At the end of 2008, the total number of murdered trade unionists in the last 23 years was estimated around 2,694. In this context of strong intimidation, Messrs. Domingo Flórez, Luis Javier Correa Suárez and Luis Eduardo García, leaders of the National

Union of Food Industry Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industrias de Alimentos* – SINALTRAINAL), received death threats on February 12, 2008, signed by the Black Eagles paramilitary group.

In addition, the murder of trade union leaders due to their defence of workers' rights continued. In a short succession of days in March 2008, Ms. Carmen Cecilia Carvajal, a member of the North Santander Teachers' Association (*Asociación de Institutores Norte Santandereanos* – ASINORT), Mr. Leonidas Gómez Rozo, leader of the National Union of Bank Employees (*Unión Nacional de Empleados Bancarios* – UNEB), Mr. Goldardo Antonio Gómez Alzate, delegate for the Antioquia Teachers' association (*Asociación de Institutores de Antioquia* – ADIDA), and Mr. Carlos Burbano, member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Colombian Hospital Workers (*Asociación Nacional de Trabajadores Hospitalarios* – ANTHOC), were murdered in Bogotá, Ocaña (northern Santander), Medellín and San Vicente del Caguán (Caquetá). Similarly, on March 22, 2008, Mr. Adolfo González Montes, leader of the Barrancas section of the Coal Industry Workers' National Union (*Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Industria del Carbón* – SINTRACARBON), was tortured and then murdered in his residence in the city of Riohacha, Guajira. In addition, Mr. Jesús Heberto Caballero Ariza, substitute attorney for the Atlántico section of the National Apprenticeship Service Trade Union (*Sindicato Nacional del Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* – SINDESENA), was found dead on April 17, 2008, his body showing evident signs of torture. Mr. Guillermo Rivera Fúquene, President of the Public Servants' Union of Bogotá (*Sindicato de Servidores Públicos de Bogotá* – SINSRVPUB), a member trade-union of the Colombian Workers Confederation (*Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia* – CTC), who had disappeared on April 22, 2008, was found dead, his body showing signs of torture, two days after his disappearance, in the city of Ibagué, in the Tolima department. However, his family was not notified until July 15, 2008.¹⁶

Serious acts of repression and assaults against defenders of indigenous peoples' rights

In 2008, the leaders of the indigenous and displaced communities were again victims of particularly serious reprisals, which threatened their integrity and their right to life. Those reprisals came as a result of their defence of the interests and the rights of indigenous peoples. Mr. Jesús Emilio Tuberquia, legal representative of the San José de Apartadó Peace Community (*Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó*), was the victim of an attack by two paramilitaries on November 1, 2008. The displaced community and its members have been subjected to threats and other forms of harassment, including murders, for various years. Moreover, on December 16, 2008, Mr. Edwin Legarda, the husband of Ms. Aída Quilcué, indigenous leader and Chief Council of the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council (*Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* – CRIC), who promoted the National Minga of Indigenous and Popular Resistance (*Minga Nacional de Resistencia Indígena y Popular*) on October 12, 2008,¹⁷ was murdered by members of the regular army as he was driving a van allocated to his wife. The day before, Ms. Quilcué had returned from Geneva, Switzerland, where she had participated in the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review.¹⁸

Acts of repression against women's rights defenders

In 2008, defenders and organisations who advocate for women's rights continued to be subjected to acts of harassment, threats and even assassinations. For instance, the members of the Women's Popular Organisation (*Organización Feminina Popular* – OFP) received threats throughout the year. On June 21, 2008, hooded men riding a motorbike distributed a pamphlet in various districts of Barrancabermeja, in which they threatened various organisations, including the OFP. In the night of September 24, 2008, during events that took place in the city of Medellín that night, Ms. Olga Marina Vergara, leader of the Antioquia section of the NGO Women of the Peaceful Route (*Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres* – RPM), who was leading the activities of the RPM in the districts of the north-eastern part of Medellín, was murdered in her residence in el Prado, one of the city's central districts. A group of hit men arrived and fired various times at her, her son, her daughter-in-law and five-year old grandson. These crimes took place at the same time as the RPM was launching in Bogotá its book *Las violencias contra las mujeres en una sociedad en guerra*. This organisation also

fights against the recruitment of young people by illegal armed groups and armed forces, using the slogan "We don't give birth for war" (*no parimos hijos para la guerra*).

Urgent Interventions issued by The Observatory in 2008¹⁹

Name of human rights defenders / NGOs	Violations	Intervention Reference	Date of Issuance
Mr. Armando Montañez and Mr. Jutínico Gomez	Murder / Harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 001/0108/ OBS 010	January 25, 2008
Mr. José Domingo, Mr. Luis Javier Correa Suarez and Mr. Luis Eduardo García	Death threats	Urgent Appeal COL 023/1207/OBS 166.1	February 19, 2008
Mr. Iván Cepeda Castro, Indigenous Unity for the Awa People (UNIPA), National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia (ONIC) and 11 NGOs in Nariño	Defamation campaign / Threats	Press Release	February 20, 2008
Mr. Iván Cepeda Castro	Acts of harassment and intimidation / Fear for personal integrity	Urgent Appeal COL 010/0508/ OBS 078	May 15, 2008
Mr. David Ravelo Crespo	Death threats / Serious harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 002/0208/ OBS 025	February 26, 2008
Ms. Adriana González Correa, Mr. Guillermo Castaño Arcila, Mr. Mauricio Cubides and Mr. Diego Macías	Death threats	Urgent Appeal COL 003/0308/ OBS 034	May 5, 2008
Mr. Leonidas Gómez Rojo and Mr. Rafael Boada	Murder / Grave attack / Serious harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 004/0308/ OBS 037	March 13, 2008
Ms. Ana Maria Rodriguez, Ms. Luz Helena Ramírez, Ms. Diana Marcela Gomez Correal Diana Sanchez, Ms. Jahel Quiroga, Mr. Albeiro Betancourt, Lizarazo, Mr. Luis Sandoval, Ms. Viviana Ortiz, Ms. Diana Gomez, Mr. Francisco Bustamante, Ms. Nancy Carvajal, Ms. Luz Estella Aponte, Mr. Pablo Arenales, Ms. Yulieth Tombe, Mr. Juan Pineda, Ms. Virgelina Chara, Ms. Nubia, Ms. Ester Marina Gallego, Ms. Nancy Fiallo, Mr. Omar Hernandez, Ms. Diana Marcela Caicedo, Ms. Sislisa Arias, Mr. Jorge Ramirez, Ms. Nelly Vellandia, Ms. Blanca Sarmiento, Mr. Libardo Pedrozo, Mr. Alfonso Silva, ONIC, Women of the Pacific Route, Civil Society Permanent Assembly for Peace, the National Movement of Victims (MOVICE), the Association for Alternative Social Promotion (MINGA), the Corporation for the Defence and Promotion of the Human Rights REINICIAR, FUNDIP, ASOPRON, National Association for Solidarity Support (ANDAS), ASDEGO, the National Federation of	Death threats / Serious harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 005/0308/ OBS 038	March 17, 2008

Agrarian Cooperatives (FENACOA), the Association for the Development and Integrity of Women, Youth and Children (ASOMUJER), The Advisory for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) and the Colombian Central Union for Workers (CUT)			
Ms. Carmen Cecilia Carvajal, Mr. Leonidas Gómez Rojo, Mr. Rafael Boada, Mr. Gildardo Antonion Gómez Alzate, Mr. Carlos Burbano	Murder	Press Release	March 19, 2008
Mr. Dario Tote, Ms. Ingrid Vergara Chávez, Mr. Pedro Geney	Threats	Press Release	March 19, 2008
Mr. Adolfo Gonzalez Montes	Murder	Urgent Appeal COL 006/0408/ OBS 043	April 1, 2008
Ms. Ingrid Vergara	Death threats / Harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 007/0408/ OBS 052	April 10, 2008
The Farmers and Mining Federation of Southern Bolívar (FEDEAGROMISBOL), Corporation for Professional Community Services SEMBRAR, Magdalena Medio Peace and Development Programme and priests of Regidor and Tiquisio	Death threats / Harassment	Press Release	April 14, 2008
Mr. Jesús Heberto Caballero Heriza	Murder / Torture	Urgent Appeal COL 008/0408/ OBS 062	April 23, 2008
Mr. Jorge Enrique Gambo Caballero, Ms. Carolina Rubio, Mr. Principe Gabriel Gonzalez, Mr. David Florez, Mr. Javier Correa, Mr. Alfredo Valdivieso, Mr. Juan Jaimes, Mr. Rafael Ovalle, Ms. Martha Diaz, Mr. Miguier Conde, Mr. Mauricio Martinez, Ms. Norma, Mr. José Bautista, Ms. Maria Cardona, Mr. Nicanor Arciniegas, Mr. Pablo Vargas, Mr. Fernando Porras, Ms. Teresa Baez, Ms. María Cedeño, Mr. Nicolás Castro, Mr. José Humberto Torres and Mr. Jesús Tovar	Attempted murder / Death threats	Open Letter to the authorities	April 28, 2008
Mr. Guillermo Rivera Fúquene	Alleged enforced disappearance	Urgent Appeal COL 009/0408/ OBS 067	April 28, 2008
	Death / Torture	Urgent Appeal COL 009/0408/ OBS 067.1	July 29, 2008
Mr. Andrés Gil, Mr. Oscar Duque, Mr. Mario Martínez, Mr. Evaristo Mena, Mr. Ramiro Ortega, Mr. Miguel Angel González Huepa	Release / Judicial harassment / Arbitrary detention	Urgent Appeal COL 019/1007/OBS 122.1	May 20, 2008
Mr. César Tamayo, Mr. David Florez, Mr. Javier Correa, Mr. Cesar Plazas, Ms. Martha Diaz, Mr. Fernando Porras, Mr. William Rivera, Mr. Gustavo Mendoza, Ms. Carolina Rubio, Ms. Nohora Villamizar, Ms. Belcy Rincón	Threats	Open Letter to the authorities	June 24, 2008

Mr. Guillermo Castaño Arcila, Mr. Mauricio Cubides, Mr. Diego Macías	Death threats	Urgent Appeal COL 011/0608/ OBS 110	June 26, 2008
The Feminine Popular Organisation (OFP), the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (CREDHOS), the Peace and Development Programmes (PDP), the Workers' Union (USO), the National Trade Union of Workers of Petroleum, Petrochemical and Related Contractors, Services Subcontractors and Activities (SINDISPETROL), the Trade union of the company Colombian Fertilisers (FERTICOL)	New threats	Urgent Appeal COL 012/0708/ OBS 123	June 23, 2008
Ms. Elizabeth Gómez, Ms. Luz Marina Arroyabe, Ms. Senaida Parra, Ms. Andrea Abello, Ms. Tania Halle, Ms. Yimmi Jansasoy, Mr. Fabio Ariza, Mr. Carlos Torres and Mr. Eduard Mina	Death threats / Harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 013/0808/ OBS 143	August 26, 2008
Mr. Luis Mayusa Prada, Mr. Manuel Erminso Gamboa Meléndez, Mr. José Omar Galeano Martínez and Mr. Alexander Blanco Rodríguez	Ongoing assassinations	Open Letter to the authorities	September 2, 2008
Mr. Yimmi Jansasoy, Mr. Abilio Peña, Mr. Danilo Rueda, Ms. Elizabeth Gómez, Mr. Eduard Mina, Mr. Fabio Ariza, Ms. Luz Marina Arroyabe, Ms. Andrea Abello and Mr. Carlos Torres	Increase in death threats / Harassment	Open Letter to the authorities	September 5, 2008
Ms. Dora Lucy Arias and Mr. Juan Carlos Valencia	Death threats / Harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 014/0908/ OBS 154	September 19, 2008
Domingo Tovar Arrieta, Rodolfo Vecino Acevedo, Nelso Berrio, Rafael Cabarcas, Lenin Fernández, Angel Salas, Juan Mendoza, Miguel Bobadilla, Eberto Díaz, Luis Sandoval, Omar Hernández, Viviana Ortiz, Albeiro Betancourt, Álvaro Londoño, Yesid Camacho, Gilberto Martínez, Ever González y Hernando Hernández, as well as CUT, Corporation Reiniciar, Association for Alternative Social Promotion Minga, USO, ANDAS, FENACOA, National Association of Hospital Workers (ANTHOC), José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (CCAJAR) and the Foundation Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (FCSP)	Death threats / Harassment / Murder	Open Letter to the authorities	September 24, 2008
Ms. Olga Marina Vergara	Murder	Urgent Appeal COL 015/1008/ OBS 159	October 1, 2008
Mr. Walberto Hoyos Rivas	Murder	Urgent Appeal COL 016/1008/ OBS 167	October 21, 2008
Mr. Jesús Emilio Tuberquia	Attempted murder / Harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 017/1108/ OBS 179	November 4, 2008
Mr. Martín Sandoval, Mr. Olegario Araque, Mr. Santiago Gómez, Mr. Gonzalo Losada, Mr. Carlos Botero, Mr. Guillermo Díaz and Mr. José Santos	Arbitrary detentions /	Urgent Appeal COL	November 4, 2008

Ortiz and the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CPDH), the Movement of Victims and the Judicial Corporation Humanity in Force	Ongoing death threats	018/1108/ OBS 181	November 12, 2008
Development and Peace Foundation (FUNDEPAZ), UNIPA and MOVICE	Death threats	Urgent Appeal COL 018/1108/OBS 181.1	
Ms. Diana Nocua Caro	Death threats / Intimidation	Urgent Appeal COL 019/1108/ OBS 184	November 7, 2008
Mr. Fernando Escobar, Mr. Jahel Quiroga Carrillo, Mr. Gustavo Petro, Mr. Iván Cepeda, Mr. Jorge Rojas	Death threats / Serious harassment	Urgent Appeal COL 020/1108/ OBS 186	November 11, 2008
Mr. Carmelo Agamez Berrio	Arbitrary detention / Judicial proceedings	Urgent Appeal COL 021/1108/ OBS 202	November 26, 2008
Mr. Edwin Legarda, Ms. Aida Quilcué, Mr. Joel Pérez Cárdenas	Murder	Press Release	December 17, 2008

1 The Colombian Commission of Jurists (*Comisión Colombiana de Juristas* – CCJ) recorded 1,205 cases of extrajudicial executions directly attributed to the police force between July 2002 and June 2008.

2 See Colombia-Europe-United States Coordination (*Coordinación Colombia-Europa-Estados- Unidos*), September bulletin 2008.

3 Following the liberation of these 15 hostages, the EU Presidency expressed its satisfaction with this happy outcome, whilst reasserting its determination to continue mobilising its resources until the liberation of all hostages. See Declaration of the EU Presidency, July 2, 2008.

4 See José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (*Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo* – CCAJAR).

5 See President of the Republic's Press Release, June 26, 2008. For the Supreme Court's reply, see La Tercera (Chile) July 1, 2008.

6 See CIDH Press Release No. 21/08, May 14, 2008.

7 See Press Release of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Colombia, May 13, 2008.

8 See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), <http://www.acnur.org/crisis/colombia/desplazamiento.htm>. According to UNHCR, in 2008 Colombia was the second country, after Sudan, in terms of the number of displaced persons.

9 See CODHES, Boletín Informativo No 75, April 22, 2008.

10 See Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Colombia, United Nations Document A/HRC/10/82, January 9, 2009.

11 The IACHR, in its Press Release No. 15/08 dated April 10, 2008, expressed its concern about these threats and urged the Colombian State "to investigate, prosecute, and punish those responsible for these threats and to guarantee the security of human rights defenders and social leaders".

12 See Press Release of the OHCHR Office in Colombia, May 13, 2008.

13 The PC3 is the Clandestine Communist Party (*Partido Comunista Clandestino*).

14 See CCJ.

15 See CUT Press Release, February 26, 2009. The CCJ, which only counts cases targeting trade union leaders and not militants, reported 14 cases of assassinations or disappearance of defenders, whilst the National Trade Union College (*Escuela Sindical Nacional* – ESN) registered 49 assassinations of trade unionists in 2008.

16 Subsequent to the aforementioned assassinations, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Hina Jilani, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and Mr. Philip Alston, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of magistrates and lawyers, Mr. Leandro Depouy, recalled that in the first months of 2008, 21 trade-unionists and civil society leaders were murdered, and death threats were sent to defenders from all backgrounds. The Special Procedures called on the Colombian Government to take the necessary measures and to acknowledge the importance of their work, as well as to stop the endemic impunity for the crimes and violations committed against human rights defenders in Colombia. See OHCHR Press Release, April 30, 2008.

17 A National Minga of Indigenous Resistance is a day of community, social and popular unity during which demonstrations and rallies for the respect of the rights of indigenous populations, and in particular their right to land ownership, were carried out. In this case, the Minga was organised by ONIC on the anniversary of the discovery of America, on October 12, with the aim of, inter alia, recalling that since 1492 indigenous populations have been systematically exterminated, as well as to demonstrate in favour of the defence of life and territorial, political, environmental and food rights of indigenous populations. Moreover, the Minga was organised to demand the fulfilment of the Government's promises regarding the distribution of land and to reject the repression they have been victims of. Armed forces retaliated by opening fire against demonstrators, claiming that terrorists were infiltrated amongst them.

18 See EU Presidency Declaration after the violent death of Mr. Edwin Legarda, December 19, 2008.

19 See the Compilation of cases in the CD-Rom attached to this report.