

# Action on Colombia

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## Chronicles of the Dirty War

by Matthew Knoester

\*edited article and photo reprinted with permission from CSN Boston newsletter.

I just returned from Colombia, where I joined a delegation led by CSN, intending to strengthen sister city relationships in several small rural areas which have seen the worst of the violence plaguing the country. Following the example of CSN headquarters in Madison in their ten year relationship with Apartadó, our Boston chapter hoped to create a relationship with Arenales, a small town on the Magdalena River facing constant threats of paramilitary violence.

Upon arriving in Bogotá, our host informed us that our schedule would be changed; during the previous evening 12 people were killed in the petroleum city of Barrancabermeja (Barranca) and an additional 43 people forcibly disappeared. According to a joint report of three human rights organizations in Barranca, approximately fifty right-wing paramilitary men arrived in the city at 8:00 pm, May 16, in four trucks. With the trucks obviously having passed through the military check-points surrounding the city, awareness of the attack by both the military and the National Police is almost assured.

A general strike was called in Barranca the following day, seriously threatening the country's gasoline supply. At the suggestion of our host we instead visited the headquarters of a leading Catholic human rights group, Justicia y Paz, whose Executive Secretary is Fr.. Javier

Giraldo S.J., author of *Colombia: The Genocidal Democracy*. Their small office had just been raided on May 13, and there continued to be concern for Fr. Giraldo's life. That Wednesday, approximately 20 men forcibly entered the premissis, refused to present a search warrant, and proceeded to rummage through the office. Several nuns were forced to their knees with machine guns pointed at their foreheads. Due to actions such as this, along with death threats and assassinations of human rights workers, Amnesty International in Bogotá closed down in February of this year. However, other human rights groups continue to persist.

On May 19th, the anniversary of the deaths of human rights workers Mario Calderón and Elsa Alvarado from the Center for Research and Popular Education (CINEP), the city of Bogotá was electrified. It was declared a Day Against Impunity and hundreds of people gathered to protest the failure of their justice system in which 97% of the politically-motivated murders go unpunished. Marching to the central plaza, we were joined by hundreds more, including trade unionists who are among the primary victims of military-paramilitary violence. According to Brother Luis Garcon, President of the



March 19th Demonstration in Colombia

Central United Workers, "of every 10 trade unionists killed in the world in recent years, 4 were Colombian..." As we continued our march to the plaza, the trade unionists were surrounded by national police officers in riot gear.

With the continued and seemingly unrelenting violence in the area, our group never made it to Barranca. But in the end the experiences communicated and shared reinforced the conclusion that the U.S. continues to implicate itself in human rights violations in Colombia. Real change in Colombia could take place if the government of the United States stopped all funding of the military and the national police in Colombia, or if they vigorously supported the UN High Commissioner's Office on Human Rights (entirely funded by the European Union). Instead, this message remains unheard, as the U.S. mainstream media chooses not to interview human rights activists and ignores the fact that these activists and church leaders are themselves prime targets of the military-paramilitary connection.

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## CSN President Relates Delegation Experience

by Jack Laun

A varied CSN delegation of 7 persons including chapter leaders from Eugene, Champaign-Urbana, and Boston, as well as a funding director, filmmaker, and two members from the national headquarters visited Colombia this May. Three of us traveled to Apartadó, where we met with the new mayor, Teodoró Diaz, to discuss the continuation of the Dane County -- Apartadó sister city relationship. Mayor Diaz, a former EPL guerrilla returned to civilian life, identifies with a conservative, pro-paramilitary line. Instead of efforts involving local people's struggle in the war-torn area, he suggested focusing on English language training and cleaning up the polluted Apartadó River as the focus of sister community activities.

We learned of some of the people's struggles firsthand as we met with Father Leonidas Moreno, director of the Catholic Church's Pastoral Social Program in Uraba, and visited the basketball arena in Turbo where 3,800 of these refugees live. The refugees are subjected to very cramped quarters with no privacy and little food, hoping to return to homes they left in 1997.

After 3 days in Apartadó we traveled to Bogotá, rejoining other members of the delegation to meet with Father Javier Giraldo, director of Justicia y Paz, and Father Fernan Gonzalez, director of CINEP. From them we learned of the courageous struggle of human rights workers, who continue to be threatened.

### Notes from a successful chapter: Eugene, Oregon

What is a CSN chapter and what is its function? This question is not easy to answer because while all chapters include a small group of committed people with a connection to a sister city in Colombia, their activities and involvement include a wide range of strategies. By examining the work of one CSN chapter, Eugene, Oregon, we will have a better understanding of what a chapter is and how it functions.

One strategy is to raise awareness about Colombia through sponsoring or calling for lectures. The Eugene Chapter uti-

In addition to learning of their plight, we also had the opportunity to discuss the severe problems of the country's justice system, including high rates of impunity. The Assistant Director of the office of the Procurador General, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Almudena Moffarasa, and two officials of the ombudsman's office, the Defensoria del Pueblo, spoke of the army's counterinsurgency war and the threat to human rights work. In addition, we were shown a moving video of peasants bombed by a Colombian armed forces' plane.

The issue of paramilitary violence was another part of our agenda as we spoke with Colombia's Joint Chief of Staff, General José Manuel Bonett. His explanation for the continued freedom of Carlos Castaño and the continued illegal paramilitary attacks on civilians in the Middle Magdalena was a lack of resources (only 120,00 troops). Despite General Bonett's protestations that the army does not actively collaborate with the paramilitaries, we were not convinced. Later, at a meeting with former Coronel Carlos Alfonso Velazquez, who was tossed out of the Army when he revealed the collaboration between General del Rio's command at the Carepa Army Base and other paramilitary leaders, these doubts about collaboration were confirmed.

lized it's connection with the university to organize lectures by Dr. Daniel Goldrich, who spoke about historical background of the U.S. foreign policy in Latin America and popular movements in Central America. Another lecture, by Dr. Julia Fox, focused on the historical, political orientation of SOA, and possible activities in the U.S. to shut down the school.

Another strategy used by Eugene includes educational outreach through presentations at various other community group's meeting (human rights organization for Latin American countries, churches), as well as contacting local newspaper to write articles about



CSN delegates Ravi Khanna, Matt Knoester, and Jack Laun (far right) with Colonel Carlos Alfonso Velazquez and a peace delegate from Belgium

While our delegation met with a variety of Colombian officials we also had the opportunity to speak with the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, Curtis Kamman. At our meeting we expressed support for the U.S. cancelling the visas of General del Rio and General Ivan Ramirez - a measure he neither confirmed or denied - and we debated vociferously with him about the aerial crop spraying with U.S. protection in the Guaviera and Putomayo regions. In these regions the herbicide tebuthiuron is suspected of being tested despite environmental concerns and Dow Agrow Sciences admonitions that it not be used there. (see page 5) Although we were grateful for his time we left very frustrated by the Embassy's positions on several issues, including the herbicide testing and support of the School of the Americas.

Much of our trip including these interviews were videotaped, except for that in the U.S. Embassy. Watch for news of the videotapes of the delegation which should be available in the near future.

CSN as well as issues in Colombia. In addition, they contacted faculty to encourage them to include Colombia in their curriculum.

Letter writing, and petitioning of Colombian and U.S. government officials in response to urgent actions in Colombia have also been and important activity for Eugene.

These outreach activities in conjunction with internal organizational cohesiveness spurred by well attended weekly meetings, as well as founder Shin Furuya's visit to Colombia, have made Eugene a successful chapter and a model for others to follow.

# Youth Express Views on Colombia

Letters to President Clinton from students at Mission Hill School, Boston

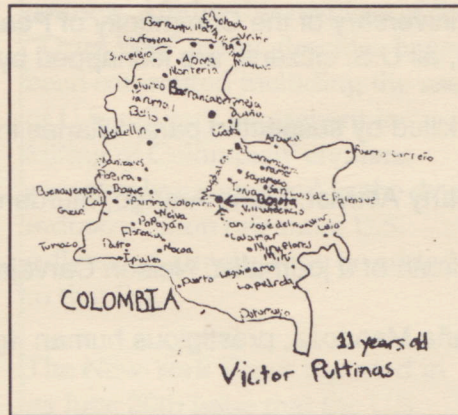
Dear President Bill Clinton,

I am an 11-year-old girl at the Mission Hill School in Boston, MA, and I am concerned about the future. The US is sending money, weapons, and helicopters to Colombia, and they are being used to kill Colombian peasants. My parents' tax dollars are paying for this when they could go to the schools, parks, social security, and other important things. We need to stop doing this, and not send anything that could cause more violence. I have researched this and the Colombian peasants have said that they don't want the US to send equipment or weapons. I think this is because they are afraid of having something like what happened in Vietnam happen there. If you really wanted to help out in Colombia, you would give the money to the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights. Please listen to me and thank you for your time.

Dear Mr. President,

I am concerned about how you are treating the Colombian people. Although you are not the one hurting these forgiving and loving people, you are funding the people who do harm them. In the past 10 years 30,000 people have died because of your Black Hawk helicopters, guns of all kinds, and other deadly instruments of death. If you want to send supplies, send food and other medical things, and not weapons! If you really cared about justice in other countries, then why haven't you sent money to the U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights? People are starving and dying and it's partly because of your weapons. Why would you send weapons over to Colombia when a war is going on between the civilians and the military, and the military are killing people for no apparent reason? I am

begging you to stop sending these weapons of mass destruction over to a country that has its hands full already!



Dear Mr. President,

I'm writing to you about the extreme violence in Colombia that **you** have willingly funded. You sent 169 million dollars for military aid last year. Partly as a result of the last ten years of military aid, 30,000 Colombians have been killed by the paramilitary, military, and guerrillas, and countless have been disappeared. I think that you should send money to the U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights. Many people have died as a result of your humongous funding of weapons. I hope you find some meaning in this letter, and decide to cut off funding

Dear President Clinton,

We are very concerned about the people who have been forcibly disappeared from Barrancabermeja, Colombia. They include: Alfredo Ruiz, David Triana, and Julio Cristancho. We think that the paramilitary should not kill innocent individuals with support from the military. We wish that you would stop sending money and weapons to Colombia. The military is not actually killing the people but is allowing the paramilitary to. These innocent people will not take this sitting down

and they have suffered a very long time. Please Listen to Us.

Dear Mr. President,

I'm outraged at the amount of money and military supplies that you have sent to Colombia. Don't you see that the amount of supplies you've sent over to Colombia (which I hope had good intentions) has backfired and now because of your money, thousands of people are dying? If you stop sending money to Colombia, I'm sure that the number of killings will drop dramatically. Although I'm just a boy of a mere eleven, I am an American citizen and request that you stop sending money over to Colombia. I'm sure that I am not the first one to write to you on this subject, and never have I seen anything so hideously terrible in my life. I saw several men and women killed and was deeply disturbed about this. Please keep in mind that even the youth of your country are calling out for you to do something.

Dear President Clinton,

I don't think you should be sending money and weapons to Colombia now they're killing people there. Why don't you let the Colombians come to the U.S.A. ? Stop the killing!



Leaders in San Jose de Apartadó -- just some of the people struggling for survival.

# ***Chronology: The Acceleration of Violence***

## **MARCH**

**March 5** - Colombian 3rd Mobile Brigade is defeated by leftist rebels of FARC. Over 70 soldiers are killed and 30 wounded. Proclaimed as the largest defeat of the military in the 30 year history of the civil war. Many, such as Gen. Wilhelm of the U.S. Southern Command cite, the defeat as a need for more U.S. military aid.

**March 19** - U.S. doubles the size of its advisory group in Colombia.

**March 23** - One year anniversary of the Community of Peace in San José de Apartadó. Four birdwatchers, all U.S. citizens, are kidnapped by guerrilla group. (FARC)

## **APRIL**

**April 8** - Five peasants killed by suspected paramilitaries in Remedios.

**April 17** - Communist Party Activist, Maria Arango, murdered at her home outside Bogotá.

**April 18** - News of the death of a journalist, Nelson Carvajal, shot 10 times in Pitalito.

**April 18** - Eduardo Umaña Mendoza, prestigious human rights lawyer, is assassinated in his office.

**April 24** - Last of U.S. birdwatchers are released, unharmed.

## **MAY**

**May 1** - News of the brutal killing of 22 people near Urao. This time the military, not the paramilitary, is blamed.

**May 5** - Puerto Alvira massacre. 21 are left dead while many others are tortured or disappeared. Appears to be the work of a paramilitary organization.

**May 13** - Offices of Justicia y Paz searched under the auspices of alleged connections to guerrilla groups. Employees made to kneel and be video-taped during the entire process.

**May 17** - Massacre in Barrancabermeja. Ten individuals were immediately assassinated. Twenty-five others were disappeared from the city.

**May 19** - The 20th Brigade, the Colombian Intelligence Unit, is disbanded due to connections to human rights violations.

**May 25** - Information released about U.S. forces training in Colombia, despite restrictions under the special forces JCET program.

## **JUNE**

**June 4** - Paramilitary group committing Barrancabermeja massacre announces they have killed, and burned the 25 people disappeared earlier from the town after performing a mock trial and finding them guilty of being guerrilla sympathizers.

**June 20** - The New York Times runs an article stating that the Colombian government has agreed to test the herbicide tebuthiuron on coca plants even though its producer, Dow AgroSciences, warns against it citing probable damage to flora and ground water.

**June 21** - Colombians elect Conservative Party candidate Andres Pastrana over Liberal Horacio Serpa in the Presidential Runoff.

## Presidential Election News

While the selection of Conservative Party candidate Andres Pastrana as the new president elect of Colombia seems to follow the same script that has been played out in that country for the last century, small deviations from the usual political dialogue (or monologue) might suggest hope for change in the future.

A persistent criticism of the Colombian political system has been the dearth of choices for the Colombian public. With both Liberal and Conservative candidates representing the same ideals and policies and no room for third party candidates, the public's options are severely limited.

In the recent presidential elections, however, a third party candidate gave the two parties a run for their money. Noemi Sanin surprised most by capturing over 30 percent of the vote in the May 31st elections. Pastrana and his Liberal opponent Horacio Serpa each captured about 40 percent of the vote. With no single candidate commanding a majority of the votes, a runoff between the two top candidates was forced. Although Sanin did not finish in the top two candidates, and thus make the runoff, her success among voters perhaps caused a re-evaluation of the issues, at least on the surface, for the two candidates.

While neither of the two candidates offered a new strategy for solving Colombia's problems, the voters seem to have objected less to Pastrana's supposed ignorance of the people than to Serpa's connection to Samper's presidency as Pastrana just squeezed out a slight 52 to 48 majority of the votes.

**Pastrana Keeps Election Promise to Meet with Guerrilla Leaders -- see the July 10th New York Times or CSN's web page ([www.igc.apc.org/csn/](http://www.igc.apc.org/csn/)) for more information**

## Tebuthuiron Testing -- Environmental Concerns Raised With New Strategy in "Drug War"

The United States' involvement in the "Drug War" in Colombia has always been a concern for those interested in promoting peace, justice, and human rights in that country. Under the auspices of the "Drug War" many atrocities have been committed including the use of U.S. military equipment in killing of Colombian civilians completely uninvolved in the drug industry. Soon one more U.S. influenced atrocity may be added to that list.

The New York Times reported in its June 20th issue that the U.S. government had persuaded Colombia to begin testing of a new herbicide to eradicate coca plants, tebuthuiron. Tebuthuiron, sold under the name of Spike 20P, is considered by many U.S. officials, to be a valuable weapon in fighting drug production. While another herbicide, glysophate, is currently used, it is only about 30percent effective. Aside from Spike 20P's increased effectiveness in eradication of the plant, its use is also advantageous because it can be dropped from higher levels, protecting the planes from gunfire on the ground.

While U.S. government officials have encouraged the use of Spike 20P for coca eradication in Colombia, other organizations are not supportive of its use. The Environmental Protection Agency requires a warning label on the product indicating that this herbicide can pollute ground water. The makers of Spike 20P, Dow AgroSciences, are also wary of the use of their product in Colombia.

In fact, they have discouraged its use as they believe its application to be too risky. Due to a number of factors, including mountainous terrain and the close proximity to other plants and people, the dangers the herbicide posed to plants and ground water makes Spike 20P's use inadvisable.

Although the New York Times reported that the Colombian government had already agreed to testing, later in the week the Colombian government flatly denied that it had made such an arrangement. Instead, Colombian officials asserted that testing of the new herbicide was merely being considered and had not, as of yet, been approved. However, it is impossible to ascertain whether this is the "official line" of the government or the reality in Colombia.

While testing of tebuthuiron in Colombia may or may not be under way, the call from U.S. officials for that measure seems to be constant, regardless of the environmental impact. In that same article New York Times quotes U.S. Ambassador Curtis Kamman as saying, "For a net environmental positive effect, getting rid of coca is the best course for Colombia".

Once again U.S. interests in the "Drug War" seem to overshadow both ecological or human rights concerns in Colombia.

## Testimonies: Herbicide Spraying Nightmares

**Maria Concepcion Torres is a 57 year old campesina woman born in the Andean zone of the Boyacá region. For economic reasons she crossed the Guaviare to settle on the vacant lands. This is her story with regards to the fumigations taking place since May 1997:**

"The fumigations have left myself and my family in poverty. We were living by cultivating yucca, banana, corn, beans, and sugar cane. On our farm we didn't have a single coca plant. Nevertheless, we were twice the object of fumigations and the result was the failure of all of our crops including the vegetable garden that we have for the survival of our family.

As we told the police inspector from El Unilla in the Guaviare, the authorities can come to my farm and see that we do not grow coca. I don't understand why the government and the police force does this type of fumigation indiscriminately, affecting the entire world and the environment, the children, the adults, the animals. It is a barbaric act that they have committed against humanity, violating human rights and the Political Constitution of Colombia. Please do something for us, we are not animals!"

**At the end of April of this year, some living in Guaviare presented the following testimony:**

"On the 30th of April 1997, an airplane from the anti-narcotics base fumigated, with glysofate, our properties situated by the capitol of the municipality of Puerto Colombia, where vegetation covered the water, and corn was cultivated.

Continually these planes flew by dropping residue from their tanks on the tracks of land, this residue was caught by the breeze and

spread to all sides where the vegetation was ripe. This is why people are continually in transit in the Graveillera.

As the earlier deeds have affected our economic situation, we have solicited corresponding investigations with the hope of determining those responsible in this case. These coca cultivating properties do not exist and they have not been able to demonstrate any type of illicit cultivation which calls for this fumigation.

As you well know, the replacement of pastures, fruits, and other crops affected by the fumigations requires much effort and time and represents for us an economic loss."

**Before the Office of Defense of Collective Rights and the Environment, Mr. Mario Pérez Ospina presented the following statement:**

"I own a farm close to Florencia (Caqueta) which was fumigated with glysofate, inciting burning of pasture lands, palms and other general vegetation; these things occurred in the last week in January, 1998, causing grave economic and ecological losses. It is something inconceivable, that you would find this in the area with the Larandia Military Base; the land is clean, without any type of vegetation that the pilots could confuse (with coca). The pain caused, I believe, is irreparable. It is absurd that they attempt to do these things against the property of good, honest, and hardworking people.

\*The names have been changed. All of the situations correspond to formal denunciations presented to local authorities. Translated from Spanish by CSN staff.

July 7th, 1998

Dear Mr. Laun:

Thank you for your letter and informative annual report for the Colombia Support Network. I applaud the important work of CSN to raise awareness of human (rights) violations and the need for continued environmental protection to preserve precious natural resources.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to commit any financial support to your organization in the County's 1999 budget. This decision is based on fiscal constraints only and does not diminish the recognition, value, or commitment from my office in terms of future support to the sister community relationship between the municipality of Apartadó and Dane County.

Good luck in your wonderful work!

Sincerely,  
Kathleen M. Falk

## Letters to CSN

May 10th, 1998

Dear CSN,

Please receive my most sincere congratulations for the newsletter that you compile to inform the United States public and the world about the social tragedy that exists in Colombia.

It is good to know that while in the commercial venues of communication many times the information is incomplete or impartial, you with your publications and speaking out, permit to show the world the other truth about Colombia.

I congratulate you also, because in spite of not being primarily made up of Colombians, your denunciations about human rights abuses and the violence in my country, you constitute a voice and a shout for those Colombians whose capability for expression has been muted.

Today, more than ever, your newsletter is vital for the true democracy that we aspire to for Colombia.

Sincerely,  
Jaime A. Franco

# BLOODSHED IN COLOMBIA: PAST AND FUTURE POLITICAL MASSACRES

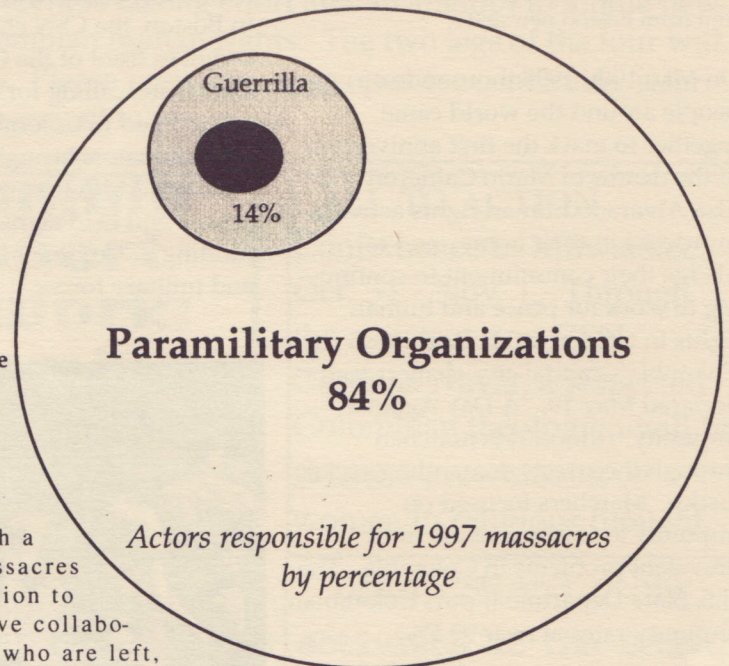
## NUMBER OF MASSACRES \* BY MONTH 1997

Jan.	14	July	16
Feb.	21	Aug.	16
March	25	Sept.	15
April	13	Oct.	11
May	15	Nov.	15
June	13	Dec.	11

TOTAL 187

\* "Massacre" denotes the killing of 4 or more people at the same time, under the same circumstances. Source: Data from the bulletin of Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, No.47, Bogotá, January, 1998

"It is very difficult for the Autodefensas to distinguish a guerrilla member from one who is not. This is why massacres of suspects is an efficient way to admonish the population to sever its ties of support to the guerrilla. Many who have collaborated with it get scared and flee the region, with those who are left, preferably victims of the guerrilla, a net-work of self-defense groups is organized and thus the region is recovered." **Carlos Castaño**, paramilitary leader, interview *Cambio 16*.



## These towns and villages are believed to be the sites of future massacres:

- In Antioquia:** Apartadó, Carepa, Chigorodó, Dabeiba, Ituango, Murindo, Mutata, Urrao, Pavarando
- In Bolivar:** Barranco de Loba, Morales, **Simiti, San Pablo**, Cantagallo
- In Boyaca:** Pajarito, Labranza Grande
- In Caqueta:** Sohia, S. Vincente del Caguan, Cartagena del Chaira, Morelia, Valparaiso
- In Casanare:** Villanueva, Chámeza, Taramena, Agua Azul, Faya
- In Choco:** Alto Baudó, Medio Baudó, Carmen de Atrato, Riosució
- In Cordoba:** Tierralta
- In Cundinamarca:** Gachala, Paratebueno, Medina, Fosca
- In Guaviare:** Calamar
- In Magdalena:** Ariguani, El Banco, Ciénaga
- In Meta:** Marpiripán, Barranca de Upia, Castillo, Mesetas, Lejanias
- In Nariño:** Sananiego, Cumbal
- In Putumayo:** Puerto Asis, Orito, Puerto Ospina, La Hormiga, Perto Guzmán, Puerto Leguizamo, Villagarzón, Mocoa
- In Santander:** Sabana de Torres, Puerto Wilches
- In Sucre:** Coloso, Los Palmitos, Ovejas, Galeras
- In Valle:** Florida, Tulua

*Foreshadowing of massacres is found in graffiti announcing the presence of the paramilitary, anonymous threatening pamphlets in circulation, announcement of a "black list". Civil authorities, city leaders, and other powerful people receive threats and flee the area. The local and national press, as well as the citizens of the area, are aware of threats being made, and in some cases the presence of strange outsiders is detected.*

In Simiti, these hints have been combined with other action to make it the most likely candidates for a massacre. The municipal capital of Simiti has been surrounded by paramilitary forces, who also control roads to the nearby municipalities of Santa Rosa del Sur, and San Pablo. According to inhabitants of the municipality of Simiti, at least ten vehicles were seen transporting paramilitary members to several communities in the municipality on the evening of 29 June. The next morning human rights NGO's contacted the 5th Brigade. A commanding officer reportedly told them that the paramilitary incursion was a peaceful operation, that the paramilitary operation was only targeted at guerrilla collaborators. However, at a 23 June meeting attended by representatives of human rights organizations and of the municipality of Simiti, the colonel of the 5th Brigade reportedly stated that the population of Simiti was collaborating with guerrilla forces. This combined with the recent withdrawal of troops at a nearby military base indicate probable paramilitary violence. For more information visit our web site at [www.igc.apc.org/csn/](http://www.igc.apc.org/csn/) (Massacre page and July's Urgent Actions)

## CSN Boston

by Carrie Vance

\*Article and photo reprinted with permission from Boston newsletter

On May 19th, 1998 thousands of people around the world came together to mark the first anniversary of the deaths of Mario Calderon and Elsa Alvarado, human rights activists murdered in their home, and to pledge their commitment to continuing to work for peace and human rights in Colombia. In Bogotá, Colombia's capital city, demonstrators declared May 19, "A Day Against Impunity"; thousands marched through the streets demanding social justice. Marchers focused on impunity as it is one of the most prevalent problems in Colombia. The U.S. State Department puts Colombian impunity rates at near 99.5%.

Human rights activists from around the world, including many in

Germany, Costa Rica, and the U.S., joined the Colombians in their protest. In Boston, the CSN chapter organized a vigil in front of the Colombian Consulate, calling for an end to U.S. military aid to Colombia. Demonstrators brought pictures of Mario and Elsa to carry in remembrance and held signs protesting U.S. funding of Colombian National Police and military forces.



*Protesters at Boston Demonstration*

Our demonstration, and other international displays of solidarity, caught the attention of the Colombian press, and a report was printed in a leading Colombian daily, *El Espectador*.

The protest of U.S. military aid to Colombia is gaining momentum. We must continue to work together to stop U.S. military aid, close the School of the Americas, and support the U.N. High Commissioner on Human Rights in Bogotá!

## Chicago Chapter Hosts Demonstration

by Carol Sundberg

On Saturday, June 13th, 4 members of CSN Madison drove to Chicago to meet up with about 50 other Colombia supporters outside the Federal Building from three states-Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. Together we held up the Colombian flag, placards demanding the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel and the termination of U.S. military spending in Colombia. Human rights abuses and the resulting deaths as well as the more than 1 million refugees also were subjects of our protest signs.

After the demonstration many met again where two CSN delegation members, from Urbana and Madison, gave a report of their experiences on that delegation. We listened to a description of a debate between the delegates and the U.S. Ambassador, Curtis Kamman, over the use of Dow AgroScience's tebuthiuron to destroy coca fields. We also heard that one delegate was searched outside Puerto Vilches by military personnel and another unidentified man (presumably paramilitary). The men sat side by side, each checking through his own list, searching for the delegate's name. From this same delegate we heard of the Coca Cola's success at breaking up and independent union at their plant, illegally firing the leader and destroying union offices.

While all of these events and experiences made an impression, this delegate was especially struck by the courage of the Colombian people in the face of extreme suffering and bloodshed; this was his first visit to Colombia.

Following these mini-presentations a discussion was held, bringing up several new activist ideas. A follow-up meeting was proposed for local participants. Although it was indefinitely postponed, the Chicago chapter still hopes to plan an organizational meeting for the near future. Please contact Alynne Romo (at [chrc@juno.com](mailto:chrc@juno.com)) for details about a new date, time, and location.

### **International Accompaniment: CSN Continues its presence in Colombia**

The past year CSN has been present in the area of Apartadó, supporting the work of Lori Furrow, from Oregon. Lori accompanied people in San Jose de Apartadó, lending physical and moral support to those living there. While Lori has just returned to the United States, CSN continues to support international accompaniment in Colombia. In July, Ohio resident, Tricia Smith began her accompaniment work in Turbo with refugees from the Choco. We have heard that she is doing well but continues to be extremely busy. We have tremendous respect for these young women who have made, and continue to make, great sacrifices for the Colombian people and the international community.



**CSN Announces Fall Tour** - The Colombia Support Network and Global Exchange, San Francisco have set tentative dates for a fall tour of CSN's Program Director. Focusing on the East and West Coasts the tour is designed to be an awareness raising effort and an attempt to kindle new chapters and activism surrounding issues of Colombian human rights. The two legs of the tour will take place in October and November respectively. Please keep your eyes open for continuing information or contact CSN regarding a possible engagement in your area.

**Colombia  
Environmental  
Meeting To Be Held in  
Madison**

With the recent announcement of the possible testing of the herbicide tebuthiuron as well as concern over the future of natural resources of Colombia, especially in the Choco region, CSN, in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin's Greens Organization, has decided to host a meeting for concerned environmentalists. We hope to develop solidarity with others working with environmental issues to prevent some of the ecological atrocities in Colombia.

Meeting to be held late July or early August. For more information, contact CSN at (608) 257-8753 or [csn@igc.apc.org](mailto:csn@igc.apc.org)

**Colombia  
Support  
Network:  
Upcoming  
Activities**

**CSN at LASA**

Colombia Support Network will be in attendance at the Latin American Studies Association Annual International Conference held in Chicago September 1998. The conference features some of the most renowned scholars and some of the latest research about Latin America.

For more information about the conference check out LASA's web site at <http://www.pitt.edu/~lasa/>

**CALL TO ACTION**

Conference in Milwaukee, Oct. 31 - Nov. 1. Through the assistance on CSN Carmaña Navia, a respected Colombian theologian will be giving a presentation on women in religious thought.

Join CSN and other activists at the School of the Americas Watch Annual Conference in Columbus, GA November 20-22. We're close - Let's Close the School of the Americas

**Colombia Support Network  
Chapters Meeting Set for  
August 1998**

A meeting of CSN chapter leaders and participants is scheduled to take place the weekend of August 29-30th in Chicago, IL. Chapters will gather to discuss strategies for activism and community involvement, as well as to meet and fraternize with other CSN members. For more detailed information please contact Colombia Support Network headquarters in Madison

**CSN Annual Phone-a-thon**

It's the time of year when friendly CSN volunteers will be calling you to ask for your support for our many projects and activities. Our goal this year is to raise \$5,000 (with a matching grant) to fund both our general activities and special projects such as international accompaniment of Colombians in areas of threat such as San Jose de Apartadó. Please consider giving to our worthy cause! Feel free to donate before we call you; donations can be charged on your credit card!

CSN Membership and Colombia Bulletin Subscription Form

YES! I want to help stop the violence in Colombia

New Member  Renewal

CSN Membership Donation (one-year contribution)

\$15 (low income contribution)  \$25 (regular membership)

Other (membership plus additional donation)

\*Note: All members receive our newsletter "Action on Colombia" Make checks out to WICOLA-CSN.

Membership donations are tax-deductible.

**Colombia Bulletin Subscription**

\$12.50 (low income/student)  \$25 (regular subscription)

Other (subscription plus donation)

Colombia Bulletin subscriptions are four issues (one year). Make checks out to WICOLA-CSN. Add \$10 for overseas address. Let us know if you would like a free sample copy.

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\$15 Please send a copy of Fr. Javier Giraldo's book *Genocidal Democracy*. **Many other books are available from our library. Please visit our website at [www.igc.apc.org/csn/](http://www.igc.apc.org/csn/) for titles and prices.**

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

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