To Dr. Alvaro Uribe Velez,
Presidencia de la República
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We, the undersigned labor representatives in the United States of America and supporters, are deeply concerned about the welfare of the members and the very existence of the Colombian Union SINALTRAINAL.

How much longer will Colombia hold the dishonorable and despicable title of being the deadliest country on earth for union leaders? How much longer will the families of union leaders in Colombia have to survive amid death threats to their loved ones for the sole reason of defending worker’s rights?

In the latest in a series of assassinations of members of this union, on August 17, SINALTRAINAL member Carlos Arturo Montes Bonilla was viciously murdered near his home in Barranquilla. Montes Bonilla leaves behind a wife and seven children. He had worked in the Infants Club for the workers of the state oil corporation ECOPETROL and participated in numerous protests against the COCA COLA Company in its attempt to destroy the union by blocking the right of association.

This murder was carried out two weeks after the Bogota headquarters of SINALTRAINAL were raid without a legal warrant by uniformed men who identified themselves as members of SIJIN, the Judicial Police with the justification of being a “preventive operation” prior the inauguration on August 7th of your presidency. To circumvent the need for a warrant, the raid was classified as an “act of voluntary search”.

Then on August 18th, hardly a day after the murder of Montes Bonilla, a sympathy card signed “Death to Trade Unionists/ Muerte a Sindicistas” was left in the home of Hector Jairo Paz, a SINALTRAINAL leader in Bugalagrand who works for NESTLE DE COLOMBIA, S.A. Ten days before, another union member was threatened while peacefully protesting in front of the NESTLE plant against the unjustified firing of 90 temporary workers and 4 workers with indefinite contracts affiliated to SINALTRAINAL.

We stand in complete solidarity with our Colombian union brothers and sisters and in particularly with the members of SINALTRAINAL who are the victim of a concerted effort to annihilate the union. From the United States, as we repeat the labor pronouncement of “an injury to one is an injury to all” we demand that: The Colombian government and the corporations involved stop at once the threats and assassination of union members; The immediate cessation of the so-called “voluntary searches” and The punishment of all the parties responsible for the threats and assassination.

As Labor Day approaches in the United States, a day when most major cities in the U.S. have large workers’ gatherings, we will make sure that the issue of SINALTRAINAL and in general the attack on workers’ rights in Colombia is prominent.

Respectfully,

Frantz Mendes, President
USW Local 8751
Boston School Bus Drivers

Steve Gillis, Vice-President
USW Local 8751
Boston School Bus Drivers

Chris Silvera, Chair
National Teamsters Black Caucus
Sec/Treas. Teamsters Local 808

Unity! Unidad! Inité! Unidade!
Clarence Thomas, Past Secretary-Treasurer, Local 10, International Longshore Workers Union; National Co-Chair, Million Worker March Movement

Felipe C. Teixeira Most Reverend OFSJC Bishop Northeastern Diocese St Francis of Assisi, CCA

Dorothea Manuela, Co-Chair Boston Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee

Kathy Black, President Coalition of Labor Union Women, Philadelphia Chapter

Alejandro Murrieta Ahumada Former President Utility Workers of America Union, L132

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