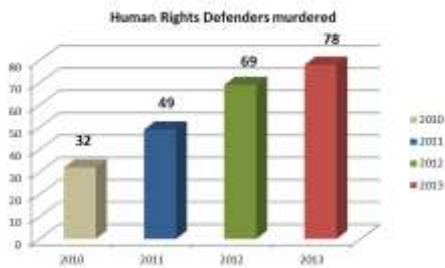
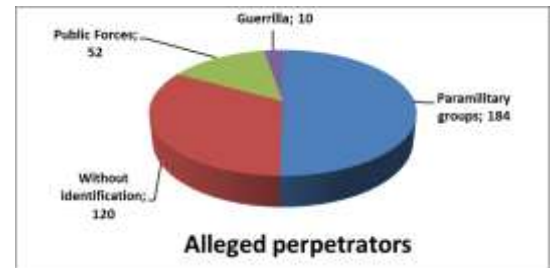


## Persistence of attacks in Colombia Situation of human rights defenders in Colombia in 2013

In 2013, the We are Defenders Program (*Programa Somos Defensores*) recorded **366 attacks against individuals and 185 against social and human rights organisations; 2.4% more than in the previous year.** This is the highest number of attacks for at least 10 years. According to the report there is a worrying correlation between times of increased social mobilization and levels of aggression. In 50% of cases the alleged perpetrators are paramilitary groups while in 33% of cases the perpetrators are unknown. Members of the state security forces (Army, Police etc.) are directly responsible for 14% of these attacks and the guerrilla are responsible for 3%.



Since 2010, murders of human rights defenders have increased, from 32 to 78. Indeed, compared to 2012, there has been a significant increase in threats (from 202 to 209 cases), the arbitrary use of criminal justice system (from 1 to 10 cases) and theft of information (from 3 to 7 cases). Oidhaco constantly reported the lack of prevention and protection of human rights defenders, social and human rights organisations.

As expressed by We Are Defenders, “the continuation of this trend of aggression and the lack of action by regional governments to address it places us in a state of **impunity**”.

Unfortunately, during the first two months of 2014, the situation remained serious. Many human rights defenders received threats because of the work they do. Below we highlight just a few of the serious examples among the many that occurred:

- On January 9, Iván Madero Vergel, president of the Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (*Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos - CREDHOS*), received a call at his office from an individual who advised him that he had 48 hours to leave town<sup>i</sup>. On the same day, Lilia Peña, president of the Regional Association of Victims of State Crimes in the Magdalena Medio Region (*Asociación Regional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado en el Magdalena Medio - ASORVIMM*) found an envelope containing a bullet and a pamphlet: a death threat against herself, her son, and Melkin Castrillón Peña, a member of the Peasant Association Scimitar River Valley (*Asociación Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra - ACVC*) which accused them of being involved with the guerrilla<sup>ii</sup>.
- After the sentence against the Colombian State in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) in the case of Marino López and Operation Genesis, surveillance, threats and smears began once again against Danilo Rueda and Alberto Franco from the and the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission (*Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz*)<sup>iii</sup>.
- On January 30 in the Valle del Cauca region, Walter Agredo, member of the Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners (*Fundación Comité Solidaridad Presos Políticos - FCSPP*), Martha Giraldo, member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (*Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado - Movice*), and human rights defender José Sánchez, member of the university trade union *Sintraunicol*, received a text message levelling false accusations against them and threatening them with death<sup>iv</sup>.
- Between 6 and 20 February, Marta Díaz, Coordinator of MOVICE’s Atlantic regional office and President of the Association of Families United in One Pain (*Asociación de Familias Unidas por un Solo Dolor - AFUSODO*) repeatedly received text messages declaring her to be a military target and threatening her with death. On February 5, she had participated in a session of the Prevention and Protection Committee, part of the Regional Roundtable on Victims in Barranquilla<sup>v</sup>.

Oidhaco is calling on the international community to make a public statement on the serious nature of these events and to show support for the work of human rights defenders. The Colombian State must issue protective measures, investigate these events, and provide guarantees so that people who defend human rights and mobilize for peace can carry out their work.

"In 2013, on average every 4 days a human rights defender was murdered in Colombia"

March 2014

<sup>i</sup> Prensa Rural: Amenazan de muerte a Iván Madero, presidente de Credhos, January 10, 2014.

<sup>ii</sup> Prensa Rural: Amenazan a defensores de derechos humanos en Barrancabermeja, January 9, 2014

<sup>iii</sup> Cijp: [Seguimientos, señalamiento y planes contra integrantes de la Comisión de Justicia y Paz, en particular, Danilo Rueda y Alberto Franco](#), January 21, 2014

<sup>iv</sup> <http://cspresospoliticos.com/index.php/noticias-2/756-denunciamos-amenaza-contra-integrante-de-la-fcsp-p-y-de-defensores-de-victimas-y-de-los-derechos-humanos-en-el-valle-del-cauca>

<sup>v</sup> Movice, [Denuncia pública: Nueva amenaza contra Martha Díaz y Rosario Arroyo](#), Movice Atlántico, February 23, 2014