Presidente de la Republica de Colombia
Dr. Alvaro Uribe Velez
Palacio de Narino
Carrera 8 No. 7-26
Bogota,
COLOMBIA

We, the undersigned students and community members of Stanford University, strongly urge you to stop the violence against women in Colombia. We ask the you to acknowledge the egregious attacks against women and girls, including rape and murder, and to bring the perpetrators to justice. During the course of Colombia's 40-year-old conflict, all the armed groups- the security forces, army-backed paramilitaries and the guerilla – have sexually abused or exploited women and girls. These crimes have been committed against civilians and armed group's own combatants and have remained hidden by discrimination and impunity.

In early May 2003, rapes, killings and other attacks against civilians allegedly carried out by soldiers identifying themselves paramilitaries in Tame Municipality, Arauca Department, led to the displacement of over 500 people. In the village of Parreros, armed men raped and killed pregnant 16-year-old Omaira Fernández, and then ripped open her belly. According to one source, "[t]hey opened her up in front of everyone. The bodies of the girl and the baby were thrown in the river."

Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for repeated cases of violence against women, including rape. One woman told how she was raped by a FARC guerrilla: "He raped me and told me that it was a little reminder… not to get mixed up with soldiers."

Yet despite the gravity of such crimes, no real efforts have been made to fully investigate them, to bring to justice those responsible, or to prevent these atrocities happening in future.

All sides to the conflict must take action. Guerrilla forces must commit to upholding international humanitarian law. The Colombian government must act to prevent and punish all acts of violence against women. Only then will the people of Colombia have the opportunity to build a future safe from the threat of violence against women. Again, we strongly urge you to take immediate action to protect women from violence. Thank you for your attention regarding this serious matter.

NAME	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS