

Justice for Colombia

Justice for Colombia (JFC) works to support Colombian trade unions and civil society organisations in their campaign for basic human rights and their struggle for peace and social justice.

We fund a variety of projects in Colombia and work in the UK, Ireland and Europe to raise awareness about the situation in Colombia.

We campaign for the freedom of Colombia's political prisoners and against UK military assistance to Colombia. We also lobby the UK and Irish Governments, and the European Union, to put more emphasis on human and trade union rights in their dealings with Colombia and to suspend the proposed EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement in light of the ongoing human rights abuses perpetrated by the Colombian regime.

JFC believes that Colombia needs democracy, social justice and the rule of law, and we support efforts to secure a negotiated political settlement to the Colombian conflict. But we believe this will only happen when those working for peace, human rights and workers' rights no longer face imprisonment, torture and assassination. The Colombian regime must understand that civil society is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

To support our work please join JFC using the form on the reverse. For more information visit our website at www.justiceforcolombia.org call us on +44 20 7324 2490 or e-mail us at info@justiceforcolombia.org

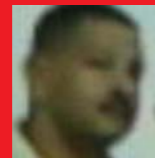
Free Colombia's Political Prisoners



David Rabelo Crespo
Human Rights Defender,
imprisoned 14th September 2010,
La Modelo Prison, Bucaramanga.



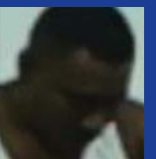
Liliyany Obando
Human Rights Defender and Trade
Unionist, imprisoned 8th August
2008 Buen Pastor Prison, Bogota.



Alexis Antonio Arroyo
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 22nd June 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.



Eulogio Tapiero Galindo
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 22nd June 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.



Manuel Antonio Marquez
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 22nd June 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.



Telmo Cuero Tegue
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 22nd June 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.



Climaco de la Cruz Rodriguez
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 30th June 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.



Faustino Carabali Rodriguez
Trade Unionist,
imprisoned 7th August 2011
Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.

“The Colombian government claims there is freedom of expression, yet they continue to jail their critics. It is time they stopped lying, and set free the innocent men and women they hold prisoner.”

Jim Sheridan, Labour MP

“I want to express my serious concern about the arbitrary arrests and detention (sometimes on a massive scale) of human rights defenders, as well as unfounded criminal proceedings brought against them.”

Margaret Sekaggya the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders



Political prisoners' wing, Buen Pastor Prison, Bogota.

“Colombian trade unionists are locked up simply for their trade union activity, for defending rights that we take for granted in Britain.”

Brendan Barber, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress

“I have been imprisoned simply for speaking out against human rights abuses. International pressure is one of the only ways of securing the release of Colombia's political prisoners, and I urge you to speak out for our freedom.”

Liliyany Obando, Colombian political prisoner, jailed August 2008

FREE COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS



www.justiceforcolombia.org

Colombia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a trade unionist. Thousands have been assassinated, displaced, disappeared and imprisoned without trial.

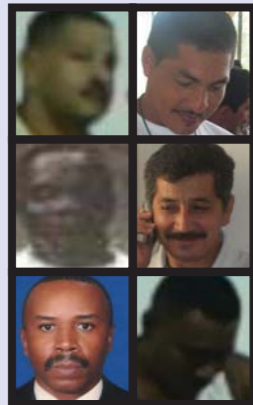
Colombia's political prisoners are not only trade unionists, but also human rights defenders, academics, indigenous and community leaders and student activists – all imprisoned for their opposition to the Colombian regime. Most are jailed without trial, accused of 'rebellion' – a trumped-up charge that the authorities use against their critics.

Political prisoners are kept in appalling conditions in overcrowded jails and are often denied medical attention, exercise time and educational opportunities. Many are tortured upon arrest.

Infants are often imprisoned with their mothers, forced to endure inhumane conditions.

HELP US FREE THEM

Justice for Colombia



THE FENSUAGRO SIX: Trade Unionists

During the summer of 2011, six members of Fensuagro, the Colombian agricultural workers' trade union, were detained in the region of Putumayo. Alexis Antonio Arroyo, Eulogio Tapiero Galindo, Manuel Antonio Marquez and Telmo Cuero Tegue were imprisoned on 22nd June, executive member Climaco de la Cruz Rodriguez on 30th July, and Faustino Carabali Rodriguez a week later on 7th August 2011. All are accused of "rebellion" and are being held in Mocoa Prison, Putumayo.

The cases against them are based on the testimonies of paid informants; unreliable evidence that is often used in false cases against trade unionists. They are just six of more than 75 Fensuagro members currently imprisoned.

In February 2011 all six took part in a high profile event highlighting human rights abuses in Putumayo. It appears their detention is an attempt to silence them.

LILIANY OBANDO: Trade unionist, Human Rights Defender and Academic

On 8th August 2008, Liliany was dragged away from her family in a raid on her house, and has been jailed since then in Buen Pastor Prison, Bogota, on false accusations of "rebellion". She has now been held for more than three years without being convicted of any crime.

Liliany carried out research into violence against trade unionists and travelled to Australia and Canada to highlight the issue. Her arrest came just before she was due to publish an indepth report on the abuses.

Liliany is also a single mother and sole provider for two young children. She has faced both physical and mental abuse from prison guards.



DAVID RABELO: Human Rights Defender

Detained on 14th September 2010, David is currently being held in La Modelo Prison, Bucaramanga, on false accusations of "conspiracy to commit a crime" and "aggravated homicide", without being convicted of any crime.

David is the spokesperson for regional human rights group Credhos and a leading member of the National Movement of Victims (MOVICE), Colombia's largest human rights organisation.

The case is based on the testimonies of former paramilitaries, one of whom was imprisoned as a result of David's human rights work.

MOVICE members have faced a 44% increase in abuses over the last year, including false imprisonment and assassinations.



FREED SO FAR BY THE JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA CAMPAIGN:



Carmelo Agamez, leading member of MOVICE human rights organisation, imprisoned from November 2008 to September 2011

Dr Miguel Angel Beltran, academic and member of ASPU, the Colombian union of university professors, imprisoned May 2009 – June 2011.



Rosalba Gaviria, executive member of FENSUAGRO, the Colombian agricultural workers' trade union and leading women's rights activist, imprisoned March 2009 – June 2011.

Aracely Canaveral Velez, leading member of the informal workers' trade union, ASOTRACOMERCIANT, imprisoned January 2011 – May 2011.



Samuel Rojas, leading member of the Bajo Ariari Regional Human Rights Committee, imprisoned September 2010 – February 2011.



Alirio Garcia, executive member of FENSUAGRO, the Colombian agricultural workers' trade union, imprisoned August 2009 – March 2010.

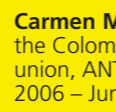


Andres Gil, leader of ACVC association of peasant farmers, imprisoned September 2007 – August 2009.

Miguel Gonzalez, leader of ACVC association of peasant farmers, imprisoned January 2008 – June 2009.



Martin Sandoval, regional president of the Permanent Committee for Human Rights, imprisoned November 2008 – May 2009.



Carmen Mayusa, leading activist in the Colombian health workers' trade union, ANTHOC, imprisoned May 2006 – June 2008.

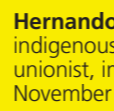


Nieves Mayusa, activist in the Colombian agricultural workers' union, FENSUAGRO, imprisoned May 2006 – June 2008.

Raquel Castro, activist in the teachers' trade union, imprisoned August 2004 – August 2007.



Samuel Morales, regional leader of the teachers' trade union, imprisoned August 2004 – April 2007.



Hernando Hernandez Tapasco, indigenous leader and trade unionist, imprisoned June 2005 – November 2005.



Hernando Hernandez Pardo, former national president of the oil workers' trade union, USO, imprisoned December 2002 – March 2004.

2 THINGS YOU CAN DO

1 Join Justice For Colombia

Fill in the below form and post, along with your membership fee, to: Justice for Colombia, 4th Floor, 75-77 St John St, London EC1M 4NN. You can also download this form or join online via our website www.justiceforcolombia.org. To set up a standing order please contact our office.

Name

Organisation

Branch

Address

Postcode

Email

Telephone

ANNUAL AFFILIATION RATES:

- £18** Individual membership (waged)
- £6** Individual (unwaged/low income)
- £90** Trade Union Branch (over 500 members)
- £60** Trade Union Branch (under 500 members)

Please also make a donation to support our work for political prisoners

Donation £

2 Send the below postcard to the Colombian Ambassador calling for the release of Colombia's political prisoners

Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to express my concern about the hundreds of political prisoners currently held in Colombian jails. They are members of the opposition: human rights defenders, trade unionists, community leaders, students, teachers and academics, jailed in order to silence them.

I would like to draw your attention to the eight political prisoners pictured on the front of this card. All are government critics imprisoned without being convicted of any crime.

The Colombian government's practice of imprisoning people for their political beliefs is unacceptable, and belies claims that they are committed to improving human rights.

Please forward this message to the Colombian authorities urging them to put an end to this situation and release these political prisoners and others like them without delay.

I look forward to progress in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Organisation

Ambassador to Colombia

Colombian Embassy to the UK

3 Hans Crescent

London

SW1X 0LN