



## **PERSECUTION AGAINST THE AFRO-COLOMBIAN ACTIVIST DIEGO LUIS BALANTA AND MEMBERS OF AFRODES.**

**October, 2013.**

**\*Unofficial translation done only for the purpose of being understood.**

The Permanent Secretariat and the Thematic Coordination of Afro Descendants of Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy (RedLad), warn of the persecution and threats against Afro-Colombian leader Diego Luis Balanta and over 120 leaders of the Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados (National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians- AFRODES).

Mr. Balanta, leader of AFRODES and prominent human rights defender, was attacked last September in the city of Cali. Although he escaped alive, had to leave his home in the wake of discrimination, violence and persecution that hovers over it and a large number of afro-colombian activists of AFRODES.

The same Mr. Balanta, had requested protection of Unidad Nacional de Protección de Colombia (National Unity Colombia Protection-UNP) months ago, however, the entity qualified the petitions as ordinary risk and dismissed the petition . This despite the fact that since 2007, he has been the victim of more than a dozen attacks against them during the development of his work as an activist of Afro-Colombian and displaced populations.

Similarly, it was reported in recent weeks, the theft of the backpack of Adam Schaffer member of WOLA, an strategic ally of AFRODES, in Hotel Bogota City. Were stolen his computer, USB, camera and meeting notes, where are personal data of human rights defenders and members of AFRODES.

The constant threatening phone calls that are made to the national office of AFRODES and the documented persecution against their members in areas such as Buenaventura, Malambo, Bogotá, Soacha, Tumaco and Cartagena, are



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evidence of the requirement of urgent protection of human rights of Afro-Colombian and displaced people.

The Redlad, platform of more than 520 organizations that defend human rights and full democracy, Member of Civil Society Forum of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Regional Chapter of the World Movement for Democracy (WMD):

- Joins to the warning statements issued by Global Rights and WOLA, and calls on the Colombian government to take action to ensure the protection of the members of AFRODES, displaced populations and Afro-Colombians .
- Requests Colombian judicial authorities, to conduct comprehensive actions in order to bring to justice perpetrators of such violations of human rights and human integrity.
- It calls for the Colombian Civil Society to repudiate the facts, promotes and demands an atmosphere of pluralism, respect for diversity and human rights without discrimination.
- Urges the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), to examine the current reality living the Afro-colombian and people displaced by the conflict in Colombia and take necessary action.

**Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy (REDLAD).**



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