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**10th session of the Human Rights Council
Consideration of UPR reports – Colombia (Friday 20 March 2009)**

Oral submission by International PEN and the World Press Freedom Committee

International PEN, the world association of writers, and the World Press Freedom Committee, an umbrella organization of 45 press freedom organizations on five continents, welcome the commitments the Colombian State has made in relation to journalists. These include: improving guarantees of their rights; encouraging investigations of crimes against them; and fostering a culture in which it is easier for journalists to carry out their work. PEN and the WPFC also note with satisfaction that there were no deadly attacks on print journalists in Colombia in 2008, unlike the preceding two years.

However, we are alarmed by the high numbers of print journalists in Colombia who continue to be threatened and intimidated in relation to their work. In 2008, PEN recorded a total of 14 attacks against print journalists: five were threatened with death, four were otherwise threatened and harassed, three were on trial for criminal defamation, one was physically attacked and another kidnapped.

PEN and the WPFC ask that that Colombian State provide journalists who are threatened and attacked in this way with adequate guarantees of their safety. In particular we urge the government to take measures to ensure that such journalists are not further endangered by comments made by public officials that could exacerbate threats and violence against them.

In order to ensure that these crimes against journalists do not remain unpunished, PEN and the WPFC note that the Colombian State must not only *encourage* investigations but *ensure* that they take place, and that these investigations must be prompt, independent, thorough and impartial. We call on the pertinent institutions in Colombia to speed up outstanding investigations and thus bring to justice all those who have committed crimes against journalists.

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