

# Action on Colombia

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## Area activists think globally and act locally

### Faceless Justice Participants Call for Mid-West Networking Meeting

On March 2 and 3, Colombia Support Network realized its goal of bringing together community members, academics, and human rights activists to study the practices associated with the Faceless Justice or the "regional justice" system in Colombia. Faceless Justice was ostensibly designed with the intention of protecting the identities of judges, witnesses, and prosecutors in cases brought against drug traffickers to help prevent violent retaliation, but later came to be used as a tool of repression.

The keynote address of Noam Chomsky, which sold out days before the event, focused on the history of U.S. economic and political interests in Latin America. Using Colombia as a case example, Chomsky outlined how the U.S. has supported policies which have had the effect of undermining efforts to raise the standard of living and improve human rights for the majority of the population in Latin America.

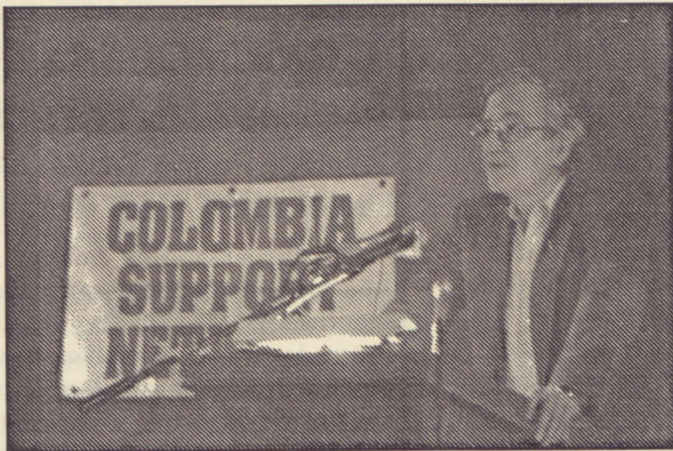


photo: Chomsky speaks to sold out audience at Faceless Justice Conference, March 3, at UW-Madison

Thanks to the presentations of featured speakers Hernando Valencia Villa, exiled Deputy Attorney General for Human Rights of Colombia, Ernesto Ramirez, exiled activist with the Patriotic Union Party, and Mark Sherman, expert on U.S. narcotics control policies, conference participants learned how Faceless Justice has been used as a tool of social control to repress the activities of those seeking peaceful change in Colombia, such as third party members, labor, indigenous, peasant and community leaders.

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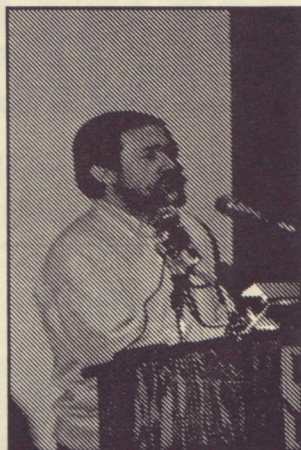
### Students from Oregon High School Support Youth of Apartadó Colombia, Dane County's Sister Community

Students from Oregon High School with the help of their faculty advisors, Jill Von Ohlen and Brian Root, have organized a chapter of Amnesty International. This year the students came together to learn about the roots of the violence taking place in Colombia and to carry out a fundraising project to benefit the youth of CSN's sister community in Apartadó, Colombia. The students sold t-shirts and concert tickets, held a raffle, and solicited donations of school supplies from area banks. The funds and school supplies, collected to help Apartadó's neediest children, were delivered to the Apartadó mayor's office by participants in CSN's November delegation to Colombia. Pictured in front (from left) are Erin O'Brien and Jesse Kiley. In the back are Chris Mattson, Katie Yale, Tami Clayton, Amy Markwardt, and Andrea Raymond. Missing from photo are Andrea Brown, Nikki Benjamin and Tanya O'Malley. (photo: Bob Gannon of the Oregon Observer)

**Colombian General Attempts To  
Pressure Gloria Cuartas To  
Shut Down CSN Web Site  
(see page 2 for story)**



photo below: Hernando Valencia Villa, former Deputy Attorney General for Human Rights of Colombia, addresses conference



**(Faceless Justice Conference-  
Continued from p.1)**

As a sidenote: Gloria Cuartas, mayor of Colombia Support Network's sister community and internationally recognized human rights defender, is currently facing legal charges in 8 separate cases initiated by those who prefer that she stop advocating for peace and justice.

Over 100 people attended the conference sessions which were audio and videotaped in their entirety. Tapes of selected segments of the conference will be available from CSN for those who wish to use them for educational purposes. Please contact CSN for more information about availability and cost.

Many conference participants expressed the need for more opportunities to network with each other. As a result of this discussion a Midwest networking meeting has been scheduled for the weekend of Sept. 27 and 28 in Champaign-Urbana. The principal goal of this meeting is to help individuals and organizations in the Midwest to learn about Colombia and to coordinate and expand their Colombia outreach and educational activities. The participation of those representing other regions is also welcomed. If you are interested in attending or have time to help organize this event please contact Suzanne Wilson (phone: 217-384-0666 or you may email her: santafe@ux6.cso.uiuc.edu)

## General Demands Removal of CSN Web Page

On Saturday March 15, 1997 Gloria Cuartas, mayor of Apartadó (Dane County Wisconsin's sister community in Colombia) reported that the previous day, a highly placed Colombian Army general had come to Apartadó solely for a private meeting to discuss CSN's web page with her. Our web page site is <http://www.igc.apc.org/csn/>

On March 12, Mayor Cuartas was required to answer a questionnaire sent to her by the Military Criminal Court based at the local Army Brigade under the command of General Rito Álejo del Río. She was told to "provide a clear, detailed statement of everything you know for sure about the document entitled 'Gloria Cuartas Page' of February 24, 1997, taken from the Internet, specifying the authorship of said document and the sources or documents upon which it is based."

Other questions focused on where the web page got its information about ties between the army and paramilitary groups in Urabá. When Gloria identified CSN as the author of the page, a highly placed Colombian Army general went to see her to get more details and to request that CSN's web page be closed.

This general told Gloria the military command was concerned: 1) that people all over the world were watching the web page, 2) that the web page suggests that readers write to the U.S. State Department to request that visas for travel to the U.S. be denied to the generals (and their families) because of their involvement in human rights abuses, 3) and that after reading the web page, people who learn about gross violations of human rights in Colombia might decide to boycott Colombian products (e.g. bananas).

This general offered to come to Madison to discuss closing the web page. Gloria Cuartas and Father Javier Giraldo of Justicia y Paz are currently facing charges filed against

them by the Colombian military for their role in the CSN web page.

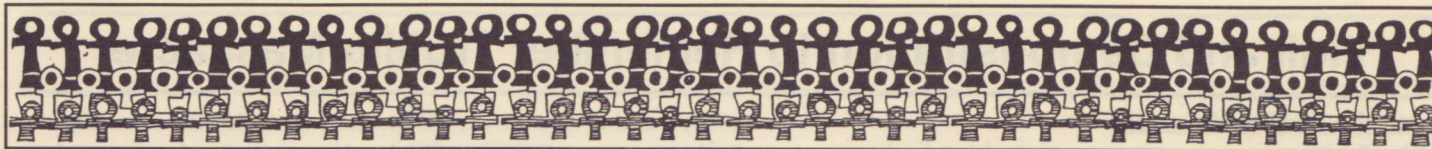
CSN has received many letters in support of continuing to publish information about the crisis in Urabá on our web page. If you would like to make your opinion on this matter known here are two ideas: 1) you may write a letter of support (signed by yourself, your friends, representatives from any sympathetic organizations that you may belong to) and send it to CSN with a request for us to publish your letter on our web page. 2) You may want to write Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520 and ask that U.S. travel visas be denied to Colombian army commanders (and their families) who have failed to protect the human rights of the civilian population, including General Rito Alejo del Río Rojas, the commander of the Colombian Army's 17th Brigade (located in Urabá and having jurisdiction in Apartadó), and General Ivan Ramirez (Río's direct superior). You might want to mention that, in addition to failing to take measures to protect human rights, that these generals have also taken action to suppress the free exchange of information.

## Gloria Cuartas Recognized by UNESCO for Peace Work

(from the Chicago Tribune, 11/17/96)

"Gloria Cuartas, mayor of Apartadó, Colombia, has received the first UNESCO Mayors for Peace Award to recognize exemplary actions among municipal leaders worldwide. Cuartas was selected 'for her courageous work to combat social exclusion and promote community dialogue, peace and citizenship,' Federico Mayor Zaragoza, UNICEF director-general, said during a ceremony in Rio de Janeiro. ....Said Cuartas, 'We need to overcome the images of death to raise instead a voice of international solidarity for protecting life.'"





## " The Women Said 'Enough Violence!' "

excerpted and translated from Nov. 26 El Colombiano

(Editor's note: The November delegation to Colombia organized by Colombia Support Network included two CSN members, two journalists from Madison, WI and four members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The delegation members gave statements of solidarity at the event described below. We have chosen to give space to this event in the newsletter because the vision of those who organized this conference demonstrates the desire of some Colombians to network with the international community in their search for creative and healing solutions to the violence.)

### **APARTADO, Urabá**

Standing and in unison, women's voices from Apartadó, and various countries from around the world said "Enough violence!". With this invitation to construct the road to peace, various women from around the world arrived in Urabá, to commemorate the International Day of Non-Violence Toward Women. During this event they told of their war-time experiences.

The mayor's office of Apartadó and Fedevivienda sponsored the event "Weaving the Culture of Life: An Encounter of Women's Worlds," which will conclude today, at 7 PM, with a children's rap act in the Culture House of Apartadó.

Women came from Bosnia, Burundi, Afghanistan, and from world organizations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the United Nations Program Women and Habitat to share their perspectives. The speakers wanted those present at the conference to be aware that women's strength can provide help in regions that appear to be conquered by despair, hatred, and cruelty.

### **PALESTINIAN EXPERIENCE**

Jihad Abu Znaid, a Palestinian woman, said that she came from a refugee camp in Gaza where there are neither schools nor medical clinics. According to her testimony, the majority of men are in jail, including her brothers. Not being able to rely on men, motivated the women to start working with each other and to begin to struggle little by little for the development of their community. They lost some of their fear, which was related to prohibitions placed on them by their culture, and began to participate in improving their surroundings. Now, Jihad participates in women's organizations that promote education and the creation of small businesses in various camps.

### **WAR IN SARAJEVO**

Mirela Muralic explained how daily life in Sarajevo had been characterized by by massacre, torture, and death. But

in spite of the pain, and with the help of international organizations and many women from around the world, women's strength was able to begin to give psycho-social and medical aid to people displaced by the war. According to Mirela, the fact of having to be alone, because the men were in concentration camps, dead, or fighting in the war, was what motivated the women to change from being victims to participants in the reconstruction of the country.

### **NDIKMANA, FROM BURUNDI**

Victoire Ndikmana participates in an organization for the economic promotion of women in Burundi. Ndikmana said that women who have had to flee from Burundi and have settled in other countries have organized campaigns such as a tour of Burundi women artists that was sponsored in France as a means of collecting material aid for Burundi children.

### **LOCAL TESTIMONIES**

Not only foreign women shared their experiences, some local Urabá women gave their testimonies and urged the conference participants to follow the example of women working together who have been able to rise above the effects of war. During this testimonial stage of the conference, a journalist took the microphone and invited the women in attendance to impregnate their husbands with "forests of peace," a proposal that was very well received in the auditorium where the Day of Non-Violence Toward Women was celebrated.

### **Get Involved in the WILPF Tour of Colombian Women**

After participating in the Nov. 96 CSN delegation to Colombia, representatives of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) started organizing an Oct. 97 tour of Colombian women to promote awareness about the crisis in Colombia and to build connections with women's groups and human rights groups in the U.S.

If you are interested in hosting a speaking event in your community or would like to make a donation to help make this tour possible please contact Marilyn Clements, Executive Director of WILPF/US at 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107; or call her at (215-563-7110).



# Vigil and Demonstration to Remember Trujillo Massacre

## About the Trujillo Massacre

The Trujillo massacre was one of the bloodiest episodes in Colombian history. Beginning in April 1989, over 250 people were tortured and murdered by police, army, and hired killers working for locally based drug traffickers. The case of Trujillo exemplifies how the U.S. trained Colombian military work closely with paramilitaries and drug traffickers and operate with near absolute impunity. SOA graduates played key roles in the planning, carrying out, and cover up of the massacre.

The officer in charge of the massacre was Army Major Alirio Antonio Urueña Jaramillo, who took a course in Small Unit Infantry Tactics at the SOA in 1976. Daniel Arcila, a civilian auxiliary to Urueña Jaramillo and eyewitness to the tortures, gave testimony to Colombian judicial authorities (he was later disappeared). He testified that after breakfast with a local drug trafficker called "el Tio" the Army major then had coffee sacks tied around the heads of the victims and threw them to the ground.

Thus began the brutal torture and assassination of the Trujillo victims that included the town's parish priest, Rev. Tiberio Fernández.

Despite the Colombian government's international acceptance of responsibility for the massacre, no one, not even School of the Americas-trained Maj. Alirio Urueña Jaramillo, who personally tortured and killed people, has been punished. The only sanction against Urueña Jaramillo has been his dismissal from the military and the denial of any retirement benefits. To this day none of the officers responsible for the Trujillo massacre has been tried or convicted.

## About School of the Americas

SOA was created to "promote regional stability" while training U.S. soldiers in jungle warfare. It evolved to teach low intensity conflict, psychological operations, and intelligence gathering to Latin American soldiers and officers. Vicki Imerman, former co-director of SOA Watch, said that the design of SOA "is to perpetuate U.S. military influence in the hemisphere without using (or risking the loss of) large numbers of U.S. troops."

## Colombians Trained at School of the Americas

Perhaps the leading SOA client nation, Colombia has sent by far the most soldiers to train at the SOA, at least 9,679. Over 6,894 Colombians trained at the SOA during the height of the Colombian "dirty war" from 1984-1992, the main period when torture, assassination, and state terrorism manuals were in use. Between 1988 and

1995, the U.S. spent over \$13 million on Colombian soldiers in the program. Of the 136 Colombians cited as human rights abusers in the SOA-Watch report, 25 have been well received at the school and awarded various commendations and invited back as instructors.

## How to Support Actions to Close the SOA

There are currently two actions against SOA which need your support. First there is a December 15, 1996 letter to Attorney General Reno, already signed by 42 national and international groups and individuals, which requests legal action regarding the torture manuals used at SOA. (The Pentagon admitted their existence and use at SOA on September 19, 1996.) Secondly, there is a new bill HR611

## COME TO D.C. ON APRIL 24TH

### Remember the victims of the Trujillo Massacre

### Protest the impunity of the Colombian military



Photo: Father Tiberio, Francy Adela Mejía, and Gilberto Berrío: three lives lost during the Trujillo Massacre. (Photos provided by Justicia y Paz.)

introduced by Rep. Joe Kennedy calling for outright closure of the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Encourage your congressperson to sign the letter to Reno and to work for the passage of HR611.

## About the Vigil and Demonstration

On April 24th, 1997 at 5:30 pm there will be a demonstration in front of the Colombian Ambassador's residence (Connecticut Ave and Dupont Circle Q Street Metro Exit) to be followed by a vigil at 6:30 pm in the park at Dupont Circle. The vigil and demonstration are to remember the victims of the Trujillo Massacre, to protest the impunity of the Colombian military, to protest the training of the training of Colombians at the School of the Americas, and to protest U.S. funding and arming of human rights

Continued next page



**(Trujillo Memorial/demonstration  
continued from p. 4 )**

violators in Colombia. For information about the demo and vigil contact the Colombia Human Rights Committee in D.C. at 202-232-8148. This event is part of 10 days of activities (from April 19th to 29th) calling for the closing of the School of the Americas. For more information about these activities and possible low-cost housing options, Contact Carol Richardson SOA Watch/ D.C.(202-234-3440) or Fr. Roy Bourgeois, SOA Watch Columbus, Ga. (706-682-536 9).



**Father Javier Giraldo  
Protests to High  
Colombian Officials about  
Urabá Crisis**

(translated from a letter by Father Giraldo to high Colombian officials)

March 12, 1997

With profound consternation permit me to again call your attention to the current situation that the region of Urabá is suffering.

Since the past 23 of February the residents of more than 15 villages of the Bajo Atrato, the majority of them belonging to the municipality of Riosucio, of the department of Chocó, began to be forced through violent means to abandon their dwellings and their livelihoods by groups that identified themselves in some cases as "paramilitaries" and in other cases as "self defense groups." Some of those villages, such as Salaqui, Tamboral, Perquerre and others were bombed in order to force the displacement of the population. In the village of (continued p. 6)

**INSPIRATION FROM FATHER ROY BOURGEOIS**

"Bishop Romero said it best, ... before he was assassinated by someone who trained at the School of the Americas. He said, 'We who have a voice, we have to speak for the voiceless.' I realize that we here in this country have a voice. We can speak without having to worry about being disappeared, or tortured, or being picked-up. We can speak. And I just hope we can speak clearly and boldly."

**Colombian Organizations Set An Example for Peace**

Despite the risk involved in speaking out against the violence in Colombia, there are dozens of non-governmental organizations that are doing excellent work. Following are two examples.

The **Inter-Congregational Commission for Peace and Justice (Justicia y Paz)**, is an umbrella-like organization made up of more than 55 Catholic Religious Orders spread out all over Colombia. Father Javier Giraldo, S.J. is its executive director. One of the extremely important and arduous tasks of Justicia y Paz is to listen to the testimony of victims of violence and/or their family members and try to determine the circumstances of the violence and, to the extent possible, who or what organization was responsible for the injury or death. Each case is painstakingly recorded and added to the Justicia y Paz databank. These cases are summarized in text and in graphs in a quarterly bulletin and some of these cases are also documented in Father Giraldo's recently published book *Colombia: A Genocidal Democracy*.

Father Giraldo and his staff have taken tremendous personal risks to defend the victims of violence. Concerned about the acquittal of those involved in the Trujillo massacre, Giraldo requested a meeting with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission which agreed to set up a joint commission to investigate the killings. Giraldo represented the victims in these proceedings, which eventually determined that the Colombian army and police were responsible for the massacre (see p. 4). In addition to listening to testimony and representing victims, Justicia y Paz set up and maintains

shelters in Villavicencio and Barrancabermeja to assist peasants fleeing rural violence. These shelters are important symbols of humanitarian resistance to the violence sweeping the country.

**Program for Peace (Programa por la Paz)** In 1986, the Jesuits turned over a piece of colonial artwork known as "la lechuga" (the lettuce - because of its elaborate construction with emeralds) to the Bank of the Republic. The money received in compensation was used to create Program for Peace (PPP), whose mission is to promote the active participation of citizens and institutions in building dignity and peace for Colombia. Since 1989 Program for Peace has supported more than 500 projects and events in different areas of the country. These projects include: economic development and community organizing projects, peace education programs, human rights training, citizenship training (including creating public pressure to discredit war as an instrument for the resolution of social conflicts). Program for Peace supports reintegration projects that help ex-combatants readjust to civilian life and find alternative livelihoods, rehabilitation and reintegration projects aimed at substance abusers, gang members, and prostitutes to help them reconstruct their lives, and projects that work for the recognition of the rights of indigenous and afro-colombian groups. PPP also conducts research about the causes of violence and possible solutions and publishes books and reports that analyze the most urgent problems of the country. A Program for Peace grant provides important assistance to CSN in carrying out our mission.



## Letter from Father Javier Giraldo about Urabá Crisis (continued from p. 5)

Vijao, on Feb. 27, they assassinated a young man Marino Lopez with extreme cruelty, dismembering his body in the presence of various members of the community. The paramilitaries recommended to some of the groups that were fleeing their communities in terror that they direct themselves to Turbo (Antioquia); that there the police would pick them up in the port and that the mayor's office would show them where they could stay.

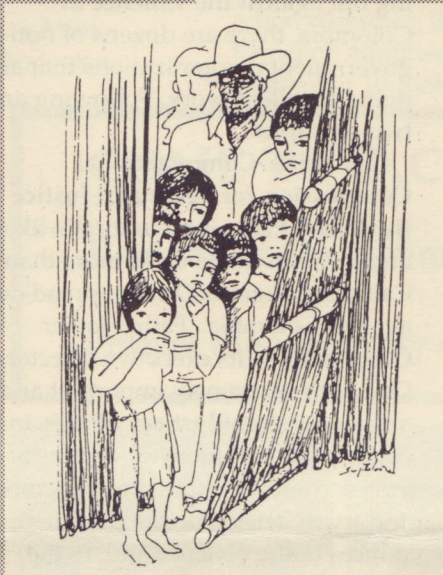
In this moment the stadium of Turbo is overflowing with several hundred displaced families and another large group of displaced families is found in Quibdó.

General Rito Alejo Del Rio, Commander of the XVII Brigade of the Army, talked last week with the displaced people that were taking shelter in the stadium of Turbo and when he was asked to guarantee safe return to their zones of origin, he responded that he could not guarantee that, since that zone was undergoing military operations and was being submitted to a general "sweeping." Therefore, there is no doubt about the close relationship between the National Army and the paramilitary groups that terrorize the region and have identified themselves as responsible for the criminal displacement of massive numbers of peasants and for extrajudicial executions and forced disappearances.

This same coordination of action (between the Public Forces and the paramilitary forces) is demonstrated in a similar fashion by what has been happening in the unincorporated town of San José, in the municipality of Apartadó. A paramilitary blockade has interrupted traffic for the last several weeks, between the urban area of Apartadó and the town of San José. There, all those who are traveling are subject to searches and on occasion the goods they are carrying are stolen under the pretext of "supplying the guerrillas." On Feb. 28 such a paramilitary group entered the hamlet of San Jose at 6:00 am and obliged all the residents to leave their houses and line up in the main street. Then the paramilitaries checked the residents' identification papers and took with them three members of the community; Don Ruben Antonio Villa, his son Antonio Villa and Don Miguel Haya. Later they forced Don Guillermo Serna to get off a public transportation vehicle and they took him also. These people were later assassinated and buried at the edge of the highway. One day before they had assassinated the driver R. Henao.

In spite of the pleadings of the widows and family members, the Public Prosecutor's Office of Apartadó initially declined to exhume the bodies and investigate the crimes.

The courageous Mayor of Apartadó, Gloria Isabel Cuartas, who in the face of such a refusal went with the widows to personally search for the place where the victims had been buried, and pressured the Public Prosecutor's office to conduct the exhumations. When the Public Prosecutor's staff (accompanied by a large contingent of military and police escorts) arrived at the site of the burial, there were paramilitaries there who exchanged friendly greetings with the army and police officials using the most familiar kind of language. Such obvious signs of immoral alliance caused profound repugnance on the part of the Mayor and the family members of the victims, which caused them to leave the scene immediately. The close ties between the institutions of the State and criminal groups who have submitted the region to a blood bath were demonstrated openly in this scene.



As on previous occasions, I reiterate to you these charges are not directed to ask for an "investigation", since a long and painful experience of seeking justice has demonstrated to us that the only results reaped are: greater risks for the victims, family members and witnesses, and greater impunity for those responsible for the violence.

What I do ask for is that the national government take urgent administrative measures to remove from their positions

the commanders of the army and police forces, who in such an evident form have acted in coordination with the paramilitary structures of the region. I ask that that they be replaced by officials that abide by the rule of the constitution and the principles of International Justice that protect human dignity. For the more than 500 families displaced from the Bajo Atrato, I ask that their properties and means of supporting themselves, of which they were unjustly deprived, be returned to them immediately.

With profound grief and pain,

Father Javier Giraldo M, S.J.  
Executive Secretary  
Justicia y Paz  
Religious Conference of Colombia  
Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace  
Santafe de Bogota



(Editor's note CSN has prepared two sample urgent action letters which respond to the situation that Father Giraldo describes. One is directed to Colombian officials the other to U.S. officials. To receive a copy of these urgent action letters, please contact the CSN office or look for them on CSN's web page.)



**JUNE 96- NEW COMMANDER OF U.S. MILITARY GROUP IN COLOMBIA** (from the May/June 96 edition of Defensa Nacional, a publication of the Colombian Ministry of National Defense) "On May 24 of this year...Robert W. Neumann assumed his functions as the Commander of the U.S. Military Group in Colombia replacing Thomas R. Carstens."

(Editor's note: Myles Frechette, U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, during a meeting with the Nov. 96 CSN delegation to Colombia, stated emphatically that no U.S. military advisors work in Colombia... apparently he does not read Defensa Nacional.)

#### **SEPT 96- ARMS TRANSFERS TO THE COLOMBIAN ARMY**

On September 11 the House Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on the sale of \$169 million of Blackhawk helicopters to the Colombian Armed Forces. The Democrats objected to the lack of monitoring associated with the sale (which was authorized).

**OCT 96 -AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON US AID TO ARMY UNITS THAT VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS.** On October 29, Amnesty International held a press conference to release documents that show that, of the Colombian army units identified by Amnesty in 1994 as gross violators of human rights, all but one had received US military aid. When Amnesty asked for information on these units in 1994, U.S. State Department officials denied that units that commit human rights abuses were receiving U.S. aid.

#### **NOV 96- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH PRESS RELEASE** (New York Times 11/26/96)

"Acting on advice from United States military advisers, the Colombian military reorganized intelligence operations in the early 1990's, tightening ties between the armed forces and paramilitary fighters who have been accused of killing civilians', a human rights report says. Jose Miguel Vivanco, executive director of Human Rights Watch/Americas, said 'this is a sophisticated mechanism, in part supported by years of advice,

training, weaponry and official silence by the United States, that allows the Colombian military to fight a dirty war and Colombia officialdom to deny it.'"

#### **WAR PREDICTED FOR 1997**

The Colombian government has announced it will spend more than \$900 million on defense in 1997 including the purchase of scores of Russian and U.S. made combat helicopters... equivalent to its total military expenditures for the last four years.

### **NO TIME TO KEEP UP ON CURRENT EVENTS?**

*try the*

## **NEWS ROUND UP**

**JAN 97- COLONEL VELASQUEZ DISMISSED FOR TELLING THE TRUTH** ( from "Enredo de Sables" Cambio16, Jan. 13) "Colonel Carlos Alfonso Velasquez was dismissed on Jan. 1 after becoming the first official that dared to ask that a general of the Republic be investigated for failing to combat (violent) paramilitary groups that operate in Urabá. Velasquez says ' it is necessary to rid the Army of people who are accepting of paramilitary killing. This is the most serious problem that the Army encounters because inside the institution of the army, paramilitarism has more of a corrupting influence than narcotrafficking.'"

**FEB 97- NATIONAL LABOR STRIKE LASTS 10 DAYS** Some 300,000 state workers in Colombia began an open-ended strike on Feb. 11 to demand wage increases in line with inflation and oppose the government's plan to privatize state industries.

**FEB 97- CAR BOMB EXPLODES IN APARTADO COLOMBIA** The bomb killed 12 people and injured 60. In a Mar. 5 letter, Apartadó mayor Gloria Isabel

Cuartas Montoya, an internationally recognized advocate for peace and human rights in Colombia, condemned the FARC-EP for the bombing and charged that residents are now "experiencing retaliation from the paramilitary forces...."

#### **MAR 97- MILITARY AID TO COLOMBIA DANGEROUS**

(New York Times 3/27 Editorial)

"The Administration is now proposing a \$40 million package of aid to Colombia's police and military to fight drugs. This comes on top of at least \$35 million in equipment and training the military is already scheduled to get this year....This is dangerous ground. Because leftist guerrilla groups in certain areas are involved in trafficking, Colombian official openly say that some of the equipment will be used for fighting guerrillas... The aid is turning the U.S. once again into the backer of an abusive military involved in a seemingly endless civil war.... The Colombian military

is a throwback to the bad old days of Latin military dictatorships, and the U.S. support for it is as dangerous as it was when Communism, not cocaine, was the enemy.

**MAR/APRIL 97- U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION 53RD SESSION** During the 1997 session, ninety Colombian organizations signed a petition to the Commission that deplored the year long delay in establishing a permanent office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, which is now finally gearing up for full operation as an international observer and reporter of human rights violations. In addition, the petition said the Colombian government should be pressed to protect human rights and diversity of opinion, to curtail the activities of paramilitary groups, and to work towards a negotiated resolution to the differences that are tearing the country apart. The Commission also received a resolution from seven members of the European Parliament listing Colombia as a major human rights violator. Other countries condemned were China, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Turkey.



## Your letters and e-mail



Dec 96

When you receive this I will be finishing a year-long assignment that has taken me across this country, sharing in some 50 presbyteries and several synod events about our Presbyterian Church (USA) mission outreach in Colombia.... People from all kinds of churches were wonderfully cordial and responsive to my presentation.... I was back in Barranquilla briefly last August.. I was appalled by the increase in human rights violations ... A massacre occurred in Dabeiba, in the Urabá Presbytery the second week I was there. Several students from that presbytery were in my office praying until after midnight, concerned because they hadn't heard from their families. The next day a pastor in Barranquilla asked if I'd heard about the massacre in the Urabá presbytery. I told him we'd prayed for the situation in Dabeiba, but he corrected me " No , I meant the new massacre--they dragged six people form the worship service in Nuevo Oriente last night and shot them all right outside the church!"....

Alice, Williamsburg, VA

7 March 97

I had been wondering what the political situation in Colombia is. Realizing that I had no idea, and all I could pickup on the news was some stuff related to the War on Drugs. Then the other day your bulletin arrived in by mail box. Wow! This is what I was looking for...

Dick, Greenfield, MA

Nov 96

Thank you very much for all your help in getting information for the asylum appeal I was preparing. I am very pleased to say that we won! Statistically, only 4% of appeals are won. The gov't. didn't even bother to appeal. I put in all our Amnesty International reports, and the extracts from Father Giraldo's book, and the Washington Office on Latin America report, which was particularly influential. The funny thing was, I didn't use the US State Dept. report, but the UK gov't did, and we simply appropriated all its information for our argument. The adjudicator was totally convinced about the situation in Colombia, and how it could have affected my clients. The result is that two men and their families are now safely in the UK on a permanent basis.

Judith (London, England)

12 Dec 97

I am very interested in contacting U.S. government officials after reading the Isthmus article "War Zone." What is the best way to go about helping Colombians? I would donate money to your organization if I were of means, but, as my billfold is, my activism is what I have to give.

Carol, Whitewater, WI

(Editor's note: If you are wondering how to help please contact CSN for

concrete suggestions, urgent action letter models, urgent action addresses, info about hosting events, about borrowing videos etc.)

28 Dec. 96

I am a Colombian who is studying at Stanford University. I am very interested in your organization and I would like to be part of it. Please let me know how I can join.

Juan, Stanford, CA

Jan 97

We recently found the "Colombia Bulletin" in the office of a local NGO (the Inter-Church Committee for Human Rights in Latin America) and we realized immediately that we have to support this excellent initiative.... We would be in the position to undertake coordinated activities with you-if for instance there is a Colombian visitor such as Father Giraldo coming to Madison, we could invite him/her to our city as well.

David, Montreal, Canada

28 Feb. 97

It is nearly 1:30 am and I have only read the first 24 pages of Javier Giraldo's Colombia: the Genocidal Democracy, but I feel an overwhelming need to express my gratitude to you for supporting the publication of this book. I am the daughter of Colombian immigrants.... I read Father Giraldo's book about political killings and think that one of those numbers in that book could have been me.. or my sister or brother and anyone of my numerous family members, the majority of which are still in Colombia. ... I thank you for telling the truth about what is going on in Latin America... it is a massacre that many of unknowingly support with our tax dollars, and I firmly believe that our ignorance is willfully supported by our government, as evidence by the lack of media coverage in this country regarding Colombia's dismal human rights record... Mil gracias por contar la verdad. (Thanks a million for telling the truth.)

Maria Elena, Ann Arbor, MI

Dear CSN: As a Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, I was stationed at the Caribbean Regional Operations Center, a Joint Service unit in Key West that is involved in counter narcotics. In 1991, I concluded that an Air Force Major, named Don Anderson, was involved in drug related espionage. I tried to do something about it, and ended up getting kicked out for psychiatric reasons. A more detailed account is available at my web site which is

<http://members.aol.com/AllenMontg/drugspy.html>

Allen D. Montgomery

Dear CSN:

I would like to offer any support I possibly can to resist the Colombian Military's ridiculous suggestion that you remove a website. You should not under any circumstance cave into this attempt to extend the Colombian Military's "sphere of faceless terror" into cyberspace. I have told a number of fellow graduate students here about your site and I will continue to monitor the situation. Let me know if there is anything I can do. Resist the Global War Machine!

Christian, Davis, CA

(see article p. 2 for suggestions on how to respond to Web Page threats)



## POSITION AVAILABLE

**Executive Director, Colombia Support Network.** Help organize, coordinate and expand public education and advocacy work for Colombian human rights, and assist in the development and coordination of sister-community projects between Dane County and Apartadó Colombia. Hours: 75% position with possible expansion to full-time. Salary: \$10.00 per hour. Starting date: May 1, 1997. If you have experience in community organizing and project development, an understanding of national or international human rights work, Spanish fluency and excellent office management and computer skills, we would like to talk to you. Please request a full job description and application instructions by contacting the CSN personnel committee at CSN, P.O. Box 1505, Madison, WI 53701 (or contacting email: [csn@igc.apc.org](mailto:csn@igc.apc.org)).

## FREE ISSUE OF COLOMBIA BULLETIN

In Sept. of 1996, a new English language magazine was initiated, focusing on the current situation in Colombia. Today *Colombia Bulletin* is 48 pages long and features articles on the current political, social and economic conditions facing Colombia. Not only is *Colombia Bulletin* a vehicle to educate people about the Colombian human rights situation, it is also a tool to assist activists in building a movement for peace and justice in Colombia. Subscription rate: \$25.00/year, \$12.50/low income, add \$10.00 airmail for overseas delivery. Send for a free sample copy to *Colombia Bulletin*, c/o CSN-WICOLA, P.O. Box 1505, Madison, WI 53701.

### Colombia Support Network

would like to thank all our friends and supporters

for helping make 1996 a year of many worthwhile projects and endeavors. We would like to give a special thanks to those who contributed during our annual phone-a-thon in August of 1996 and to all those who helped it happen. A big thanks to local businesses which provided refreshments for the phone-a-thon volunteers. Please patronize **El Charro**, **La Hacienda** and **Cousins Subs**. Thanks also to **Wisconsin Coalition against Domestic Violence**, an organization engaged in essential and vital work, for their logistical support in carrying out the phone-a-thon. Lastly thank you to all the volunteers who freely gave of their time and energy.

### Get A Free Copy of the

February 1997 Issue of

*The Progressive* magazine

AND A Special Subscription Offer --

One year subscription to *The Progressive*, plus half hour taped interview by Matt Rothschild with local Colombia expert, plus Feb. 1997 issue (with several articles on Colombia) all for only \$18.00

To receive the free Feb 97 issue and/or tape and sub, send this coupon, your name and address to:

*The Progressive*

409 East Main St. Madison, WI 53703

**Yes!** I want to help stop the violence in Colombia.

Here is my contribution to the Colombia Support Network and the Dane County/Apartadó Sister Communities Project:

\$25     \$50     \$100     \$250     \$500    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to join the CSN. Please contact me.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Colombia Support Network, P.O. Box 1505, Madison WI 53701 (608) 257-8753

Checks made out to WICOLA-CSN are tax-deductible.



Midwest Regional  
Networking Meeting  
On Colombia  
Human Rights  
Champaign- Urbana  
Sept. 27-28

Wondering how to get more  
information? How to get active?

This meeting is to help individuals and organizations in the Midwest learn about Colombia, find ways to initiate Colombia outreach and educational activities in your community, and connect with others doing the same.

If you are interested in attending or have time to help organize this event in Champaign-Urbana please contact Suzanne Wilson (phone: 217-384-0666 or email her at: santafe@ux6.cso.uiuc.edu).

### CSN August Delegation to Bogotá and Urabá Region

Take advantage of CSN's experience leading thought-provoking delegations. Educate yourself in order to do a better job educating and organizing others. Tentative dates are August 2 - 16. Please contact CSN for more information.

Colombia Support Network  
P.O. Box 1505  
Madison, WI 53701

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Colombian Army Tries to Shut Down CSN's Web Page – What are they afraid of?... <http://www.igc.apc.org/csn/> - page 2

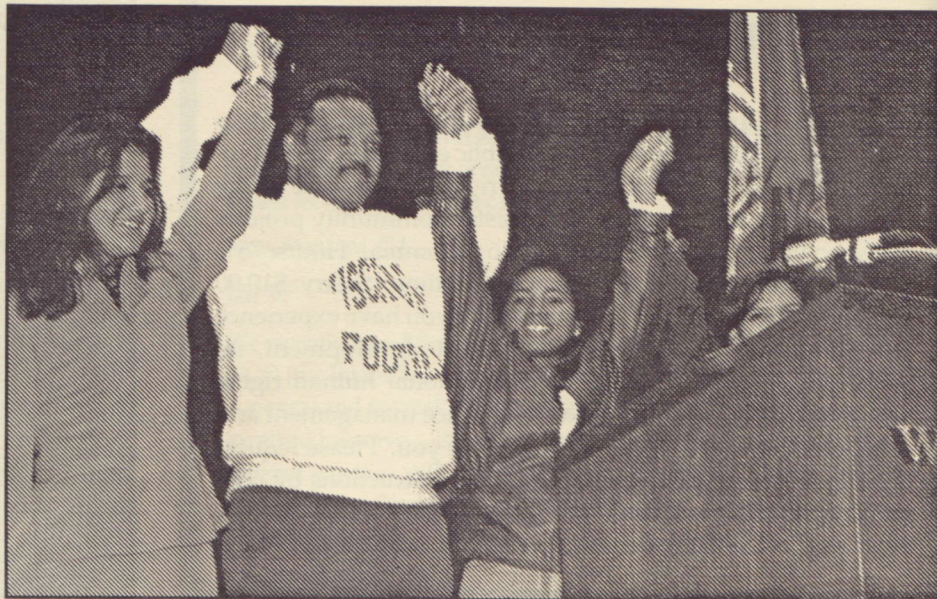


photo: Zulia Mena immediately to right of Jesse Jackson at UW-Madison 10/96,  
photo courtesy of UW Office of News and Public Affairs

## Afro-Colombian Congresswoman Zulia Mena

Zulia Mena realized a life long dream of meeting Jesse Jackson whom she invited to visit Colombia in conjunction with her mission to call attention to the needs and concerns of the Afro-Colombian peoples in Colombia. Zulia Mena, Afro-Colombian Congresswoman and community organizer, visited Madison as part of a three week tour of the U.S. While she was here she spoke at University of Wisconsin and met with community leaders in various organizations including the Madison Urban League and the Sierra Club. Zulia's home region, the Chocó, is facing numerous challenges including the economic and political isolation of its primarily Afro-Colombian population, the exploitation of its abundant natural resources by outside interests, and the an increasing pressure to meet the needs of internal refugees fleeing violence (see the letter from Father Javier Giraldo, p. 5).

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