

Petition to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos

Dear President Santos,

We, the undersigned, are writing to urge the release from prison of Colombian trade unionist, human rights defender, and academic, Liliyany Obando.

Ms. Obando has been held in Buen Pastor Prison, Bogota since 8th August 2008 without being convicted of any crime. Furthermore, the premise of the main evidence against Ms. Obando was ruled to be "inadmissible" by the Colombian Supreme Court in a separate case, yet the case against her continues.

We are deeply concerned that Ms Obando has been jailed for her political beliefs rather than for any crime; that she is being deprived of her liberty in order to silence her and discourage others like her from speaking out about human rights abuses.

We believe that Liliyany Obando is innocent and that her detention is a severe violation of human rights.

The large number of political prisoners in Colombia's jails – be they academics, trade unionists, community leaders or other civil society activists – belies claims that human rights are being respected by the Colombian State.

Yours Sincerely,

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