
Le Président
The President

**President Señor Juan Manuel Santos
Presidente de la República,
Palacio de Nariño,
Carrera 8 No.7-26, Bogotá,
Colombia**

Re: Concerns regarding the human rights lawyer Julio Cesar Rosero

Your Excellency

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over death threats received by human rights lawyer Julio Cesar Rosero.

The CCBE is informed that on 7 June 2011, Julio Cesar Rosero, a lawyer representing Jenny Torres, a member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE) in the trial of eight members of a Special Forces group of the armed forces, received an email with death threats saying: *"this message is for the lawyer Julio Cesar Rosero, for Martha Giraldo and all her organization of bandits, for Jenny Torres ... if the soldiers are convicted, the lawyer and la negra [Jenny Torres] will die, last warning, this is serious, very serious"* (este mensaje es para el abogado Julio Cesar Rosero, para Martha Giraldo y toda su organización de vandoleros [sic], para Jenny Torres ... si condenan a los militares muere el abogado y la negra ultima advertencia [sic] es en serio muy en serio [sic]).

The CCBE understands that the death threats received by Julio Cesar Rosero are intended to intimidate him to desist from his work as a human rights lawyer.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take immediate and effective steps to investigate the death threats directed against Julio Cesar Rosero and prosecute those responsible, as it is believed that these death threats are directly related to Julio Cesar Rosero's work as a human rights lawyer. In addition, the CCBE respectfully requests that you preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice and guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Colombia are able to conduct their professional duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGES-ALBERT DAL

President