

Bogotá D.C., January 22, 2009

## **OPEN LETTER FROM FENSAUGRO (AGRICULTURAL AND AQUACULTURAL UNION) TO:**

**Honorable  
President of the Republic of  
Colombia  
Dr. Álvaro Uribe Vélez**

**Honorable  
Vicepresident República de Colombia  
Dr. Francisco Santos**

**Honorable  
General Solicitor of the Nation  
Dr. Alejandro Ordoñez Maldonado**

**Honorable  
Ombudsman  
Dr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz**

**Attorney General de la Nación  
Dr. Mario Iguarán**

**Honorable  
Human Rights Program Director  
Ministry of the Interior and of Justice  
Dr. Rafael Bustamante**

**Honorable  
United Nations High Commission in  
Colombia  
Dr. Navi Pillay**

**Honorable  
Human Rights Commission,  
Congress of Colombia  
Dr. Juan Manuel Corzo**

With all respect:

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Executive Committee of the Federation of United National Agricultural and Aquacultural Unions (Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria), FENSUAGRO, affiliate of the United Workers Center (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores) of Colombia, CUT, and the World Trade Union Congress, WTUC, address you with the object of making manifest our profound concern and our rejection of the constant and repeated political persecution against our federation. We direct public attention to the strategies of imprisonment, the governmental targeting, the murders of our membership, the threats from forces on the margins of the law, and the displacement of thousands of our leaders in the national territory. We have already reported these deeds before the national government and national and international public opinion without having had effective measures taken to detain the criminal wave against our organization of campesinos and aquaculture workers. Thus it is that hundreds of crimes against our leaders, national directors, and rank and file federation members continue with the most complete impunity. The violence against our national organization has not been enough. The shameless and cowardly dispossession of the lands and assets of thousands of campesino families throughout the length and width of the country has been carried out-- the displacement of millions from their homelands.

More than 1,500 FENSUAGRO members have been assassinated in its 32 years of existence, eight of them in the year 2008 and what has passed so far of 2009.

To continue, we relate:

January 24, 2008: The murder of the Director and Financial Officer of the Tolima Association of Farm Workers and Campesinos (Asociación de Trabajadores Agrarios y Campesinos del Tolima), ASTRACATOL, comrade Israel González, also a member of the National Committee of FENSUAGRO. According to information from his wife, the authors of this assassination were members of the Caicedo Battalion.

March 16, 2008: The murder of labor leader, José Fernando-Quiroz, member of the Putumayo Border Corridor Association for Campesino Integration (Corporación de Integración Campesina del Cordón Fronterizo del Putumayo), CICACFROMAY, FENSUAGRO-CUT affiliate. According to accounts from the population of Vereda Azul, Municipality of Teteyé, Department of Putumayo, José Fernando was detained by members of the National Army belonging to Brigade 27 and was found dead on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, in the cemetery of Puerto Asís.

May 11, 2007: The murder of campesino leader Luis Orlando Galvis in the Nuevo Oriente village, Municipality of Tame, Department of Arauca, by an illegal armed group. Orlando was a member of the Campesino Association of Arauca (Asociación Campesina de Arauca), ACA, affiliate of FENSUAGRO-CUT.

August 13, 2007: The murder of campesino leader Manuel Erminson Gamboa Melendez, when he was walking through a street of Puerto Asís, Putumayo. Manuel was approached by paramilitaries, who gave him the lethal impact of seven bullets that blacked out his life.

October 25, 2008: In the village of Esmeralda, district of Mecaya, Department of Putumayo, the murder of campesino leader Jeferson Estiven Bastidas. According to the people of the region, Jeferson was riddled with bullets by members of the National Army.

January 1, 2009: The murder of agrarian leader Adolfo Tique, director of the Farm Workers Union of Tolima (Sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas del Tolima), SINTRAGRITOL. Adolfo was stabbed by an individual called José Vicente Acosta alias "Pacheco", who was captured and hours later put at liberty by the military unit that they encountered in the Municipality of Prado Tolima where the incident occurred.

January 7, 2009: The campesino Diego Ricardo Rasedo Guerra was found murdered in the jurisdiction of the municipality of Sabanas de Torres, department of Santander. Diego, a member of the Agrarian Association of Santander (Asociación Agraria de Santander), ASOCRAS, had disappeared on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January of the same year. His death was caused by a shot in the mouth.

January 16, 2009: The murder of campesino leader Arled Samboni Guaca in the Municipality of Argelia Cauca, by two individuals that shot him in seven places.

To all these who were assassinated, add the 60 campesino and campesina leaders detained and judged, many of them in an arbitrary manner and without due process.

For all of the above, we DEMAND:

1. Put an end to the political persecution against our Federation and its national and regional leaders.
2. Put an end to the assassinations of agrarian leaders of the campesino movement and in particular of the affiliated members of Fensuagro.
3. Identify the murderers of Fensuagro members and bring those intellectually and materially responsible to justice.
4. Return the lands and other assets to the campesino families who are victims of the displacement and violence.
5. Give political, economic, and moral reparations to the families of those campesino and campesina leaders affiliated with Fensuagro who were victims of State and paramilitary terrorism and violence.

**WE ARE PRODUCERS OF LIFE....DO NOT CONTINUE MURDERING US!**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**EBERTO DIAZ MONTES**  
President

**JUAN EFRAIN MENDOZA**  
General Secretary

**AIDEÉ MORENO**  
National Secretary for Human Rights

**PARMENIO POVEDA**  
Treasurer