



## URGENT ACTION!

### Death threats made against director of Justicia y Vida, LILIA SOLANO

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27 July 2010

KAIROS friends:

KAIROS has received extremely worrying news from Lilia Solano, director of the Bogota-based human rights organization Justicia y Vida, about new death threats directed at her and attacks against the organization. The eighth-floor office of Justicia y Vida was fired upon July 21. We are gravely concerned about the safety of Lilia and other members of the organization.

Lilia is an outspoken defender of human rights who has been the subject of past urgent actions issued by KAIROS, our member churches and Amnesty International. She spoke at the KAIROS Gathering last June and has met many Canadian church members and activists in her efforts to raise awareness in Canada of the extent and causes of the armed conflict and human rights violations that grip Colombia. The violence has a particular impact on Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean communities, unions, women's groups and human rights defenders.



Below you will find the urgent request for your action, contact information, and a report from Justicia y Vida. Recently, Lilia's organization was instrumental in presenting a complaint to Colombia's Constitutional Court regarding the installation of US military bases in Colombia. Lilia believes that opposition to Justicia y Vida's involvement in the complaint is the reason for the latest threats. The situation is very dangerous because Justicia y Vida is confronting extremely powerful vested interests.

KAIROS would like to emphasize that this grave situation illustrates precisely why the churches opposed the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which was recently passed by Parliament. The reality remains that there are no guarantees for the safety of those who speak out, including people like Lilia and organizations like Justicia y Vida. Despite provisions for a government human rights impact assessment, human rights violations continue.

[You can find more information on our Colombia page >>](#)

[These incidents occur on the eve of KAIROS' 'Women of Courage' delegation tour to Colombia August 15 - 25 >>](#)

We invite your prayers for the safety of Lilia, the members of Justicia y Vida, and all human rights defenders in Colombia. Please consider printing this action and sharing it in church. Every voice makes a difference.



## **TAKE ACTION**

**Please read the message from Justicia y Vida at the bottom of this page.**

Write a short message without delay to the Colombian authorities listed below. Then adapt it as suggested to send to the Canadian authorities also listed below.

Thank you for raising your voice to protect Lilia and her colleagues.

**Your action can save lives!**

## **A. Message to Colombian authorities:**

- Express concern about the threatening phone call to Lilia Solano, director of Justicia y Vida, on July 23 and the shot fired at her office on July 21.
- Ask for an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.
- Request that authorities immediately activate effective protection measures, in communication with Lilia and her colleagues.
- Ask for a reply to let you know what steps have been taken

### **PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:**

**1. Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez,**  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26,  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Fax: 011 57 1 337 5890

(Salutation: Dear President Uribe/ Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe)

Alternatively, you can go to the President's website -- <http://web.presidencia.gov.co> and scroll down on the right hand side to a section called "Escibale al Presidente" (write to the President). A new window should open. (You will have to provide your name and email address, and then say that your city and department are Bogotá as there is no option for people living outside the country), and then copy your text in the box.

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

(Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Estimado Sr. Fiscal General)

### **SEND COPIES TO:**

**1. His Excellency Jaime Giron Duarte,**  
Ambassador for Colombia  
360 Albert Street, Suite 1002,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7X7  
Fax: (613) 230-4416  
E-mail: [embajada@embajadacolombia.ca](mailto:embajada@embajadacolombia.ca)

**2. Justicia y Vida**  
[comunicaciones.justiciayvida@gmail.com](mailto:comunicaciones.justiciayvida@gmail.com)

or  
[liliasolano1@gmail.com](mailto:liliasolano1@gmail.com)

**B. Message to Canadian authorities:**

- Express concern about the threatening phone call to Lilia Solano, director of Justicia y Vida on July 23 and the shot fired at the office on July 21.
- Explain that Lilia Solano is a human rights defender who is well known and highly respected in Canada because of the years she lived here and her subsequent visits to this country to share information about human rights concerns in Colombia
- Ask Canadian authorities to leverage their close relationship with Colombia and promises made during debate over the Free Trade Agreement to call for an immediate, impartial and thorough investigation to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.
- Request that Canadian authorities press their Colombian counterparts to immediately activate effective protection measures agreed to by Lilia and her colleagues.
- Ask for a reply to let you know what steps have been taken.

**SEND COPIES TO:**

**1. The Hon. Peter Kent**

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Latin America),  
110 Justice Building, Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
Fax: (613) 992-0887  
Email: kentp@parl.gc.ca

**2. Genevieve des Rivieres,**

Ambassador of Canada in Colombia  
Canadian Embassy, Bogotá, Colombia  
genevieve.desrivieres@international.gc.ca

**3. James Lambert,**

Director General, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau  
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada  
125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2  
Fax: (613)-996-0677  
Email: james.lambert@international.gc.ca

**Please send a copy to your Member of Parliament**

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## **Urgent Request from Justicia y Vida (translated from Spanish)**

*Last Wednesday, July 21st, at around 4:30 PM, the window of the office of the human rights organization Justice and Life (Justicia y Vida) was hit by a bullet that fortunately did not wound anyone on the premises. The office is located on the eighth floor in the center of Bogota and from the characteristics of the hole left by the bullet we think it came from a building next to the office.*

*This new attack is one more element to be added to the threats against the life of Lilia Solano, director of the organization.*

*In the morning of Friday, July 23rd, she received once again threatening telephone calls in which the caller described her daily activities and the places she frequented, accused her of being a terrorist and a traitor to her country, and threatened that she would be killed.*

*It is clear that under the current government there is no security for human rights defenders or for those who exercise their constitutional rights to criticize and dissent from the policies of the government.*

*For this reason we demand that the Colombian government move in a concerted fashion to immediately put in place effective measures that will afford real and effective protection for Lilia Solano and the team of the organization Justicia y Vida.*

*At the same time we ask that judicial organizations and those of public order carry out the appropriate investigations to determine who was responsible for the above acts and bring them to justice.*



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