



Ambassador Mauricio Rodriguez  
Embassy of Colombia to the United Kingdom  
3 Hans Crescent  
London SW1X OLN

19<sup>th</sup> March 2012

RE: David Rabelo, Colombian human rights defender and political prisoner

Dear Ambassador,

I am writing on behalf of the Parliamentary Friends of Colombia, representing over 80 UK parliamentarians to express our concern about the case of David Rabelo, Colombian human rights defender imprisoned since 14<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Mr. Rabelo is currently being held in La Modelo Prison, Bucaramanga, on accusations of "conspiracy to commit a crime" and "aggravated homicide".

We understand that before his arrest, Mr. Rabelo was the spokesperson for regional human rights group CREDHOS, and a leading member of MOVICE, Colombia's largest human rights organisation. Mr. Rabelo has made several high profile public denouncements against former president Uribe and his human rights work has led to the imprisonment of numerous paramilitaries and members of the Colombian army.

It is therefore of grave concern that the case against Mr. Rabelo is based on testimonies from former paramilitaries, one of whom - Mario Jaimes Mejía, alias "El Panadero"- was in fact imprisoned as a result of Mr. Rabelo's work. Testifying against Mr. Rabelo has allowed him to reduce his prison sentence from over 40 years, to a maximum of eight.

It is clear that Mr. Rabelo's detention is a reprisal for his work dedicated to the defence of human rights, and an attempt to silence any further criticism. Mr. Rabelo is one of numerous members of human rights organisation MOVICE who have been targeted as a result of their work and is one of hundreds jailed for speaking out in Colombia.

We understand that the final hearing in Mr. Rabelo's trial is taking place from 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 and we hope that your government and the Colombian authorities will do their utmost to ensure that Mr. Rabelo's trial is both free and fair.

We are also extremely concerned by a recent threat against David Rabelo's son, who has been active in the campaign for his freedom. On 8<sup>th</sup> March he received an email signed by the AUC paramilitary group, declaring him a military target and giving him and his young family 24 hours to leave. The email has been traced back to an

**Parliamentary Friends of Colombia**

c/o Tony Lloyd MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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