



The Ethics Commission for Truth in Colombia

Comunicado No 27

We reject the statements pronounced by President Alvaro Uribe Velez about the Nobel Peace Prize Adolfo Perez Esquivel, a member of the Ethics Commission for Truth in Colombia.

President Uribe Velez, with respect to the testimony given by a police officer, Juan Carlos Meneses, who claimed to have taken part in paramilitary operations of the group called "The 12 Apostles", one of whose members was Santiago Uribe, the president's brother, said *"I trust that Colombian people have talent. In this my brother, what calls my attention, is the ability of criminals to penetrate society. Criminals have the ability to convert into a useful idiot a person such as a Nobel Peace Prize, they have the ability to make a useful idiot out of a priest and have ability to penetrate a serious newspaper like The Washington Post. That's what he would say."* [1]

This testimony was delivered to the Argentine Nobel Prize and other well known international jurists, then published in the American newspaper The Washington Post and Noticias Uno in Colombia. In interviews with various media Adolfo Perez Esquivel expressed the importance of the testimony and his availability to present the case to the international tribunals if in Colombia there were no justice.

In seven visits to Colombia and two international meetings abroad as members of the International Ethics Commission for Truth in Colombia, we have listened to and accompanied the victims of the barbaric paramilitarism and of state crimes, we have faced the almost absolute impunity that protects its beneficiaries and instigators.

Uribe's reaction intends to reject the testimonial value of the evidence, connecting it with a criminal operation against him. It is necessary to specify that the Nobel Prize, a reference for human rights, has taken into account with expertise and deep humanity Meneses's testimony, perceiving the objective elements without prejudice of credibility.

Moreover, it is worth noting that this testimony and the related documents confirm the publication of Never Again (NUNCA MAS), referring to the Finca "La Carolina" and the "12 apostles."

We also know that there are other witnesses and relatives of the victims, who still survive persecution, who confirm the existence of the paramilitary structure that operated from the farm "La Carolina" owned by the Uribe family.

We express our support to Adolfo Perez Esquivel in solidarity with the victims and so their right to truth, to justice and full reparation in Colombia.

We reject the strategy of misleading used in this case and others, to reverse the truth transferring the responsibility to an alleged criminal strategy to individuals and agencies, who only want to affirm the right to solidarity and truth.

We support the work of the agencies who want to clarify the serious allegations of connections with paramilitarism of the brother of the President or any other person and we support the noble work of the Honorable Members of the Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court who have been victims of these misleading operations by the executive team.

We call upon the international community to be ever more vigilant and guarantors of the need to know the truth in Colombia, and those who are responsible for committing crimes against humanity may be effectively and properly judicialized.

Signatures:

Commission against Torture of Chile, Chile

Community of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Madrid, Spain

Elizabeth Deligio, School of The Americas Watch / SOA Watch, USA

Eduard Nachmann, son of a disappeared, educator, member of H.I.J.O.S. Buenos Aires, Argentina

Enrique Santiago, lawyer, Institute of Political Studies on Latin America and Africa, Spain

Enrique Nunez, Group of Ex Political Prisoners, Chile

Libertad Sánchez, Association for the Recuperation of Memory of Mérida and Comarca, Spain

Lorenzo Loncon, Werken Mapuche Nation, Argentina

Mirta Barravalle, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo “Madres de la Plaza de Mayo – founding line”, Argentine

Miguel Álvarez, president of Serapaz, Mexico

Pierluigi Di Piazza, Balducci - Center, Udine, Italy

Professor Dr. Gilberto López y Rivas; National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico, Mexico

Profesor Carlos Fazio, Universidad Autónoma of Mexico - UNAM, Mexico

Professor Stephen Haymes, DePAul University, USA

Rainer Huhle, Human Rights Center of Nuremberg, Germany

Sean Hawkey, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland

Vicenta Font de Gregori, director of Catalan International Institute of Peace, Espai Catalunya-Comissió Ètica, Spain