

David Rabelo Statement, Intersectoral Round Table for the Right to Life, 22 December 2012, Barrancabermeja, Colombia.

A warm greeting to all those present at this event,

Mr. Vice President of the Republic Angelino Garzón, you know what a struggle it is to be a trade union and human rights leader, and because of this you have suffered stigmatisation and persecution by the establishment, to the point that they have not respected your position as Vice President and you have recently been the victim of false accusations supported by a false witness that attempted to link you to the FARC insurgency.

If these accusations are mounted against you, with all the national recognition you have, what can we expect for us simple citizens who have dedicated our lives and efforts to human rights.

It is in this climate of hostilities and stigmatisation that social leaders and human rights defenders carry out their noble work, without any guarantees.

In this country, to carry out the work of a social leader, trade unionist, human rights defender or member of the political opposition, you are exposed if you're lucky to imprisonment or worse to physical elimination by selective or collective assassination.

Hundreds of colleagues from social organisations, human rights groups, or the political opposition have lengthened the list of those assassinated by state or para-state organisms, all with complete impunity.

In this way, I, as a social leader, human rights defender and member of the political opposition, fulfil all the perpetrators' conditions for assassination, and for this reason on multiple occasions they have tried to take my life, including using heavy weaponry, such as a rocket.

The objective was clear; to remove me however possible, first by physical elimination, through assassination and then by way of framing me in a false legal case, to present me not as the victim, as I have been, but rather the perpetrator. And to this end the Justice and Peace Law 975 of 2005 fit like a glove. As paramilitaries are experts in using lies as a weapon of war, with the help of the DAS, the criminal Mario Jaimes Mejía, alias "El Panadero" was placed to make false accusations from the prison of Itagui - the national factory of judicial framings, as it was named by journalist Daniel Coronel. There, following orders from Rodrigo Pérez Alzate alias Julián Bolívar, paramilitary commander of the Central Bolivar Block, the case file was fabricated for alias "El Panadero" to follow.

Following this, "El Panadero" accuses me under the Justice and Peace hearings, of participating in an alleged meeting with former liberal senator Arístides Andrade and members of the FARC, to plan the death of the engineer David Núñez Cala, who was assassinated on 5th April 1991, more than 20 years ago.

Currently, the trial has reached the stage of the public hearings. The case judge approved the evidence we submitted, which had been excluded by State Prosecutor No. 22 of the Anti-Terrorism Unit - the same prosecutor who appealed against the judge's decision to include other evidence submitted by the defence. It is also this same prosecutor who was investigated under orders by the Supreme Court of Justice on 19th January 2011 for his alleged inaction and failure

to fulfil his role as prosecutor in the case of the Chivolo territory in the department of Magdalena, robbed from peasant farmers by paramilitaries in 2006.

In the public hearings, the witness "El Panadero" has given eight contradictory accounts of the facts. The second witness, another paramilitary and an ally of El Panadero as they have stated publically, has also contradicted him.

In addition this story is fabricated by the same paramilitaries convicted to more than 40 years of prison for a massacre on 16th May 1998 in Barrancabermeja, which has continuously denounced by myself and the organisation CREDHOS, in addition to our work accompanying and advising the victim's families.

This story is also full of implausible facts, to the point that one of the witnesses was only 10 years old when the alleged events took place. This witness implicates recognised figures from Barrancabermeja, who according to him participated in a meeting to plan the assassination of David Núñez Cala.

There are so many lies, that as much as the paramilitaries prepare their story, the truth will always out. Because as I have insisted, the truth is there, only lies have to be invented, and the truth is that this supposed meeting never took place. The truth will set me free because I am innocent, I have been re-victimised.

The Justice and Peace process, that we criticised vehemently, as it is an instrument of impunity, is also an instrument of persecution, where the truth is combined with lies, to make these criminals appear as if they were docile doves.

With reason the international judge Baltazar Garzón, has criticised this false process of Justice and Peace.

The case against me is planned with the aim of delivering a blow to the human rights movement and trying to demoralise those of us who carry out this noble work.

They are mistaken, as neither their persecutions, nor the assassinations or imprisonment will break us.

Last year, still a free man, I participated in a meeting with Vice President Angelino Garzón, and he said something important; that we must disarm the rhetoric. I agree; we must disarm the rhetoric, the false positives, the fabricated judicial cases, putting an end to impunity, social exclusion and constructing peace with social justice.

Thank you!

DAVID RAVELO CRESPO