

NGO Statement on La Gabarra Massacre  
June 22, 2004

We, the undersigned organizations, are appalled by the June 15<sup>th</sup> massacre in La Gabarra, Colombia. Reports indicate that this was an unjustifiable attack targeting civilians, killing 34 and wounding 7. Although there is an ongoing investigation, witnesses and the Colombian authorities allege that Front 33 of the FARC is responsible for what the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogotá has called a war crime.

We join with Colombian civil society organizations, the Colombian government, the United Nations and others in denouncing this attack in the strongest possible terms. Our deep-felt sympathies go out to the survivors and the families of the victims of this inexcusable violation of international humanitarian law.

We call on the Colombian government to carry out a thorough investigation to determine who is responsible and to bring the guilty parties to justice. We repeat our previous calls for all armed actors in Colombia to respect civilians in compliance with international humanitarian law. No political or social demands justify the targeting of civilians, which has become all too common in Colombia's brutal internal conflict.

At the same time we reiterate our call on President Uribe to respect the vital role of national and international human rights groups in Colombia. Our work is essential to documenting human rights and international humanitarian law violations such as the La Gabarra massacre, and to ensuring justice for victims of human rights abuses.

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