

THEFT OF INFORMATION FROM HOME OF CCEEU COORDINATOR

Brussels, October 20, 2015

The European organisations and coordination groups signing this statement would like to express our concern regarding a new assault on a staff member of the Colombia Europe United States – Coordination Group - CCEEU (a coalition of 221 Colombian organisations working on the promotion, dissemination and defence of human rights).

On October 14, at midday, 2 people entered the home of Lourdes Castro, the Coordinator of the CCEEU, after intimidating a domestic worker, asking her whether Lourdes Castro was at home and what time she would return. These people stole Ms Castro's personal computer and some other nearby objects, but did not take other goods of higher economic value.

This is the fifth time that members of the Colombia - Europe - United States Coordination Group office have suffered the theft of information and computer equipment in recent years. It would appear that these events seek to intimidate and deter the CCEEU from its work defending human rights, and to steal sensitive information about issues related to the protection and defence of human rights.

These events have occurred in the context of a continuous increase in attacks¹ against human rights defenders, which have risen from 174 in 2010, to 626 in 2014. In the first half of 2015 alone, 399 attacks were recorded.

We believe that work defending human rights is fundamental and necessary for building more democratic, inclusive and peaceful societies, and we ask for the following actions to be urgently carried out.

To the Colombian authorities:

- Investigate this new aggression promptly in order to identify and punish the perpetrators, those who ordered the theft and intend to benefit from the illegal appropriation of information
- Guarantee effective protection measures for the Office of the CCEEU and for human rights defenders, to avoid further attacks related to the work they carry out.

To European countries and the European Union:

- Publicly show concern about the events described above and reiterate their crucial support for human rights work
- Contact the Colombian authorities in order to ensure the rapid investigation and implementation of effective measures for the protection of human rights defenders

For more information contact Vincent Vallies – oidhaco@oidhaco.org

¹ Threats, killings, attempted murder, arbitrary detention, arbitrary use of the criminal justice system, theft of information, forced disappearance, sexual violence and personal injury

Signed:

- ABColombia (UK)
- ACAT (France)
- ask! (Switzerland)
- Atelier (Spain)
- Christian Aid (UK)
- CNCD-11.11.11 (Belgium)
- Comité pour le respect des droits humains "Daniel Gillard" (Belgium)
- Cooperacció (Spain)
- DKA Austria (Austria)
- Grupo Sur – Coordination group of European organisations (International)
- ICCO Cooperation Colombia (Netherlands)
- Iniciativa Solidaria Internacionalista de Burgos (ISI) (Spain)
- Intermon Oxfam (Spain)
- International Caravana of Jurists (UK)
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) - Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (International)
- International Office on Human Rights - Action Colombia (OIDHACO), a network of 36 European and international organisations (International)
- Justicia por Colombia (Spain)
- kolko (Germany)
- Lafede.cat organitzacions per la Justícia Global of 114 NGOs (Spain)
- Misereor (Germany)
- Mundubat (Spain)
- Pax Christi Deutschland - Solidaritätsfonds Eine Welt (Germany)
- Peace Brigades International - PBI Colombian Project (International)
- Rete Colombia Vive (Italy)
- Taula Catalana per la Pau i els Drets Humans a Colòmbia (Spain):
 - Ajuntament de Lleida
 - Associació Catalana per la Pau
 - Comissió Catalana d'Ajuda al Refugiat
 - Consell Nacional de la Joventut de Catalunya
 - Cooperacció
 - Entrepobles
 - LaFede.cat
 - Fons Català de Cooperació al Desenvolupament
 - Fundació Desenvolupament Comunitari
 - Fundació Pagesos Solidaris
 - Fundació Pau i Solidaritat - CCOO
 - FundiPau
 - Intersindical-CSC
 - Justícia i Pau
 - Lliga dels Drets dels Pobles
 - Moviment per la Pau - MPDL
 - Oxfam Intermón
 - Sindicalistes Solidaris
- The Swedish Foundation for Human Rights (Sweden)
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) - Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (International)