



Mr. Eduardo Montealegre  
Attorney General of Colombia  
National Office of the Attorney General  
Diagonal 22B No. 52-01 (Ciudad Salitre)  
Bogota  
Colombia

8 December 2012

Dear Mr. Montealegre,

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our concern about the case of Mr. David Rabelo, Colombian human rights defender and prisoner of conscience, convicted and sentenced to more than 18 years of prison, for the crime of “aggravated homicide”.

In particular we are concerned by the role of Mr. William Pacheco, Public Prosecutor 22 of the National Antiterrorism Unit, who is leading the investigation against Mr. Rabelo. We understand that Mr. Pacheco was dismissed from the Colombian police and banned from public office for his proven participation in the forced disappearance of Guillermo Hurtado Parra in 1991. Mr. Pacheco’s continued role in Mr. Rabelo’s case is a severe violation of due process and it is appalling that he continues in office. We urge you to ensure that his role in Mr. Rabelo’s case is examined and that he is removed from public service immediately.

Mr. Rabelo’s case was also marred by further severe irregularities. For example, Mr. Rabelo was detained for more than two years, without being convicted of any crime. The investigation against him carried out by the public prosecutor excluded evidence submitted by the defence and the legal process suffered severe delays. Indeed, the final verdict was delayed by over six months.

In addition the evidence against Mr. Rabelo was based on testimonies from two imprisoned paramilitaries. The principal witness, Mr. Mario Jaimes Mejía, alias “El Panadero”, has been convicted of two massacres and was imprisoned as a result of Mr. Rabelo’s human rights work. His testimony against Mr. Rabelo allowed him to reduce his prison sentence from 40 years to a maximum of eight years.

Mr. Rabelo is the spokesperson of regional human rights group CREDHOS and a leading member of MOVICE, the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes. Mr. Rabelo’s work has been instrumental in exposing hundreds of members of the Colombian military for human rights crimes, and he helped to reveal links between former President Uribe and paramilitary groups.

It appears to us that the case is politically motivated. It makes clear once again that despite claims to be committed to human rights, the Colombian authorities continue to directly target opposition activists and human rights defenders.

We have written to the Colombian authorities on numerous occasions, highlighting the above irregularities, yet it appears no action was taken to ensure due process and a fair trial. We believe Mr. Rabelo's conviction is a severe injustice and a violation of his human rights, and we urge you to ensure it is quashed immediately.

If the Colombian authorities are to claim a commitment to human rights they must put their rhetoric into action and defend the lives and work of civil society activists.

We look forward to progress in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Liz Davies  
Chair  
Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers