

Bogotá, May 12, 2010

Dr. FABIO VALENCIA COSSIO
Minister of the Interior and of Justice
Bogotá

Ref: Of. DDH-0250 010586 dated May 4, 2010

With all due respect:

Thank you very much for your letter of last May 4 in which you refer to the threats on my life that have appeared on walls of the city, and for your offer to use on my behalf your office's program for the protection of human rights.

While I thank you for your offer, I respectfully refuse it, for the same reasons that I gave in 1996, in 1998, and in 2006, when I wrote to the government's different security agencies. They had insisted that I accept their security plans. I will repeat those reasons for the sake of transparency.

1. The only reason that my life and safety could be at risk is that I file complaints about serious violations of fundamental human rights by agents, direct or indirect, of the government against defenseless people and communities, because my work has been focused on this kind of accompaniment for several decades. *It would be illogical to be protected by the same institutions that have perpetrated the violations.*
2. I believe that the people I work to support, whose most elemental human rights have been violated, run much greater risks than I do. Because of that, I would not be comfortable if I were to be protected while they were not, since my work for them is the real reason that I have been threatened.
3. I cannot in conscience permit or allow any weapon to be purchased or its use to be justified because of me, or much less that a human being carry arms because of me. I am convinced that the dynamic that leads people to arm themselves to defend others leads to a greater and greater spiral of violence. That makes it more and more difficult to achieve civilized solutions.
4. Personally, I could not bear it if anyone, in order to defend me, were to injure or kill another human being. If there is a risk of death, the death that would be most disturbing to my conscience would be if someone would be killed by a person defending me, even an attacker.
5. In my experience with others who have accepted protection plans from government agencies, these plans gradually push aside the people who need them most, that is, the

victims. The majority of them have been traumatized by the use of weapons against them and their loved ones.

The full text of these reasons has remained for 14 years in the files of the various security agencies of the government and I will now update the authentication.

The current situation has allowed the public to become aware of the profound levels of corruption and unscrupulousness in the most important security agency, the one attached to the President of the Republic. Although all of my efforts to respect Article 15 of the Constitution, which provides a person the right to inspect reports that the government maintains about him or her, have been barred, even by justices of higher courts, some reporters have sent me parcels of information that demonstrate that the DAS (Colombian FBI) has followed me and my activities for 20 years. The DAS has carried out an elaborate plan of “offensive intelligence”. It’s apparent objective was to obstruct all of my activities, to disparage me before society and to create phony dramas that could be used as part of some judicial frame-up. You will understand, Mr. Minister, that I would not do well to seek the protection of the government after I have revealed all of these truths, even had there not been more weighty ethical reasons, as stated above.

Permit me then, Mr. Minister, as I thank you for your offer and for your good intentions, I must at the same time sincerely make clear my refusal. I have already signed, in the presence of the National Police officers who visited me, the relevant refusal documents for the protection of the government, assuming all of the responsibility that goes along with my refusal.

Respectfully,

Javier Giraldo Moreno, S.J.