

24 de Junio, 2008

President
ALVARO URIBE VELEZ
Palacio de Narino
Bogota, Colombia
South America

Dear President Uribe :

We write to you to express our strong support for the courageous report of Ivan Cepeda Castro and the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) on the worrisome influence of paramilitaries in the Universidad de Cordoba, an important institution of higher education in northern Colombia.

MOVICE called attention to the fact that the head of the university, Rector Claudio Sanchez-Parra, was chosen by paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso. Mancuso has for the past several years exerted strong influence over appointments in the university. During this period 19 members of the academic community have been murdered. Rector Sanchez is the subject of investigations by the Attorney General's office for his ties to paramilitaries, and has appointed several relatives of Mancuso to university posts.

Those professors, students and employees who oppose the corruption and violence brought by the paramilitaries, and particularly those who are members of the union for university personnel, SINTRAUNICOL, have had their lives threatened. An attempt on the life of one of the union's leaders was made after Claudio Sanchez became Rector.

We are particularly distressed that you have personally commended the Rector and severely criticized Mr. Cepeda and MOVICE, whose defense of the victims of paramilitary and state-sponsored violence we celebrate.

We call upon you to end paramilitary influence in the university and guarantee a respectful academic environment free of threats. Instead

of crass personal criticisms of Mr. Cepeda show him the respect a true friend of letters deserves.

We pledge to focus our attention on the Universidad de Cordoba, and support the courageous efforts of those who seek to end the destructive paramilitary influence there.

Sincerely,

Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor (retired) MIT
John I. Laun, President Colombia Support Network
Eunice Gibson, Adjunct Professor of Law at Lakeland College and MATC
Al Gedicks, Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Marc Becker, Truman State University
Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Detroit
Dan I. Bolef, Professor Emeritus, Washington University, St Louis
Regina Birchem, PhD
Mark M. Giese, Racine Wisconsin
William Aviles, Professor of Political Sciences, University of Nebraska-Kearney
Al Gedicks, Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Nancy McClintock, member WILPF
Natalia Jaramillo, Founder Committee, Civic Human Rights Network Colombia
Dave A. Davis, Kansas City
Father David Wanish, Diocese of Madison
Dan Kovalik, USSW, Associate General Counsel
Marian Seagren Hall of Wausau, Wisconsin
Joshua Clark, University of Texas, Austin
Nicolas Zakzuk, Miami
Edith Ballantyne, Special Adviser on United Nations to WILPF
Robert W. McChesney, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Ann Tiffany, CSN Central New York
Luis Alfonso Hernandez
Fredrik Jansson, President Colombianätverket, Stockholm, Sweden
Lynn Biddle, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Pat Stoner
Zoltan Grossman, Faculty in Geography and Indigenous Studies, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington
Sister Frances Hoffman, O.P. Sun Prairie Public Library

Luis Alonso Cardona Betancourt, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Islas Canarias
Philip E. Gates, Retired Superintendent of Schools, Arizona
Enrique Santiago Romero- Abogado, Madrid, Espana

cc Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice

Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon

US Ambassador to Colombia William Brownfield

Colombia ' s Ambassador to the US Carolina Barco