



BAR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMITTEE OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

London, 19 February 2013

STATEMENT

BHRC expresses concern at the murder of two lawyers in Cali, Colombia

The BHRC is extremely concerned at the recent news of the murders of two lawyers in Cali, Western Colombia.

Eduardo Martinez (59) and Daniel Calderon (26), father and son, were shot dead in their office on 25 January 2013. Both were in private practice, and Eduardo Martinez was a distinguished professor of law at the University of Cali.

The Colombian ‘Council of the Litigation Bar’ has issued a statement calling for a full investigation, and drawing attention to the murders of 200 other lawyers in the Valle region which have been carried out with impunity in the last decade.

The statement also called on the national government, and in particular the Ministry of Justice, to provide proper protection for lawyers, to safeguard the administration of justice. Press reports suggest that many of the murders have been carried out by dissatisfied clients connected to organised crime groups and drug cartels¹.

The BHRC notes that international law provides guarantees for the safety of lawyers, and requires national governments to take all reasonable measures to protect those whose profession is essential to the rule of law; *Article 17*, of the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990².

The BHRC calls on the Colombian authorities to rigorously investigate these murders and instigate a full inquiry into the murders of other lawyers in the same region in recent times. The rule of law requires that those who perpetrate such crimes be brought to justice, and that there are effective measures in place to protect lawyers.

¹ <http://diarioadn.co/cali/mi-ciudad/preocupan-los-ataques-contr-a-abogados-en-cali-1.43489>

² <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/lawyers.htm>

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales (“BHRC”) is the international human rights arm of the Bar of England and Wales. It is an independent body concerned with protecting the rights of advocates, judges and human rights defenders around the world. The Committee is concerned with defending the rule of law and internationally recognised legal standards relating to human rights and the right to a fair trial. The remit of BHRC extends to all countries of the world, apart from its own jurisdiction of England & Wales. This reflects the Committee's need to maintain its role as an independent but legally qualified observer, critic and advisor, with internationally accepted rule of law principles at the heart of its agenda.

END

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