

**Nizkor Int. Human Rights Team**  
**Derechos Human Rights**  
**Serpaj Europe**  
**Urgent Solidarity/Information 13/12/2001**

i) OILWORKERS UNION PRESIDENT IN CARTAGENA, AURY SARA MARRUGO, ASSASSINATED.

Human rights and social organisations, trade unions, members of the National and International Human Rights Campaign Against Privatisation and the Criminalisation of Social Protest repudiate and condemn the vile

assassination committed on our comrade and friend AURY SARA MARRUGO and we urge the national Colombian and international community to demand that the Colombian government puts an end to the genocide that is being committed against trade union leaders in Colombia.

The facts:

1. On Friday 30th November 2001 AURY SARA MARRUGO, President of the Cartagena Branch of the oilworkers union USO was at 8.35am travelling from his home to the USO office in Cartagena, accompanied by his bodyguard ENRIQUE AREYANO, in their car registration number CGS 897. He was stopped by several armed men from three vehicles (blue and grey cars and a red van) who forced him to get out of his vehicle and took him off to an unknown destination.

2. On 3rd December 2001 the self named Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) [lit. United Self Defence of Colombia] admitted having trade union leader AURY SARÁ MARRUGO in their power and they demanded the presence of Camilo Gómez, High Commissioner for Peace. According to this group which communicated with the Commissioner through the internet, the union leader "... has been found guilty of multiple crimes by the tribunal, including kidnapping, cattle robbery, extortion and terrorism". They assured that "We are only disposed to hand him over to you in person in one of our camps in the jungle and then you will explain to us what you are really doing as Commissioner".

3. At about 10.30am today, 5th December 2001, as humanitarian actions were being taken by USO to liberate the comrade, AURY SARÁ MARRUGO was found dead along with his bodyguard.

4. This vile assassination of our comrade adds to the detention by order of the Special Attorney 241 in Bogotá on 16th October, one day before the national stoppage that USO had prepared to protest against the violation of the human rights of their members, the following USO leaders:

- LUIS VIANA ex-president of the USO refinery section, who is now retired, in Santa Marta;
- EDGAR MOJICA president of USO Bogota, in Bogota
- RAMON RANGEL Human Rights and Peace Commission of USO;
- JAIRO CALDERON ex-leader of USO Barranca currently in the administration of state oil corporation Ecopetrol;
- FERNANDO ACUNA ex-president of Fedepetrol and sacked by Ecopetrol;
- ALONSO MARTINEZ worker at Ecopetrol who was displaced due to death

5. Previously there were the assassinations of ARTURO ESCALANTE MOROS in the town of Tibu in Northe Santander Department. That same day FERNANDO LERMA a temporary worker at the oil refinery in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, was assassinated.

6. Moreover there have been constant death threats and murder attempts on HERNANDO HERNANDEZ, who is the National President of USO. several other leaders of the union have been followed and cahsed. In May 2001, EDGAR MOJICA, President of the Bogotá Branch of USO and DANIEL RICO, Vice-President of FUNTRAENERGÉICA and Press and Publicity Secretary of USO's National Executive Committee received threatening telephone calls at the office of USO's negotiating commission and at the Bogota USO headquarters, where it was announced that there would be attempts on their lives if they continued with trade union activity. The suspects who made the calls identified themselves as members of the "Capital Block" of the self styled AUC.

7. In June and July 2001 USO leaders in Bogota reported to the authorities that they were permanently being followed by individuals on high capacity motorcycles, and that this surveillance continued in the immediate vicinity of the trade union office and the Ecopetrol headquarters from several vehicles, particularly by men in a grey Toyota van without number plates who carried hand guns and rifles.

8. Then the report of death threats on the USO leaders lead the Bogota police and the special security unit SIJIN to carry out a risk study, which concluded that it was urgently necessary to set up a security scheme for the threatened leaders. This consisted of a vehicle to move around in, two bodyguards that they trusted, arms, bullet proof vests, communications, and walky-talkies linked into the system used by trade unionists and human rights defenders. However nether Ecopetrol nor the Interior Ministry provided the necessary guarantees for the security of the threatened leaders. On the contrary the persecution grew worse and has reached the dramatic point of these two terribly sad murders.

WE DEMAND:

a. That the Colombian state suspends whatever order of execution or assassination, arbitrary detention, forced disappearance that its officials are intending to carry out against the lives and security of leaders of the Union Sindical Obrera - United Workers Union and other trade unionists and human rights defenders in Colombia.

b. That investigations are set in motion to identify and punish in exemplary fashion the intellectual and material authors of the assassination of AURY SARA MARRUGO and his bodyguard ENRIQUE AREYANO as well as the other assassinations and forced disappearances against trade union and social leaders in the country.

c. That all necessary operations are carried out to arrest members of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia who admitted publicly that they had AURY SARA MARRUGO and ENRIQUE AREYANO in their power.  
[see <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/auryauc01.html> ]  
[SPA/ESP]

d. We demand that the Colombian state guarantees the free exercise of trade union activity, and the promotion and defence of human rights by

USO  
is included.

e. That the results are given publicly of the investigations into those responsible for the genocide against the working class, the trade union, social and human rights activists and leaders.

Colombia, 5th December 2001

Asociacion Para la Investigacion y Accion Social - NOMADESC;  
La Union Sindical Obrera - USO; Sindicato de Trabajadores de Las  
Empresas Municipales de Cali - SINTRAEMCALI;  
Cooperacion Servicios Profesionales Comunitarios - SEMBRAR  
Sindicato De Los Trabajadores Universitarios De Colombia - SINTRAUNICOL  
Central Unitaria De Los Trabajadores CUT - VALLE DEL CAUCA  
Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Mineria en Colombia - SINTRAMINERCOL  
Movimiento Estudiantil del Valle del Cauca y Narino  
Fundación Comite De Solidaridad Con Presos Politicos Seccional Valle  
del  
Cauca; Sintramunicipio Bugalagrande; Sintramunicipio Yumbo;  
Sintramunicipio Dagua; Sintrametal Yumbo; Sutev; Asonal Judicial Valle  
del Cauca; Sintrahospiclinicas; Sinaltrainal Bugalagrande.

[English version obtained through the Colombia Solidarity Campaign, Uk]

-----  
ii) THE NATIONAL UNITARY EXECUTIVE CONDEMNS THE ASSASSINATION OF THE  
COLOMBIAN OIL WORKERS UNION'S LEADER, AURY SARA MARRUGO.  
<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/aur03.html> [SPA/ESP]

Today (5 December) the bodies of assassinated comrade AURY SARA MARRUGO and his bodyguard ENRIQUE ARELLANO were found in the municipality of Marialabaja, Bolivar. They had been abducted on 30 November in the city of Cartagena, a kidnapping subsequently attributed to the paramilitary organisation, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), who said their release was conditional upon the Commissioner for Peace (Camilo Gomez) coming in person to collect them.

This premeditated crime can be added to the list of 147 trade unionists who have been assassinated so far this year and shows once again the total lack of protection and the absolute ineffectiveness of State action to guarantee human rights and the freedom to carry out trade union activities.

We categorically refute the AUC accusation that comrade Aury Sara was an  
ELN commander. He was a genuine representative of the oil workers and was assassinated, like so many others, for simply being a trade unionist. Attempting to justify their crime in this way constitutes, in our view, a serious assault on the possibilities of initiating peace talks with the Peoples' Liberation Army (ELN) and is an attempt to sabotage the renewal  
of negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia \_  
Peoples' Army (FARC\_EP), and part of a sinister strategy to intensify the war and, by doing so, create conditions favouring foreign military intervention, a possibility made even more likely by the so-called 'war on terrorism'.

We call your attention to the fact that this crime was committed in the midst of a scandalous media campaign which raised the profile of those

armed confrontation.

The government bears a heavy responsibility, not only because they did not do enough to save the life of comrade Aury Sara, but also because, once again, the precariousness and ineffectiveness of the protection programmes for trade unionists were plainly evident. But most of all because they show no real commitment to a policy of dismantling paramilitary groups which are exterminating all those involved in popular struggles.

The National Unitary Executive expresses its deepest and most intense solidarity with the Union Obrera Sindical (USO) and with the relatives of the victims and calls on all Colombian workers to express their grief and indignation by holding a NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST on 6 December, with public declarations, meetings and other mass actions in workplaces wherever they may be.

In addition, the Executive calls on the international trade union movement, on Human Rights NGOs at the United Nations and on world public opinion to show solidarity with Colombian workers so that this barbarity can be stopped and our country can be encouraged to respect human rights and trade union freedoms, and to make it possible for a negotiated solution to the conflict so that we can build peace with social justice.

Bogotá, 5 December 2001

National Unitary Executive  
CUT CTC CGTD CPC

[English version obtained through the Colombia Peace Association, Uk]  
-----

iii) 143 TRADE UNIONISTS ASSASSINATED IN COLOMBIA UP TO NOVEMBER 27, 2001.

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/cut143.html> [SPA/ESP]

The Human Rights Department of the CUT asks how many deaths must we denounce before the National Government takes the relevant measures to stop this war that has been declared against our leaders, activists and unionised workers, who continue to be victims of all manner of human rights abuses as in the following:

- On 26th November 2001 at 2:00 p.m. JHON JAIMES SALAS CARDONA was taken from his residence in Abriaquí Municipality, Antioquia Department. The comrade is director of La Milagrosa College and a representative of the Antioquia Teachers Association ADIDA - CUT.

We call for URGENT ACTION to save the life of this comrade, so that he may be returned safe and sound to his family and friends.

- On 25th November 2001 at 11:00 p.m. JORGE ELIÉCER GONZALEZ was taken from his house in Natagaima Municipality, Tolima department and he was found in the same area the following day, assassinated and with signs

torture. The comrade was president of the Natagaima branch of the healthworkers union, the National Association of Workers and Employees in Hospitals, Clinics, Consultancies and enteres dedicated to the helath of the Community ANTHOC - CUT.

- On 24th November 2001 GONZALO SALAZAR was assassinated in the city of Cali, Valle del Cauca Departament; he was the presidnet of the United Security Guards Union of Colombia SINUVICOL-CUT.

How many comrades have they assassinated in this struggle for something so natural as the defence of civil and political liberties?  
When will we reach our dream of liberty and democracy in Colombia?  
When will it be possible to live with dignity in Colombia?

There are many question marks over this anti-democracy and that the National Government does not seem to have a response, it only sees that we are an obstacle to the development of its neoliberal policies that are leading Colombia into a social deterioration without precedent in history, that is reflected in the unmeasured increase in threatened and displaced people, in the silent death of thousands of families who have no hope for a dignified future because, we reiterate, the guarantees of life do not exist in Colombia.

We continue to call on the solidarity of the International Community for the Colombian people, demanding the Government respects fundamental rights and that the state terrorism stops.

November 27, 2001

Domingo Tovar Arrieta  
Organisation Department/Human Rights  
Unitary Workers Union of Colombia - CUT

[English version obtained through the Colombia Solidarity Campaign, Uk]  
-----

#### iv) SYSTEMATIC PERSECUTION AND ASSASSINATION OF WORKERS, ACTIVISTS AND UNION LEADERS.

The Human Rights Department permits itself to denounce the National government for not guaranteeing our lives and allowing all acts against the human rights of workers, activists and union leaders to be carried out.

To date statistics record 133 assassinations, 24 attempts at assassinations, 71 disappearances of which 15 appeared dead with signs of torture and 23 appeared safe and sound, and finally, 33 continue disappeared and abducted.

#### ASSASSINATIONS

- The 14th of November, 2001, DIEGO DE JESUS BOTERO was assassinated in the Municipality of Cartago in the Department of the Valle del Cauca. He had been District Attorney of the Board of Directors of the Assistant Management in Cartago of the Workers and Employees of Public Services Union, Autonomous and Decentralized Institutes of Colombia -SINTRAEMSDES-CUT-.

- The 13th of November, 2001, EMIRO ENRIQUE PAVA DE LA OSSA was

Antioquia. He had been a union leader of the Assistant Management of Magdalena Medio region and a delegate to the National Assembly of the Oil Industry Workers Union –USO-CUT.

- The 12th of November 2001, the teacher TIRSO REYES was found assassinated on the highway between the Municipalities of Burgos and Santa Rosa in the Department of Bolivar. This companion had been disappeared the previous day in the same region. He had been a member of the Only Union of Educators of Bolivar –SUDEB-CUT-.

- The 10th of November, 2001, EDGAR SIERRA PARRA, was found assassinated and tortured in the Municipality of Puerto Rondon, Department of Arauca. This companion had been abducted the 3rd of October, 2001 in the Municipality of Tame, Department of Arauca. He had been an activist in the National Association of Workers and Employees of Hospitals, Clinics, Offices and Entities dedicated to providing health services to the community – ANTHOC-CUT-.

#### ABDUCTIONS

- The 5th of November, 2001, CARLINA BALLESTEROS GARCIA was abducted was on her way to the Municipality of Magangué. She is a teacher in the township of Tiquiso, Municipality of Puerto Rico, Department of Bolivar and she is a member of the Only Union of Educators of Bolivar –SUDEB-CUT.

- The 3rd of November, 2001, JORGE ENRIQUE POSADA was abducted along the highway that leads from Medellín to the Municipality of Caldas, Department of Antioquia. This companion is Civil Judge 12 and is a member of the National Association of Functionaries and Employees of the Judicial Branch.

The previous acts of barbarity demonstrate clearly the imminent danger in which we, unionized workers, find ourselves. They are also proof of the lack of guarantees on the part of the Government to exercise union rights in Colombia where the disrespect for life and human dignity is tolerated. Also the framework in which these crimes against unionism find themselves, is within the complete impunity allowed by the judicial power of the State.

#### 25 ATTEMPTS AGAINST LEADERS, ACTIVISTS AND MEMBER WORKERS OF OUR CENTRAL IN THE YEAR 2001

The Department of Human Rights allows itself to denounce that on November 16th, 2001, in the Municipality of Yumbo, Department of the Valle de Cauca, CARLOS ARTURO MEJIA POLANCO was a victim of attempted assassination with a firearm. He was a member of the Assistant Management of the Yumbo Branch of the United Workers Union of the Construction Materials Industry – SUTIMAC-CUT-.

The criminal act was carried out by a man who fired and shot the companion, Mejia Polanco 3 times. His present state of health is critical.

It is definitely the aim of the extreme right to exterminate us since

employees. These latter do not show willingness or political commitment to guarantee our lives and in this manner, our union rights.

With what concerns the violation of our fundamental rights, the sole body responsible in the Colombian State along with the President of the Republic, Dr. Andres Pastrana Arango being at the head. He is characterized by rhetorical speeches in the national field and internationally he paints himself as another victim of what is happening with the intention of applying dirty war tactics. This war is principally being carried out by paramilitary groups to whom no policies permitting the capture of those responsible for the planning and concession of materials for the members of these death squads, are applied. This creates a framework of complete impunity with regards to these serious acts that are being carried out against Colombian Unionism.

Jesus Antonio González Luna  
Director of the Department of Human Rights

[Source: Unitary Workers Union of Colombia (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia-CUT), 22Nov01]

-----

#### v) PROTEST IN COLOMBIA IS CRIMINALIZED

- The Department of Human Rights of the Workers Central Union of Colombia –CUT-, denounces, before all national and international human rights organizations, the repression of which were victims the workers of the University Hospital of Popayan, also members of the National Assembly of Workers and Employees of Hospital, Clinics, Offices and Entities dedicated to providing health to the community, Cauca Branch –ANTHOC-CUT. They had been protesting peacefully in front of the National Voting Registry Building of Popayan, Department of Cauca because it has been 14 months since they were last paid. They have no found solutions to the problematic that is developing around workers labour rights which directly affect the users of the Hospital Centre.

- The police attempted to take over the office of the Assistant Management –CUT- in an illegal and violent manner. They did not take into account the presence of students, workers and other companions who supported the protest. In a fascist act, the anti-mob police indiscriminately sprayed tear gas and hit people with their batons leaving LUIS EDUARDO ARIAS seriously injured along with 8 other people. Approximately 20 are detained in police quarters in the city.

- These acts are a reflection clearly the manner in which the National Government, in an intransigent and violent form, impedes social protest and does not look for the political mechanisms as a solution to the different conflicts that appear at the roots of inefficiency of administration of public services. These include health and education since only last week 3 students were killed in different protests along with many that were injured or are now detained. These protesters were only looking to have their needs heard but the Government does not want to listen and is not interested in reconciling with the Colombian people to find a better way of life or to preserve human life with dignity, avoiding the violation of human rights and respecting union freedoms.

vi) COLOMBIA IS THE MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN WHICH TO  
PERFORM UNION WORK ACTIVITIES

- The Department of Human Rights allows itself to denounce the fact that the persecution and the assassination of workers, activists and union leaders does not cease. This reflects the situation of Humanitarian Crisis that we are living due to the fact that no concrete policies exist that guarantee our lives in defense of union freedoms and our human rights.

ASSASSINATIONS

- November 11, 2001 HOOVER DE JESUS GALEANO was assassinated in the city of Pereira, Department of Risaralda. He was a worker of the Energy Company of Pereira and was also a great activist and delegate of the workers in the Workers and Employees of Public Services Union, Autonomous and Decentralized Institutes of Colombia-Pereira Branch-SINTRAEMSEDES-CUT-.

- November 10, 2001, LUIS ALBERTO DELGADO, who had been a victim of an attempted assassination the day before, in the Municipality of Tuquerres, Department of Nariño, died. He had been a teacher and a member of the Union of the Magistrate of Nariño-SIMANA.CUT-

- November 9, 2001, PEDRO CORDERO was assassinated in the main park of the Municipality of Nariño. He had been a teacher and member of the Union of the Magistrate –SIMANA-CUT-.

It is important to point out that in the last week, the population of the Department of Nariño has been under war policy, or in a state of war, since 33 municipalities find themselves isolated and without communication to the outside world. There are 8 car bombs installed along various highways and thousands of displaced people. The government hasn't taken any real measures to help the department nor to confront the Humanitarian Crisis that is occurring. We therefore ask for your collaboration as the situation worsens.

- November 9, 2001 in the city of Medellin, Department of Antioquia, during a peaceful protest of the students of the University of Antioquia denouncing the death of CARLOS GIOVANNI BLANCO, two other students were killed: DAVID SANTIAGO JARAMILLO URREGO (23 years old) and JUAN MANUEL JIMENEZ ESCOBAR (27 years old). They were students of pharmaceutical medicine and had been playing chess when two armed men entered the educational centre and shot them.

- November 8, 2001, in Bogota during a peaceful student protest in the National University of Colombia, the police, with the intention of stopping the march, initiated acts of violence. These led to more disturbances which resulted in the assassination of the student CARLOS GIOVANNI BLANCO who was in his second semester of medicine. 23 were hurt and an undetermined number were arrested.

The above situation is once again a clear example that in Colombia, the government of Dr. Andres Pastrana Arango does not make sufficient



to guarantee our lives and our union freedoms. It is to be noted that these political crimes are committed in their majority by paramilitary groups to which no clear policies or measures exist to allow for their capture, their proceedings and condemnation, this being the highest level of impunity.

The call to solidarity we are making is to oblige the Colombian government to express willingness and commitment to guarantee our lives and union activities. Also, that it dismantles paramilitary groups and that it judges those that are responsible intellectually and for providing materials for the crimes against the union movement in Colombia.

The one who is politically responsible for this barbarity which has already resulted in 129 assassinations in the year 2001, is the Colombian Government.

Jesus Antonio Gonzalez Luna  
Director of the Human Rights Department

-----  
RELATED LINKS:

Human Rights in Colombia

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/>

Plan Colombia [mainly in Spanish]

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/plan/>

Peace Process in Colombia [SPA/ESP]

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/paz/>

European Parliament resolution on Plan Colombia and support for the peace process in Colombia. 01feb01.

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/europa/parlamento/PEcoleng01feb.html>

La economia del delito al servicio de la politica [SPA/ESP]

<http://www.derechos.org/koaga/viii/dionis1.html>

Deuda externa, narcotrafico y militarismo. [SPA/ESP]

<http://www.derechos.org/koaga/vii/dionis1.html>

--

FIN DEL MENSAJE END OF MESSAGE EINDE BERICHT FIM DA MENSAGEM FINE  
DEL MESSAGGIO ENDE NACHRICHT FIN DEL MENSAJE END OF MESSAGE  
EINDE BERICHT FIM DA MENSAGEM FINE DEL MESSAGGIO ENDE NACHRICHT

\*\*\*\*\*

This Information is edited and disseminated by Nizkor International  
Human Rights Team.

Nizkor is a member of the Peace and Justice Service-Europe (Serpaj),  
Derechos Human Rights (USA) and GILC (Global Internet Liberty  
Campaign).

PO Box 156037 - 28080 - Madrid - Spain. Telephone: +34.91.526.7502

Fax: +34.91.526.7515 Mailto: [eng@equiponizkor.org](mailto:eng@equiponizkor.org)

<http://www.equiponizkor.org>

If you do not wish to receive Information messages send "unsubscribe"  
as  
subject.

\*\*\*\*\*