



Standing up for trade unionists in the firing line

www.justiceforcolombia.org

Rt Hon David Miliband MP
Secretary of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

18th January 2008

Dear Foreign Secretary,

We write to express our concern over a series of extra-judicial executions perpetrated in recent months by the Colombian Army. In some cases the killings have been targeted at trade unionists, community leaders and members of the political opposition.

The murders are even more worrying as we fear that some of the soldiers involved have received British military assistance.

As you will be aware, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other respected bodies have recently documented an increase in extra-judicial executions by the Colombian Army – indeed, every year since President Uribe came to power in 2002, the UN has reported an increase in such killings by members of the security forces.

Events indicate that there has been no improvement in the situation and that the Army continues to systematically assassinate civilians in numerous regions of the country. In their most recent report, the UN stated that “Because of their number and widespread occurrence, murders with characteristics of extrajudicial executions do not appear to be isolated incidents”. The report goes on to say that the killings are “not limited to a single military unit; it occurs in various units over a large area of the country.”

In the past, the Foreign Office has confirmed that Britain gives training to the Colombian Army in “counter-guerrilla strategy”, and it is during these counter-guerrilla/insurgency operations that virtually all of the extra-judicial executions in recent months have occurred.

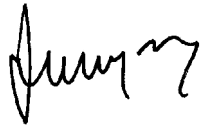
Since August, soldiers that we believe may have received British military training have been involved in 37 murders of civilians (details attached). We

would appreciate it if you would agree to investigate the cases in question, and inform us of your findings. News of what representations the British Embassy in Bogotá made to the Colombian regime at the time of these killings would also be welcome.

As you will be aware, the United States has banned certain units of the Colombian Army from receiving US military assistance due to their human rights records. In addition, last year the US Congress froze a large amount of US military assistance to Colombia in response to human rights violations. We hope that Britain will follow this example, and also agree to make their military assistance dependent on human rights.

For far too long, elements of the Colombian Army have got away with systematically abusing the human rights of the Colombian people. We would urge you to seriously re-consider Britain's support for an Army that has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Dear
Chair, Justice for Colombia



Liam Craig-Best
Secretary, Justice for Colombia

cc: OPEN LETTER

Details of 37 civilians extra-judicially executed by the Colombian Army in recent months

Date:	January 10 th 2008
Name of Victim(s):	Cristian Largo Zapata
Location of Killing:	Hamlet 'La Esperanza' in Riosucio municipality, Caldas department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Ayacucho' Battalion of the 8 th Brigade
Sources:	http://www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=113 and 15/01/08 statement from the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia www.onic.org.co

Date:	January 1 st 2008
Name of Victim(s):	Jose Ermides Escue, Edwin Guerrero & Aleyser Ordonez (all indigenous people)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of Palmar near the town of Timba, Cauca department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Codazzi' Battalion of the 3 rd Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=108 and 14/01/08 statement from the National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia www.onic.org.co

Date:	December 28 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Sigifredo Higuera Ramirez (trade unionist)
Location of Killing:	The town of Facatativa in Cundinamarca department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Manuel Murillo Toro' Communications Battalion of the 13 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=90 and 01/01/08 Urgent Action from the Food Workers Trade Union re-produced at http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2008/01/77003_comment.php

Date:	December 28 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Parmenio Manuel Hernández Anaya (peasant)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of La Poza in Cantagallo municipality, Bolivar department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Calibio' Battalion of the 14th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=105 and 04/01/08 statement from the regional peasant farmer association re-produced at http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2008/01/77176.php

Date:	December 23 rd 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Maria Margarita Giraldo Usuga (peasant)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'Arenas Bajas' in Apartado municipality, Antioquia department.
Army Unit Responsible:	Troops of the 17 th Brigade (Battalion not known).
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=92 and 26/12/07 statement from the San Jose Peace Community www.cdpsanjose.org

Date:	December 22 nd 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Mario Angel Cardona Aristizabal (farmer)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'El Pital' in Argelia municipality, Antioquia department.
Army Unit Responsible:	'Granaderos' 4 th Counter-Insurgency Battalion of the 4 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=91 and 26/12/07 article by the Rural Press Agency www.prensarural.org

Date:	December 18 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Pedro Antonio Infante & Yobanino Choco Ararat (indigenous people)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of Ventura near the town of Timba,
Army Unit Responsible:	'Codazzi' Battalion of the 3rd Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=108 and 15/01/08 statement by the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca re-produced at http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2008/01/77831.php

Date:	December 18 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Jose Albeiro Rendon
Location of Killing:	Village of Santa Marta in Sonson municipality, Antioquia department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Granaderos' 4 th Counter-Insurgency Battalion of the 4 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=91 and 26/12/07 article by the Rural Press Agency www.prensarural.org

Date:	December 14 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Juan Javier Manco Molina (member of the San Jose Peace Community)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'La Balsa' in Apartado municipality, Antioquia department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Voltigeros' Infantry Battalion of the 17 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=92 and 20/12/07 statement from the San Jose Peace Community re-produced at www.dhcolombia.info/spip.php?article449

Date:	December 4 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Ricardo Juanias Hernandez (political opposition leader)
Location of Killing:	Town of Natagaima in Tolima department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Caicedo' Battalion of the 6th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=88 and 11/12/07 press release from the office of Senator Gloria Ramirez www.polodemocratico.net/Senadora-Gloria-Ines-Ramirez

Date:	November 26 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Samuel Navia Moreno (student) & Jhon Carlos Nocua Rueda (shop worker)
Location of Killing:	The rural area of 'El Silencio' in Boyaca department
Army Unit Responsible:	'General Juan Jose Neira' Battalion of the 18th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=87 and 30/11/07 Urgent Action from the World Organisation Against Torture www.omct.org

Date:	November 24 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Misael Arturo Mojica Toscano (farm worker)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'La Coloada' in Sacama municipality, Casanare department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Rondon' Counter-Insurgency Battalion of the 16 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=96 and 03/12/07 article by the Rural Press Agency www.prensarural.org

Date:	November 24 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Duban Antonio Estrada Atehortua (agricultural worker)
Location of Killing:	The rural area of 'La Cristalina' in Argelia municipality, Antioquia department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Barbula' Infantry Battalion of the 14 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=91 and 26/12/07 article by the Rural Press Agency www.prensarural.org

Date:	November 4 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Cristian Largo Zapata
Location of Killing:	Hamlet 'La Cristalina' in Teorama municipality, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	95 th 'Ricardo Diaz' Battalion of the 30 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=72 and 08/11/07 article by the International Peace Observatory www.peaceobservatory.org

Date:	October 23 rd 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Luis Alberto Jimenez & Luis Eduardo Gonzalez (both members of the political opposition)
Location of Killing:	Village of Cano Limon in Tame municipality, Arauca department
Army Unit Responsible:	Unknown but thought to be troops of the 5 th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=59 and 24/10/07 article by the Rural Press Agency www.prensarural.org

Date:	October 16 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Wilmer Jacome (peasant farmer)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of Patiecitos in Convencion municipality, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	'Garcia Rovira' Infantry Battalion of the 30th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 25/10/07 Urgent Action from the World Organisation Against Torture www.omct.org

Date:	October 14 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Adinael Arias Cardenas (community leader)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of La Fortuna in San Calixto municipality, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Terrorist Battalion of the 15th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 25/10/07 Urgent Action from the World Organisation Against Torture www.omct.org

Date:	October 10 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Albeiro Amaya Montejo & 13-year-old Juan Salcedo Durán
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of El Rosario in Catatumbo region, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	Troops of the 2 nd Division (Battalion and Brigade not known)
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 13/10/07 article by the International Peace Observatory www.peaceobservatory.org/10002/asesinatos-torturas-y-amenazas-a-civiles-en-catatumbo

Date:	October 9 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Jorge Eliecer Ortega Bonet
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'La Bogotana' in El Carmen municipality, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Terrorist Battalion of the 15th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 17/10/07 Urgent Action from the World Organisation Against Torture www.omct.org

Date:	October 9 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Carlos Daniel Martinez Ortega (farmer)
Location of Killing:	Village of Caracol in San Calixto municipality, Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	Troops of the 2 nd Division (Battalion and Brigade not known)
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 17/10/07 Urgent Action from the World Organisation Against Torture www.omct.org

Date:	October 5 th
Name of Victim(s):	Jose del Carmen Solano (peasant farmer)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'La Colombiana' in the Gabarra area of Norte de Santander department
Army Unit Responsible:	Troops of the 5 th Mechanised Group of the 30 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=51 and 13/10/07 article by the International Peace Observatory www.peaceobservatory.org/10002/asesinatos-torturas-y-amenazas-a-civiles-en-catatumbo

Date:	September 27 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Jhon Jairo Valero (peasant farmer)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of Maracaibo in Rioblanca municipality, Tolima department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Guerrilla Battalion of the 8th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=40 and 28/09/07 Urgent Action from human rights organisation Reiniciar www.reiniciar.org/drupal/?q=node/152

Date:	September 8 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Simon Coreno, Gentil Yascuaran Pai & Feliciano Obando (all trade unionists)
Location of Killing:	Near the villages of 'Rancheria' and 'El Amarradero' in Orito municipality, Putumayo department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Terrorist Battalion of the 13 th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=22 and press release from the CUT trade union federation www.cut.org.co/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=299&Itemid=450

Date:	September 4 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Antonio Esteban Rojas (community leader)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'Cano Guayabo' in Tame municipality, Arauca department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Terrorist Battalion of the 5th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=20 and 16/09/07 bulletin from the International Peace Observatory www.peaceobservatory.org/9632/ipo-informe-quincenal-no-16

Date:	September 4 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Jose Lozada Quintero
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of 'Cesar' in Tame municipality, Arauca department
Army Unit Responsible:	Counter-Terrorist Battalion of the 5th Mobile Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=20 and 16/09/07 bulletin from the International Peace Observatory www.peaceobservatory.org/9632/ipo-informe-quincenal-no-16

Date:	August 31 st 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Alfonso de Jesus Bedoya Florez (member of the San Jose Peace Community)
Location of Killing:	Hamlet of La Miranda in Apartado municipality, Antioquia department
Army Unit Responsible:	Troops of the 17th Brigade (Battalion not known)
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=25 and press statement from the Spanish human rights organisation ACOMPASZ www.acompaz.org

Date:	August 23 rd 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Ruben Dario Luna Triana (peasant leader)
Location of Killing:	Village of San Pablo in Chaparral municipality, Tolima department
Army Unit Responsible:	Unknown – though the soldiers were also accompanied by a uniformed, armed and masked man
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=45 and 05/09/07 statement from the National Movement of Victims www.movimientodevictimas.org/node/466/print

Date:	August 8 th 2007
Name of Victim(s):	Jairo Rojas Gaona & Victor Antonio Rodriguez (peasant farmers)
Location of Killing:	Village of El Progreso in Granada municipality, Meta department
Army Unit Responsible:	21 st Vargas Battalion of the 7 th Brigade
Sources:	www.justiceforcolombia.org/?link=newsPage&story=27 and 10/09/07 statement from the 'Jose Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers Collective, reproduced at http://colombia.indymedia.org/news/2007/09/71876.php