



Free Ricardo Palmera



We demand the U.S. government free Ricardo Palmera, a political leader and negotiator of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Mr. Palmera has done nothing wrong. To the contrary, he consistently defends the sovereignty of his country, Colombia's right to self-determination, and the rights of the Colombian people.

Now, Ricardo Palmera has been extradited to the United States and imprisoned as part of the Pentagon's counter-insurgency war. Ricardo Palmera is the latest victim of the Bush Administration's so-called "War on Terror"; an unending war that respects no national boundaries and leads to repression and death around the world.

U.S. WAR IN COLOMBIA - PLAN COLOMBIA

The United States Government is intervening directly in Colombia's civil war - on the side of the military, the government, and the wealthy. Under the euphemistic name "Plan Colombia", President Bush has doubled U.S. troops to 800, contract mercenaries to 600, and added countless intelligence agents to U.S. forces in Colombia. George Bush is conducting a dirty war in Colombia - spending over \$3.5 billion in taxpayers' money on a war where the Colombian Military operates death squads to kill trade unionists, students, and peasants.

THE FARC AND COLOMBIA'S CIVIL WAR

The imprisonment of Ricardo Palmera is a direct result of U.S. involvement in Colombia's forty-year-old civil war. Founded by workers and peasants seeking democratic social and economic change in Colombia, the FARC formed in 1964 following violent attacks by Colombia's elites and their U.S. government and corporate allies. Today, the FARC is a rebel army of 27,000 fighting for national liberation. It consists mainly of peasants and one-third of its fighters are women. Furthermore, the ranks of the FARC include professors, doctors, accountants, trade unionists, lawyers, and priests--all soldiers fighting for social justice, the poor versus the rich. The FARC opposes the U.S. Empire envisioned by Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld: where U.S. corporations steal the oil, coal, minerals, gems, and agricultural products that belong to the Colombian people.

U.S. DESPERATION LEADS TO EXTRADITION

Bush and friends are desperate. They know the forces of revolution grow, as "Plan Colombia" fails. To try to salvage their "dirty war" in Colombia, they ride roughshod over Colombian sovereignty and bring U.S. intervention in Colombia's civil war to the courtrooms of the U.S.

It is absurd that the U.S. Government has extradited Mr. Palmera on the basis of hostage taking and providing material support to terrorists. The specifics of the charge concern U.S. contracted mercenaries who were shot down in their plane over FARC territory. A firefight ensued in which one U.S. mercenary and a Colombian sergeant were killed, while three U.S. mercenaries were captured. The U.S. Justice Department is trying to claim that this small battle in Colombia's civil war amounts to hostage taking, and that the long-running guerrilla war is now a "terrorist" action! This makes a mockery of international law, as Bush attempts to impose U.S. sovereignty in Colombia.

The extradition of Ricardo Palmera and his pending trial in a U.S. courtroom lays bare the lapdog relationship of Colombia to the U.S. This extradition is a threat to movements for social justice around the world. The "visible" and direct involvement by the U.S. Government in Colombia threatens to set a precedent where popular movements around the world will be under the unilateral and direct dictates of the U.S. government and U.S. law without regard to national independence or international law. We ask people who stand for peace with justice, who support democracy, and who know right from wrong, to join our campaign for the immediate release of Ricardo Palmera!



National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera

www.freericardopalmera.org