

The Initiative for Inclusive Security

A Program of Hunt Alternatives Fund

Date: July 5, 2007

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COLOMBIAN PEACE BUILDER CALLS FOR PROTESTS ON HOSTAGE DEATHS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – [Ana Teresa Bernal](#), president of the Colombian NGO National Network of Citizens' Initiatives for Peace (REDEPAZ), has called for peaceful demonstrations across Colombia today in protest of the June 18 killing of 11 hostages by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Bernal, who has more than two decades of experience in government-insurgent negotiations, is also a commissioner in Colombia's National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation. Her call for demonstrations is an effort to increase pressure on the government and FARC to reach a humanitarian agreement for a prisoner exchange. President Alvaro Uribe, several governors and mayors, civil society leaders, and media outlets have joined Bernal in her efforts.

“REDEPAZ supports all the demonstrations [today] throughout the country to protest the inhumane practice of kidnapping, which is against human rights and international human law,” said Bernal, a member of [The Initiative for Inclusive Security's Women Waging Peace Network](#). “REDEPAZ invites all its activists to demonstrate against the use of civilians in war and all the barbaric practices that armed groups use in Colombia.”

The hostages, lawmakers from Valle del Cauca, were kidnapped by FARC in 2002. The FARC claims that the politicians died as part of a failed rescue attempt by an unidentified military group. President Uribe has stated that no military operations took place on June 18, and that FARC is responsible for the deaths of the hostages.

Women's groups in Colombia have consistently advocated for victims and for a peaceful solution to the country's 40-year-old conflict. Since the initiative's inception in 1999, Inclusive Security has supported Colombian women in their efforts to end violence. Recently, in May 2007, Inclusive Security traveled to Bogotá to conduct a two-day workshop for prosecutors in the attorney general's Unit of Justice and Peace.

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The Initiative for Inclusive Security, a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Creating sustainable peace is achieved best by a diverse, citizen-driven approach. Of the many sectors of society currently excluded from peace processes, none is larger—or more critical to success—than women. Since 1999, Inclusive Security has connected more than 500 women experts with over 5,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts across the globe. For more information visit: www.InclusiveSecurity.org.