

Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón

President of the Republic of Colombia

Palacio de Nariño

Bogota - Colombia

Mr. President:

We are writing to you to express our serious concern and ask that you take concrete action regarding the safety of Mr. Iván Cepeda Castro, Member of the Colombian Congress for the opposition political party *Polo Democrático Alternativo* (PDA), and also regarding the safety of the people who are working with him to carry out important work for democracy and justice in Colombia.

Little by little the Colombian justice system has been clarifying the circumstances of the assassination of Mr. Cepeda's father, Senator Manuel Cepeda Vargas, who was killed by a paramilitary group on August 9, 1994, upon the orders of a high ranking civil servant from the Department of Administrative Security (DAS), who has recently been sent to jail.

Iván Cepeda Castro, who suffered exile and is a well known Human Rights Defender and founder of the Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), recently received various death threats, and suffered an assassination attempt. Mr. José Obdulio Gaviria Escobar, advisor to former President Uribe, recently erroneously stated in an article that Iván Cepeda Castro is a member of the FARC. This kind of smear campaign has often led to human rights defenders being killed in Colombia.

With enormous courage, Mr. Cepeda has handed over to the Colombian justice system and revealed to the public, fundamental testimonies describing how former members of Mr. Uribe's Government, and Mr. Uribe himself, promoted and worked closely with paramilitary groups.

However, this work, which is essential for the existence of democracy in Colombia, has placed Mr. Ivan Cepeda and those who work with him under enormous danger.

This is why we are asking to you to urgently intervene, in order to ensure that Mr. Cepeda, the witnesses, the lawyers and the judges, who with enormous courage are making progress towards justice and democracy, receive from you, as the highest authority in Colombia, and from your government, clear public support and concrete protection measures, in order to safeguard their physical integrity and their right to live in Colombia.

Please receive, Mr. President, our highest consideration,

1. Helmut Scholz
2. Bernd Lange
3. Paul Murphy
4. Richard Howitt
5. Ole Christensen
6. Jürgen Klute
7. Jan Berman
8. Ana Gomes
9. Catherine Bearder
10. Marie-Chrsitine Vergiat
11. Wolfgang Kreissl-Dorfler
12. Willy Meyer-Pleite
13. Maria Matias
14. Miguel Portas
15. Bairbre de Brun
16. Soren Sondergaard
17. Elie Hoarau
18. Joao Ferreira
19. Ulrike Lunacek
20. Catherine Grèze
21. Rui Tavares