



Juan Manuel Santos Calderón
Presidente de la República de Colombia
Carrera 8, n° 7 – 26
Palacio de Nariño
Bogotá
Colombia

Reference: JH SG 0001.1

May 25, 2014

Dear President Santos

We are writing today to express our concern as members of the International Caravana of Jurists, about the recent statement made by Dr. Jorge Eliécer Molano and Germán Romero, Colombian lawyers and human rights defenders, announcing that they have been forced to suspend their work as lawyers due to the lack of guarantees for their safety.

We have known Mr. Molano and Mr Romero since 2008, and we greatly admire their work as legal advisers in non-governmental associations such as the Sembrar Corporation and dhColombia, and as legal representatives of victims of human rights violations in cases of great importance for human rights and the functioning of the rule of law in Colombia .

This May 14, 2014 Drs Molano and Romero reported that during 2014 there have been several security incidents against them, including:

- Attacks on their families;
- Break-ins to their homes and theft of information;
- Attacks on their emails and website;
- Interception and triangulation of their communications;
- Surveillance.

Jorge Molano has been granted precautionary measures from the IACHR . In January 2013, the National Protection Unit (UNP) defined Dr. Molano's risk level as extraordinary. On March 26, 2014, the Colombian state agreed before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to adopt measures to protect Germán Romero and Jorge Molano. To our knowledge, at the time of writing this letter, these lawyers have received no new security measures.

On the “International Day of the Endangered Lawyer” in January 2014, lawyers' associations protested in different cities around the world about the lack of protection in Colombia for lawyers. According to information from the Attorney General's Office between 2002 and 2012, there were over 4,400 incidents against this group and over 400 lawyers and lawyers have been killed in Colombia since 1991, which means that on average each month one lawyer is murdered. There are also numerous reports describing how, in



addition, human rights lawyers face arbitrary arrests, illegal wiretapping and threats to their lives and personal integrity.

We add our voices to the concerns expressed by the Office in Colombia of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its 2013 report which “found significant delays in the implementation of protection measures by the National Protection Unit, which increased risks to human rights defenders”. Jorge Molano has repeatedly communicated his concern for his safety. We believe that it is vital for the rule of law to guarantee and provide all the necessary resources for those dedicated to the free exercise of defending the rights of victims.

We ask the Colombian state to implement the measures requested by the lawyers themselves:

1. Political: public recognition and support for their work by the Colombian State;
2. Legal: investigation into the security incidents against Jorge Molano and Germán Romero, and sanctions against those responsible, as dictated by Colombian law;
3. Material: provision of the necessary security measures to Jorge Molano and Germán Romero so that they can continue with their work defending the human rights of the victims they represent.

We will continue to monitor the progress of the investigation into all the above threats. We also ask that we be kept updated in respect of the extent to which progress has been made in investigating the above crimes, in bringing those responsible to justice and in implementing the necessary protective measures.

We would be most grateful if you would kindly quote the above reference in your response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Chandler

CC:

Angelino Garzón - Vice President of Colombia

Andres Villamizar - National Protection Unit

Lindsay Croisdale-Appelby - UK Ambassador in Colombia

Todd Howland - Representative in Colombia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Margaret Sekkagya - UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Gabriela Knaul - UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of lawyers and judges

The Colombian Association of Lawyers for Human Rights Defenders - Acadehum