

October 6, 2006

Dr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez,
Cra. 8 No. 7-26,
Palacio de Nariño,
Santa fe de Bogotá,
COLOMBIA

Via Fax: (571) 566-2071
Original by mail

Dear Mr. President,

My name is Barry O'Neill and I am the President of British Columbia's largest union. My role as a leader is to work with my constituents to make sure their rights and abilities to be active members in our communities is recognized as a basic human right. We may not always agree with that constituents position but we will be sure the right to do so is protected to its extreme.

With that in mind, I am writing on behalf of CUPE to express our very deep concern regarding the continued persecution of civil society leaders in the Valle de Cauca region of Colombia. We have recently heard of the existence of judicial documents (FGN CTI SIA 358 and 359) that outline false information about 13 trade unionists, political opposition leaders and human rights defenders in order to charge them with crimes of rebellion and terrorism.

Our union supports the work of several of these people including human rights defender, Berenice Celeyta who was a special guest at our 2003 convention and labour leader, Carlos Gonzalez who spoke at our 2006 convention. We are shocked and dismayed that their efforts to defend and promote human rights and labour rights for all Colombians is met with such intimidation. The fact that this case was being developed by investigators within the Fiscalía of Colombia is shocking and requires action from the highest levels of the Colombian government.

In order to safeguard the rights and lives of these civil society leaders, we strongly encourage you to:

1. Insure that the security and physical well-being be guaranteed for those Colombians named in the documents FGN CTI SIA 358 and 359;

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2. Guarantee their freedom to continue their professional work; and
3. To investigate and bring to justice the intellectual and material authors of this egregious act;

I look forward to hearing your response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Barry O'Neill
President
Canadian Union of Public Employees British Columbia Division

C: Vicepresidencia de la República, Dr Francisco Santos
Procuraduría General de la Nación, Dr. Edgardo José Maya Villazón.
Defensoría del Pueblo, Dr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz
Misión Permanente de Colombia ante las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra.
Canadian Ambassador to Colombia, Matthew Levin
NOMADESC
Prohibido Olvidar
Canadian Labour Congress
BC Federation of Labour
CUPE National