January - June 2011
Report of the Information System on
Aggression Against Human Rights
Defenders in Colombia -
ISAAHRDC
The nongovernmental protection program for human rights defenders, We are Defenders – Somos Defensores in Spanish – is a protective group that looks to develop an integral proposal to prevent aggressions against and protect the lives of the people at risk due to their work as human rights defenders, specially those who safeguard the interests of social groups and communities affected by the sociopolitical violence in Colombia. The We are Defenders program is made up by the Association for Alternative Social Proposals, MINGA in Spanish; the Colombian Commission of Jurists and Benposta: Nation of Youth.

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Special edition created by:

With support from:

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The content of this bulletin is the responsibility of its authors and is not necessarily indicative of the ideas of the organizations and institutions that have supported this publication.
The change of the national government in Colombia has created much expectation in the country especially within political sectors, including human rights and social circles, because of the new government’s moderated, conciliating and inclusive political tone. This new environment has permitted continued exchange between human rights movements and the central government as well as the resumption of certain initiatives such as the National Table of Guarantees for social defenders and leaders of the country.

As a result, it was predictable that in the first 10 months of the Santos administration, the numbers of aggressions against human rights defenders and social leaders would decrease as a result of the improved political environment. Nevertheless, reality can overcome any expectation. Far from decreasing, the statistics show an increase of aggressions against human rights defenders in Colombia, which directly contrasts with the political environment.

Murdered, threatened, detained, jailed, exiled…human rights defenders in Colombia have been victims of crushing violence: in the first half of 2011 alone, 29 human rights defenders have been assassinated.

All of these people lost their lives for their work, knowing that they could be killed given the specific regional contexts in which they acted, the danger that their work – defending human rights, being social leaders, defending their right to land, etc. – and given the threats they had received. They also lost their lives due to a lack of physical protection, and more importantly, a lack of political protection from the Colombian state. It is here where the difference between discourse and action lay. While the government shows advances regarding human and workers' rights, in order to be certified by the international community - thus gaining access to commercial treaties and agreements – armed groups in Colombian continue to murder, threaten, displace and disappear.

But who are these people who have been victim to these aggressions? Mining, peasant, community, student, union, Afrocolombian, environmental, LGBT and displaced leaders, as well as human rights lawyers are those, amongst others, who have sadly died in 2011, defending their own rights, those of their communities and organizations, and those of others. Every which one of them had a name, a face and a life: they were someone’s children, someone’s brother or sister; others were grandparents, parents, mothers, husbands and wives. In 29 homes in Colombia there is an emptiness left by the violent loss of these defenders.

Confronted by this situation, Protection Desk Colombia – PD COL1, the National and International Campaign “For the Right to Defend Human Rights Defenders in Colombia,” the MINGA Association and the We are Defenders Program, have published this special bulletin, with the goal of going beyond the numbers on aggressions against human rights defenders. The end is to help national and international public opinion better know the events that led to the death of these 29 men and women, who all lost their lives exercising their legitimate and legal right to defend human rights in Colombia. The hope is that these deaths and stories do not end at impunity, and that these 29 men and women do not end up being just another statistic.

This is in homage to their bravery, the bravery they had to travel the path of human rights protection in Colombia, knowing full well that their lives could be cut short. As many Colombians recognize, "Being a human rights defender is necessary in a democracy, but it is very dangerous in Colombia."2

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1 This Protection Desk in Colombia, created in 2009, is the fruit of an alliance between Social Action and Thinking (Colombia), and Protection International (Brussels).
Fernán was the president of the Miners Association of Ayapel in the province of Córdoba and enjoyed much respect in the municipality for his leadership spirit. He was a defender of economic rights, and fought for the legalization of the gold deposits where hundreds of peasant families extract the precious metal on a small scale. As the newspaper *El Heraldo* summed it up, “His goal was to defend the peasants, those dedicated to small-scale mining, those whose goal was to support their families.”

The mining leader was assassinated on Sunday January 30, 2011 in the municipality of Ayapel, when he was leaving a meeting in which the central topics discussed were the legalization process of the mines, and his latest work in Bogotá and Montería. After the meeting, Fernán was heading home, and there he was approached by two armed men who then took his life. According to the National Police, the murder was apparently carried out by alias Nicolás and alias Julián, members of the criminal group Los Urabeños.

**PARAMILITARIES - LOS URABEÑOS**

**LUZ MERY ROA ROA • 35 years old**
Communal Action Board of the Dios Peña Village, San Miguel
PUTUMAYO

Luz Mery, vice president of the communal action board of the Dios Peña village, in the municipality of San Miguel, in the province of Putumayo, was assassinated with her daughter, who was under 18 at the time, along with four other people in a massacre committed on February 11, 2011, apparently by paramilitaries.

At approximately 12:30 pm, unknown men violently stormed into the village, located on the banks of the San Miguel river, and went towards the house of Luz Marina Roa Alfonso, 59, and they slit her throat with machetes together with Luz Mery Roa Roa and her daughter Sorith Juliet Alfonso Roa, only 5 years old, whose hands they also mutilated. They also shot and killed two of the three workers who were in the farm when the murders occurred – the third worker was able to get away.

According to information from the family, between the villages of Afilador, Albania and Dios Peña in the municipality of San Miguel, very close to where the massacre took place, soldiers from the 27th Jungle Brigade, the Mechanized Group “José María Melo” and the Southern Naval Forces are all present. According to community spokespeople, in the days before the massacre, there were military actions carried out (combat) against the FARC – EP.

**PARAMILITARIES**
Efrain was an indigenous leader, member of the Indigenous Guard along with his wife and children, who voluntarily served his community of la Concepción, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. He actively participated in the processes convoked by his community and territory. Recently, he had participated in the humanitarian action called for by the Indigenous Authority of la Concepción in which they carried out a search for the Indigenous community member Alonso Gualiche, who had been kidnapped by an unknown illegal armed group on December 16, 2010, in the village La Esmeralda, in the municipality of Buenos Aires, in Cauca.

On March 7, 2011 in the Indigenous Territory of La Concepción, Efrain was assassinated by unknown men, in the village of Pedregal, along the road towards the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, also in Cauca. According to the report from the Indigenous Territorial Authority, the murder was committed with a large knife in the early hours of the morning, when Efrain was heading to his community.

**Presumed Responsible Party:**
Unknown
Ricardo Alberto, delegate attorney for the Human Rights Ombudsman office represented the victims of the paramilitary block that belonged to Freddy Rendón Herrera, alias El Alemán. He worked various cases defending the victims of paramilitaries that operated in the Chocó area of the Urabá region.

Ricardo was murdered Sunday, March 7, 2011, in the city of Itagüí, Antioquia, by a hitman on a motorcycle. The murder took place in the afternoon when Ricardo was going home, in the Las Chimeneas park.

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** UNKNOWN

David de Jesús was a peasant leader working with land restitution and founder of the Victims’ Association ASOVIRESTIBI as he had been displaced two years earlier from the Tulapás region in Antioquia, where he claimed some 20,000 hectares stolen from peasants by paramilitaries between 1997 and 2004. Additionally, he was a witness in judicial processes regarding land restitution in the region. The leader had been the key piece in documenting cases with state entities like the Ministry of Agriculture, of the Interior and Justice, the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation, amongst others.

David de Jesús was assassinated on March 23, 2011 in the city of Medellín, Antioquia by unknown assailants. The crime took place around midday, when David was in the Gran Via mall in the Belén neighborhood of Medellín, in the parking lot outside.

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** UNKNOWN
Eder Verbel Rocha • 45 years old
Movement of Victims of State Crimes - MOVICE – Sucre Chapter
Sucre

Eder, along with his family was part of MOVICE in the department of Sucre since 2006. Since then, he participated in various activities in the municipality of San Onofre with the goal of making the victims of State crimes more visible, as well as denouncing the levels of impunity in the municipality, the epicenter of paramilitarism in the region. On January 4, 2005, Guillermo Verbel Rocha, Eder’s brother and citizen monitor of corruption cases in San Onofre, was murdered by the paramilitary block that still operated in the region.

On March 23, 2011, Eder Verbel was murdered in the urban locality known as el Higuerón in the municipality of San Onofre, apparently by paramilitaries. At approximately 6:15 pm, when the brothers and social leaders Orlando Enrique, Eder Verbel Rocha and his son (then a minor) were coming back from the work day in his farm, they were assaulted by two armed men who began to shoot with saying a word, fatally wounding Eder, also beating him with their guns to make sure he had been killed. His brother Orlando and his son were able to escape from the spot, avoiding the shots. The murderers were identified by authorities has Jose Manuel Pivera de Avila, alias 'el Begueta' and Eder Antonio Arroyo Hernandez, alias 'Polvora,' both detained a few hours after the murder and then released later that day for unknown reasons.

PARAMILITARIES

EDAR FABIAN SILVA IPIA / MANUEL IPIA
ACIN
Cauca

Edgar y Manuel were two indigenous leaders in the village el Triunfo in Tacueyó, Cauca. According to the communiqué published by the Association of Indigenous Leader of Northern Cauca – ACIN – the community members disappeared during a military operation carried out by the National Police, with air support from the Jungle Antinarcotics Command on March 26, 2011 at 2:25 in the morning, after a bombing raid in the Gargantillas village.

Two days later, the lifeless bodies of Edgar Fabian and Manuel appeared in the Medicina Legal building in the city of Cali, in the Valle del Cauca, amongst the 15 presumed guerrillas killed in the military operation. The National Police and National Army have made no statements regarding the situation.

UNKNOWN

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:
UNKNOWN
Carlos Andrés, ex-leader of the Veterinary department of the University of Antioquia, was gunned down in the urban locality of San Cristobal in Medellín, on March 14, 2011 and died five days later due to the injuries he received from the gun shots. The ex-leader had denounced threats against him according to friends in the University.

This assassination shows the cruel persecution against the student community of the University of Antioquia. On various occasions, the university has been the scene of constant violations of human rights, a situation that has worsened in the last two years, resulting in the death threats and murder of an ex-student within university grounds in March 2009. Also, on March 10 of this year, professors and student leaders of the university received death threats in the email account of the Student Assembly of UniAntioquia.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN

HÉCTOR OROZCO • 35 years old / GILDARDO GARCÍA • 32 years old
Peasant Workers Association of Tolima – ASTRACATOL
TOLIMA

Héctor was a community leader in the village of San Fernando in the locality of La Marina, in the municipality of Chaparral, Tolima. A well-known community leader, Héctor also was the vice-president of the Communal Action Board in his village as well as the vice-president of the Chaparral chapter of ASTRACATOL, husband and father of three. Giraldo, from the village of Florestal-Ambeima also in the locality of La Marina, was the director of the Communal Action Board in his village, husband and father of four.

Héctor y Gildardo were murdered on March 30, 2011 at 6 pm when they were heading home on a motorcycle traveling along the road that connects the city center of Chaparral to the La Marina locality in Tolima. They are no eyewitnesses to the murder, but nonetheless it is known that the zone is highly militarized and that less than 400 meters from where the murder took place, the National Army has a permanent presence in a place known as the Holy Spirit intersection. Once their bodies were found, the competent authorities were notified to clean the bodies and inspect the crime scene. But the response from the authorities was negligent, and therefore the scene was analyzed the next day at 11 am (more than 12 hours after the murders had occurred). During this time lapse, the bodies of the victims remained exposed to the climatic conditions and their families were trapped suffering without being able to recover the bodies of their loved ones.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN
SILVESTRE IPIA
Peasant Movement of Cajibio
CAUCA

Silvestre was a peasant leader and father of the Peasant Movement of Cajibio, who stood out as a leader in the area and was dedicated to growing sugarcane and panela, a type of molasses. He was killed in the village of “Los Naranjos” on April 16, 2011. Silvestre was attacked by three men at 2:30 in the morning, who tried to kidnap him. In the resulting struggle, Silvestre was killed. There were no known threats against the leader at the time.

With almost 20 years of work in the region, as an important leader for panela farmer interests, and one of the founders of the Peasant Movement of Cajibio, Silvestre was amply recognized by his peasant and indigenous friends and co-workers, as well as by the local authorities for his community and social work and human rights demands. The death of Silvestre occurred in the middle of the planning process for the Caravan of Life, organized by the Peasant Movement of Cajibio and support by various social organizations in Cauca and on the national level. This initiative was created due to the unlivable situation of aggression and attacks against leaders, human rights defenders and the civil population of Cauca by all of the armed actors of the armed conflict: Paramilitaries, guerrillas, the Public Forces, etc.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN

WILLIAM ANDRÉS ÁLVAREZ OROZCO
Human Rights and Humanitarian Protection Table of Eastern Antioquia
ANTIOQUIA

William, a community leader in the municipality of Viboral in the province of Antioquia, along with other regional community leaders, formalized reports on threats during the months of March and April of this year, and also demanded permanent accompaniment by the armed forces as a guarantor of his security and that of the communities.

Nevertheless, on Thursday April 7, 2011 in the afternoon, hooded men arrived to William’s home and, while intimidating his family, stole their cell phones. When William arrived, the hooded men took him with them, pulling him by his hair.

The next day, at about 7:50 am, William’s lifeless body was found two kilometers from his house, on the limits between the villages of La Cristalina and El Porvenir, at the high-point known as Chisquetes, in the municipality of Carmen de Viboral. The fact that the authorities took almost 80 hours in beginning the body cleaning and investigation processes requires much attention.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN
Hugo was an indigenous leader of the Nasa people. He was found dead near the office on the indigenous territorial authority in La Playa Alto Naya, in the forest area of the maritime port of Buenaventura, on April 12 2011. The Association of Indigenous Territorial Authorities of Northern Cauca – ACIN in Spanish – announced that the indigenous leader was murdered after taking part in a public act to remember the victims of the Alto Naya massacre, which was carried out 10 years earlier by paramilitary groups. ACIN informed that this murder “is another added to the innumerable victims that there have been in this region since the massacre 10 years earlier.”

Hugo Ulcué was one of the leaders who, according to ACIN, “questioned with the most insistence and fervor the minimal advances in the judicial process to clarify the facts and find those responsible for the Alto Naya massacre.”

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** UNKNOWN

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Martha, leader of the Association of those Displaced from the Apartada ASODESLAP, was one of the leaders in the process of reclaiming land that the paramilitaries had stolen from the peasants in the municipalities of Montelíbano, Puerto Libertador, La Apartada and Ayapel in the department of Córdoba.

She was killed on Wednesday April 27, 2011 in the village of La Apartada in the municipality of Ayapel, when she was returning home. She was gunned down by two men who arrived on a motorcycle to her house and shot at her various times. The crime was denounced by the Human Rights Ombudsman, Vólmar Pérez. The death of Martha Gaibao is now added to the deaths of Freddy Abel Espitia, Yolanda Izquierdo, Azael Hernández Bedoya, Ana Isabel Gómez, Jhon Jairo Martínez Vides, Guillermo Ramos Rosso, Alberto Pastrana and Teófilo Vidal Vidal, all peasant leaders in Córdoba who were also murdered by unknown assailants while they pushed forward processes to recover their land in Córdoba.

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** UNKNOWN
Pedro was the president of the Communal Action Board of Rincón del Valle and a community leader in the locality of Rafael Uribe Uribe in the city of Bogotá, who worked for the subsistence of eight of his grandchildren, six of them orphans of Elmer Geovanni, his son who had been murdered eight months previously.

On May 30, 2011 at 7:00 am, Pedro was murdered by unknown men in a spot known as the Children's Park along the main road into the neighborhood.

After his death, his family has remained in an incredibly difficult economic situation, without any protective measures from the State or District governments.

**PREMISED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** UNKNOWN

José Francisco, peasant leader from the community of Curvaradó, Chocó, was assassinated on May 16 in an area known as the Mouth of the Clear Canyon, within the collective territory of Curvaradó. At the same moment, two of his family members were also killed.

According to information from an eyewitness, the murder of Jorge Francisco was caused by hits from a large stick, all over his body. While the witness escaped from the place of the murder, he or she was able to see the death of the other two family members of José. The families of the community then left the area displaced by fear because of the murder of José Francisco.

The communities of Curvaradó and Jiguamiando have been demanding the restitution of their lands for more than 10 years, after the relationship between paramilitaries and Palm Oil companies, to steal the land from the communities after having massively forcibly displaced them, was proven.

**PREMISED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:** PARAMILITARIES
Ana Fabricia, victims’ leader for land restitution was part of the Association of Leaders Moving Forward for a Human Weave of Peace (LATEPAZ). About a decade ago, she arrived to Medellín fleeing from the massacres committed by paramilitary groups, of which various members of her family had been victims. She settled, displaced, in the neighborhood of The Cross in the Manrique commune and immediately became connected to different organizational processes for women and displaced persons. Since that time, Ana Fabricia clearly reported the violence against victims and demanded that those responsible be investigated.

But armed violence would silence her. Ana Fabricia was murdered on June 8, 2011, in Medellín, Antioquia by an unknown assailant who traveled in an urban bus along the Santa Cruz route. The murder took place when the unknown man got on the bus and with a gun with silencer, shot Ana Fabricia, killing her instantly. Once the murder had been carried out, the murderer got off the bus and ran from the scene. Ana Fabricia left two children now orphaned.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN

Jorge was an environmentalist and philosopher who lead a campaign denouncing open-air mining by multinational companies in the province of Risaralda.

He was murdered on June 8, 2011 in the city of Pereira by unknown assailants. The crime was committed when Jorge was leaving the office of the Santa Sofía Educational Institute, in Dosquebradas, a locality in the city of Pereira. There, two hitmen traveling on a motorcycle caught up to the environmentalist and shot him various times, killing him. The crime took place a week after Jorge had denounced the effects of open-air mining on the radio. Co-workers stated that, “He was a very loved person in the educative community, and had no problems like threats, which is why his murder has surprised us all.” Jorge belonged to Meedrua (“mining zone” in the indigenous Quechua language), a non-governmental environmental organization where various studies on open-air mining throughout the region and country had been carried out.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN
Luis, Jorge, Lexter, Steven and Juan Camilo, were indigenous Senú leaders, members of the communities of La 18 and La Unión – Pato, part of the municipality of Zaragoza in the province of Antioquia.

The Indigenous Organization of Antioquia (OIA in Spanish) reported the murder of these five indigenous leaders at the hands of the paramilitary group Los Rastrojos. The first murder took place on June 24, 2011 with the death of Luis Hernández, 19. The next day, Jorge Mejía, 46, and his sons Steven Alberto, 17, and Juan Camilo, 16, were assassinated. According to statements from the family, members of the paramilitary group Los Rastrojos announced that they had killed the men and buried them in an unknown location. On Sunday June 26, the body of Lexter Enrique Graciano Pérez, 26, was found in the waters of the Nechi River. Lexter Enrique belonged to the community of La Unión – Pato, in the municipality of Zaragoza, and had been forcibly disappeared five days earlier.

The lower Cauca region of Antioquia, where these leaders lived and were murdered, is one of the regions in the country with the most presence of paramilitary groups, or BACRIM as the government and some international bodies label them. The violent events can be added to a long list of deaths, displacements and threats from these paramilitary groups against social, human rights, and journalist organizations, as well as against public officials and the civil population of Colombia.

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:**
PARAMILITARIES – LOS RASTROJOS

Antonio was a leader of displaced communities, director of the Association of Displaced from San Onofre and Los Montes de María, who also was a council member from the Polo Democrático leftist political party in the department of Sucre. He led processes in which displaced families could return to their lands that had been stolen from them by armed groups. He also was supporting a process to demand the restitution of land by departmental and municipal authorities.

He was killed on June 30, 2011 by unknown men.

This murder shows the grave context of violence and persecution, in which in just the month of June, there were five attacks or threats against the directors of the Sucre Chapter of MOVICE, victims leaders and leaders in the land restitution processes in the department of Sucre.

**PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY:**
UNKNOWN
FERNANDO TEQUIA
Association of Indigenous Territories of Chocó OREWA– Katío People
ANTIOQUIA

Fernando was an indigenous leader of the Embera Katio people who was the governor of the community of La Mirla in the indigenous territory called La Cristalina, in the municipality of Carmen de Atrato (Chocó).

He was murdered on June 30, 2011 by unknown men during the night in the municipal park of the city of Urrao, in the department of Antioquia. Although Fernando had not denounced any threats against him, the Indigenous Authorities of Antioquia warned that the murder could have been because of illegal mining interests, as illegal mining has been developing in the territories of the Katio people.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN

JOHN EDISON RAMÍREZ SALAZAR
Transgender Foundation of the South
NARIÑO

John Edison, members of the Transgender Foundation of the South – an organization that defends the rights of the LGBT population in the municipality of Pasto, also was part of the Technical Table to Work with Diverse People for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities. He was killed on March 17, 2011 around dawn, along the road that connects the village of Cubiján Alta, located between the urban center of Catambuco and la Coba Negra, in the rural area of Pasto. John Edison called himself ‘Gabriela’ within the transsexual community of Pasto.

The murder of John Edison coincides with threatening pamphlets that had begun to appear in various neighborhoods in the city in which “social cleansing” groups declared certain groups, including the LGBT community, military targets. In July of 2010, various LGBT organizations and human rights defenders, and even public institutions in the municipality, received a death threat through their email in which “death to homosexuals, transvestites and the depraved of Pasto” was stated, if they continued their work of “social decomposition.”

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: UNKNOWN
Crisanto was a young leader of the Katio people. His lifeless body was found on February 26, 2011, in the indigenous territory Conondo, in the Alto Andagueda zone of the municipality of Bagadó, in the department of Chocó. His family reported his disappearance to the Conondo Indigenous Authorities on February 24, 2011. According to the report from the Association of Indigenous Territories of Chocó OREWA, it is presumed that the disappearance and later murder of Cristanto was committed by FARC guerrillas, given that the indigenous leader, along with other members of the community, had opposed the forced recruitment carried out by this guerrilla group of young indigenous community members of the Alto Andagueda. Days before his disappearance, the community denounced that when armed groups were present in the indigenous territory, many communities were confined and trapped due to the pressure from the armed groups.

PRESUMED RESPONSIBLE PARTY: FARC - EP
January - June 2011
Report of the Information System on Aggression Against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia - ISAAHRDC

According to the registry created and maintained by the Information System on Aggression Against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia – ISAAHRDC – from the non-governmental program of Protection for Human Rights Defenders – We are Defenders (Somos Defensores) - during the first six months of 2011, 145 defenders and leaders were victim of some kind act of aggression, as well as 65 social and human rights organizations were victims of some kind of aggression that put the life and integrity of its members at risk, and created obstacles for the legitimate and legal labor of human rights defense in Colombia.

By referring to these acts of aggression on a monthly basis, we see that the highest number of registered cases occurred in February 2011, with some 38% of the cases (56) and March with 22% (32 cases). Then is June with 13% (19 cases), January and April with 10% each (14 cases), and lastly May with 7% (10 cases).

Individual Aggressions

The we are Defenders program has worryingly registered an increase of 126% of individual aggressive acts against defenders when compared to the same time period in 2010. Between January and June of 2010, the information system reported 64 defenders attacked; in the same period in 2011, there were 145 cases.
It is worth pointing out that during this time period, human rights and social organizations were in the middle of discussions with the national Government within the legal context of the National Table for Guarantees for human rights defenders, which were suspended in June, precisely because of the lack of effective protection for defenders from the Government. Also discussed were the measures implemented by the government through Decree 1740 for the protection of those who defend human rights in Colombia and are under threat; at the time of the writing of this report, the decree is in the process of being evaluated and reformulated by the National Government.

“The defenders or leaders of land restitution and victims, as well as indigenous, were the common target of aggressions during the first semester of 2011.”

This situation, of constant aggression, has been pointed out and denounced continuously by international organizations like Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Latin America Working Group, Center for Justice and International Law, Center for International Policy in the USA and Amnesty International in Europe, who all state that the attacks, threats and murders continue.°

http://www.wola.org/es/noticias/defensores_colombianos_de_derechos_humanos_siguen_sufriendo_amenazas_ataques_acoso_y_escuch
http://www.es.amnesty.org/actua/acciones/columbia-defensores-amenaza-muerte/
When looking at aggressions by gender, we registered that of the 145 defenders aggrieved between January and June of 2011, 76% were men and the other 24% were women.

### Aggressions by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Individual Aggressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the time period covered by this report, information was compiled that shows **seven types of aggression against human rights defenders in Colombia**: murders, attacks, threats, injuries, arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances and arbitrary use of the judicial system.

### Aggressions According to Type of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Individual Aggressions</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murders</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbitrary Detentions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Disappearances</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbitrary Use of the Judicial System</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Individual Aggressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the individual attacks registered, 65% were threats, 20% were murders, 7% were attacks, 5% arbitrary detentions, 2% forced disappearances, and under 1% for injuries and arbitrary use of the judicial system.
“On average, between January and June of 2011, a defender was attacked about every day-and-a-half”

The murder of defenders

Despite that in the last five years, the murder of human rights defenders has not stopped, and in the month of February of this year, the numbers broke the limits. According to the ISAAHRDC, 29 defenders or social leaders were murdered in the first six months of 2011. Their names are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>LOCALITY</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>TYPE OF DEFENDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>Itagüí</td>
<td>RICARDO ALBERTO SIERRA</td>
<td>Ombudsman's Office Colombia</td>
<td>Leader of land restitutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>Medellín</td>
<td>CARLOS ANDRES VALENCIA</td>
<td>University of Antioquia Students</td>
<td>Student Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antioquia</td>
<td>Medellín</td>
<td>DAVID DE JESÚS GOEZ RODRÍGUEZ</td>
<td>Victims' Association ASOVIRESTIBI</td>
<td>Leader of land restitution</td>
</tr>
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<td>Antioquia</td>
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<td>San Onofre</td>
<td>Eder Verbel Rocha</td>
<td>Movimiento de Víctimas de Crímenes - MOVICE: Sucre Chapter</td>
<td>Lider de Restitución de Tierras</td>
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<td>Antonio Mendoza Moraes</td>
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</table>
Of the murders, 89.7% correspond to men while the remaining 10.3% correspond to women.

Antioquia is the department most affected by the murder of defenders with 11 leaders killed there. Cauca then follows with four; Chocó, Córdoba, Bogotá, Sucre and Tolima with two each; and the Valle del Cauca, Putumayo, Nariño and Risaralda with one each.

**Individual Threats**

Threats continued to be the most frequent and systematic method to intimidate the defenders in Colombia, which did affect their work. During the first half of 2011, the proliferation of threatening pamphlets, communiqués and emails against human rights and social organizations was constant. Some threats also were made through text messages and telephone calls. The names of the groups that were most responsible for the threats were the Black Eagles, Urban Command of Los Rastrojos, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, and the Joint Command for Cleansing, amongst others.

Bogotá heads the list with the highest number of individual threats against defenders registered in the ISAAHRDC in 2011 with 30 cases; followed by Caquetá with 16 cases; the Valle del Cauca with 11; Sucre and Risaralda with 10; and Santander with seven.

Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico, Caldas, Cundinamarca, Nariño and Norte de Santander, reported only one case each in the first half of the year.

**Forced Disappearance**

In 2011, there has been a reactivation of forced disappearances against human rights defenders. Three defenders were disappeared and until now, there is no word on their whereabouts or wellbeing. It grabs attention to see that all three cases occurred in the Valle del Cauca.

Sandra Viviana Cuellar Gallego, 26, an environmental rights defender, disappeared on Thursday February 17, in the city of Cali. Also the married couple of community leaders of the Community Council of the Mouth of the Cajambre River, Ana Julia Renteria and Migual Santos Renteria Caicedo, disappeared on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, in the village of Guayabal on the Cajambre River in Buenaventura, in the Valle del Cauca.
Regarding those responsible for aggressions, paramilitaries are those presumed responsible in some 85 cases, while 43 cases correspond to unknown actors. The members of the State security forces (National Army, National Police, SIJIN, Fiscalia, amongst others) appear registered in 15 cases as those responsible. The FARC guerrillas are registered in two cases as the responsible party.

**Aggressions by Region**

The capital of Bogotá continues to report the highest number of cases of aggression in the whole country with 34 cases. The Valle del Cauca and Caquetá are next with 16 each, followed by Sucre with 14, Antioquia with 13, Risaralda with 11 and Cauca with 10. These departments have the highest number of defenders attacked in the country. Situations like Sucre, Risaralda and Caquetá demand attention in that during the same period in 2009 and 2010, these
Legend

Human rights defenders attacked per departament Jan-Jul 2011

1 - 7
8 - 16
17 - 34

prepared by: Carlos Alberto Zúñiga L.

scale 1:8,000,000
## “Attacks on defenders (as) by Department - January June 2011”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of Aggressions</th>
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<td>Antioquia</td>
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<td>Boyacá</td>
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<td>Caldas</td>
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<td>Cesar</td>
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<td>Sucre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Putumayo</td>
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<td>Tolima</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>Total Individual Aggressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
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</table>
General Conclusions

As a way to conclude, starting from the analysis based on the data from the Information System on Aggressions Against Human Rights Defenders in Colombia – ISAAHRDC – regarding the first half of 2011, from the We are Defenders Program, we conclude that:

- There has been an incredible increase of **126%** in individual aggressions against human rights defenders when compared to the same time period in 2010.

- On average, between January and June of 2011, a human rights defender was attacked or threatened every day-and-a-half.

- The **29 defenders and social leaders assassinated** in the first six months of 2011 put the protection system of the National Government in doubt and are an indicator of the critical humanitarian situation in the country.

- The fact that a large percentage of those responsible for the aggression against human rights defenders continue to be paramilitaries, is an indicator that there groups still act without control.

- The increase in aggression against defenders, social leaders and displaced persons organizations is evident and clear in the context of process of restitution, truth, justice and reparation, land defense, victims' rights claims and indigenous rights work.

- The numbers make evident a lack of policies for the prevention and protection of human rights defenders by the authorities and especially the High Public Prosecutor's Office of the Nation, which shows no sign of investigations related to attacks and threats against defenders and social leaders, despite the demands from the Platforms of Human Rights, Peace and Development for the country, within the National Table for Guarantees of protection for human rights defenders.