

July 28, 2010

Genevieve des Rivieres, Ambassador of Canada in Colombia
Canadian Embassy,
Bogota,
Colombia

Dear Ambassador Des Rivieres

On behalf of the 130,000 members of my union, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), I am writing to you about an urgent matter of great concern.

Last Wednesday, July 21, 2010, the window of the office of the human rights organization, Justice and Life (Justicia y Vida) in Bogota was hit by a bullet but fortunately no-one was hurt. Then, on the morning of July 23, Lilia Solano received a threatening telephone call in which the caller described her daily activities and the places she frequented and accused her of being a terrorist and traitor to her country and threatened that she would be killed.

In August, 2009, my union sent a six member team to Colombia to see firsthand what the human rights situation was like. While in Bogota, they met with Ms. Lilia Solano and reported on the wonderful work that she and Justicia y Vida are doing regarding human rights in Colombia. We met with the Mothers of Soacha and other similar organizations and were extremely moved by the presentations.

It is clear to us that under the current government there is no security for human rights defenders or for those who exercise their constitutional rights to criticize and dissent from the policies of the government. Ms. Solano is well known and loved by our union and highly respected in Canada because of the time she has spent here and the excellent work she continues to do in Colombia.

I am requesting that the Canadian government leverage its close relationship with Colombia and enact the promises made during the debate over the Canada Colombia Free Trade Agreement and call for an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice. I am also requesting that you press the Colombian government to immediately activate effective protection measures agreed to by Lilia and her colleagues.

Please write to let me know what steps have been taken on this matter as soon as it has been approved.

Sincerely,



Warren (Simokoy) Thomas

cc. His Excellency Jaime Giron Duarte, Ambassador for Colombia
cc. Justicia y Vida
cc. OPSEU Colombian delegation

100 Lesmill Road
Toronto, Ontario
M3B 3P8
Tel: 416-443-8888
Fax: 416-448-7469

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sefpo@sefpo.org
www.sefpo.org
Le SEFPO est associé
à la FTO, au CTC
et au SNEGSP



July 28, 2010

Dr. Guillermo Mendoza Diago
Fiscal General de la Nación (e)
Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01)
Bloc C, Piso 4
Bogotá, Colombia

Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to you on behalf of the 130,000 members of our union, the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU) regarding an urgent matter of great importance.

This matter is concerning recent threats against the life of a human rights defender, Lilia Solano, director of *Justicia y Vida*, threats which took place in Bogota just a few days ago. From what we have heard, she received a threatening phone call on July 23 and as well, on July 21 shots were fired into her office endangering not just her life but that of her colleagues as well.

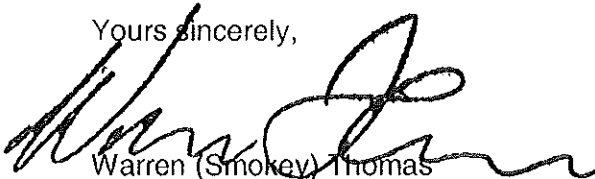
In August, 2009, I recommended that six representatives of OPSEU go to Colombia to investigate the human rights and labour rights situation in your country. Our union delegation met with Ms. Solano and we were extremely impressed with the work that she is doing as part of *Justicia y Vida*. In fact, she has commended great respect here in Canada among unions and civil society organizations for her work in defending human rights over the years.

We find what has happened to her totally abhorrent and would ask that you initiate an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

I am also requesting that your government immediately activate effective protection measures in communication with Ms. Solano and her colleagues.

Please respond as soon as possible to let me know what steps have been taken so that I can report to our members that action is being taken to protect Ms. Solano and her colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, OPSEU

cc. His Excellency Jaime Giron Duarte, Ambassador for Colombia
cc. Justicia y Vida
cc. OPSEU Colombian delegation

/bw

July 28, 2010

James Lambert, Director General
Latin America and Caribbean Bureau
DFAIT
Ottawa, ON

Dear Mr. Lambert,

On behalf of the 130,000 members of my union, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), I am writing to you about an urgent matter of great concern.

Last Wednesday, July 21, 2010, the window of the office of the human rights organization, Justice and Life (Justicia y Vida) in Bogota was hit by a bullet but fortunately no-one was hurt. Then, on the morning of July 23, Lilia Solano received a threatening telephone call in which the caller described her daily activities and the places she frequented and accused her of being a terrorist and traitor to her country and threatened that she would be killed.

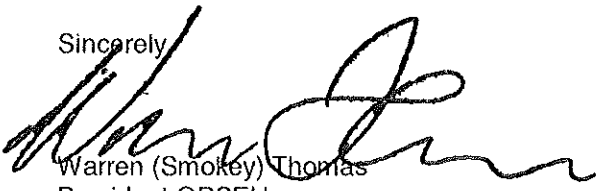
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It is clear to us that under the current government there is no security for human rights defenders or for those who exercise their constitutional rights to criticize and dissent from the policies of the government. Ms. Solano is well known and loved by our union and highly respected in Canada because of the time she has spent here and the excellent work she continues to do in Colombia.

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Sincerely,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President OPSEU

cc. His Excellency Jaime Giron Duarte, Ambassador for Colombia
cc. Justicia y Vida
cc. OPSEU Colombian Delegation

/bw



July 28, 2010

Hon. Peter Kent
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Latin America)
110 Justice Building
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Kent,

On behalf of the 130,000 members of my union, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), I am writing to you about an urgent matter of great concern.

Last Wednesday, July 21, 2010, the window of the office of the human rights organization, Justice and Life (Justicia y Vida) in Bogota was hit by a bullet but fortunately no-one was hurt. Then, on the morning of July 23, Lilia Solano received a threatening telephone call in which the caller described her daily activities and the places she frequented and accused her of being a terrorist and traitor to her country and threatened that she would be killed.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Warren Thomas', written over a white background.

Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President OPSEU

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cc. Justicia y Vida
cc. OPSEU Colombian delegation

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July 28, 2010

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26
Bogotá, Colombia

Dear President Uribe,

I am writing to you on behalf of the 130,000 members of our union, the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU) regarding an urgent matter of great importance.

This matter is concerning recent threats against the life of a human rights defender, Lilia Solano, director of *Justicia y Vida*, threats which took place in Bogota just a few days ago. From what we have heard, she received a threatening phone call on July 23 and as well, on July 21 shots were fired into her office endangering not just her life but that of her colleagues as well.

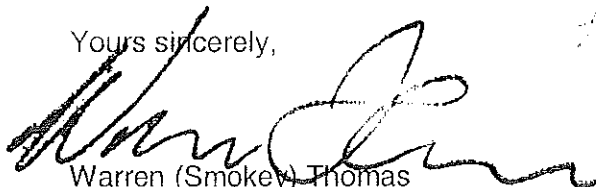
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