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SECTIONS

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR

TRANSMITTED VIA FAX

TO: Board of Governors
Section Chairpersons
(Designated to Receive Public Statements)

FROM: Carol Ann Cunningham *OK*

DATE: March 6, 1992

SUBJECT: PUBLIC STATEMENT regarding Death Threats
against Jorge Gomez Lizarazo and his colleagues
at Comite Regional para la Defense de los
Derechos Humanos by the Section on
International Law

Eileen Sobeck
Chair, Council on Sections
Susan L. Moss
Vice Chair,
Council on Sections

James Robertson
D.C. Bar President
Jamie S. Gorelick
D.C. Bar President-Elect
Katherine A. Mazzaferri
D.C. Bar Executive Director

Carol Ann Cunningham
Sections Manager

Enclosed please find for your review a one-page summary of a public statement prepared by the International Law Section. Copies of the full text will be provided upon request. If you wish to have this matter placed on the next Board of Governors' agenda on April 14, please call me by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 13. I can be reached at (202) 331-4364.

Please note that according to the Guidelines regarding public statements (pp. 39-52) your telephone call "must be supplemented by a written objection lodged within seven days of the oral objection."

Enclosures

cc w/full public statement text:
James Robertson, Esq.
Jamie S. Gorelick, Esq.
Delissa A. Ridgway, Esq.
Eileen Sobeck, Esq.
Susan L. Moss, Esq.
Katherine A. Mazzaferri, Esq.

The International Law Section proposes to send letters to the President of Colombia, Cesar Gaviria Trujilli, to the Attorney General, Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla, and to the Minister of Defense, Dr. Rafael Pardo, expressing concern with the threats against the lives of Jorge Gomez Lizarazo and his colleagues at Comite Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos ("CREDHOS"). Mr. Gomez, the founder and president of CREDHOS, has received the 1991 Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award in recognition of his work representing families affected by the Fifth Army Brigade's counterinsurgency operations in the Magdalena Medio region of Santander and Antioquia departments during September 1990.

On March 19, 1991, Mr. Gomez' private bodyguard, Jose Humberto Hernandez Gabanzo, was murdered. On January 29, 1992, his secretary for 13 years, Blanca Varelo de Duran, was murdered in front of the CREDHOS office as well. Witnesses reported that police officers were near the CREDHOS offices when the killing took place, but took no action to detain or pursue the killers. The murders and threats, and the climate of fear they generate, are intended to intimidate and hinder Mr. Gomez' and CREDHOS' efforts on behalf of human rights.

The International Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar will urge that immediate and adequate measures be undertaken to protect Jorge Gomez Lizarazo and his colleagues at CREDHOS, and that a full investigation be made into Mr. Hernandez' and Mrs. Varelo's murder to bring those responsible to justice.

The International Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar has over 2,000 members. The views expressed herein represent only those of the International Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar and not those of the D.C. Bar or of its Board of Governors.

Sincerely,

Section on International Law
of the District of Columbia Bar
Paul S. Haar, Chair
Louis K. Rothberg, Vice Chair
Lucille A. Barale
Karen Hudes
Lisa B. Koteen
Deborah A. Lamb
Michael P. Scharf

INTERNATIONAL LAW SECTION



The District of Columbia Bar

March 13, 1992

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Committees

Antitrust
Energy, Environment and Minerals
Human Rights
Immigration and Refugee Affairs
International Trade
Investment and Finance
Law and National Security
Public International Law

Dr. Rafael Pardo
Ministro de Defensa
Avenida El Dorado - Cra. 52
Bogota, Colombia

Dear Minister Pardo,

The International Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar is concerned with the threats against the lives of Jorge Gomez Lizarazo and his colleagues at Comite Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos ("CREDHOS"). Mr. Gomez, the founder and president of CREDHOS, has received the 1991 Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award in recognition of his work representing families affected by the Fifth Army Brigade's counterinsurgency operations in the Magdalena Medio region of Santander and Antioquia departments during September 1990.

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The International Law Section of the District of Columbia Bar urges that immediate and adequate measures be undertaken to protect Jorge Gomez Lizarazo and his colleagues at CREDHOS, and that a full investigation be made into Mr. Hernandez' and Mrs. Varelo's murder to bring those responsible to justice.

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Michael P. Scharf

cc: Ambassador Jaime Garcia Parra
Embassy of Colombia

Ambassador Morris D. Busby
Embassy of the United States

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Senor Presidente Cesar Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la Republica
Palacio de Narino
Santa Fe de Bogota
Colombia

Dear President Gaviria,

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Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
Procurador General de la Nacion
Procuraduria General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia

Dear Dr. Arrieta,

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March 5, 1992

Senor Presidente Cesar Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la Republica
Palacio de Narino
Santa Fe de Bogota
Colombia

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Procuraduria General
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