



**F. I. C. I. B.**  
**International Fédération of LIBertad Committees**  
**(ex- Betancourt committees)**  
**for freeing the hostages in Colombia**

**Press Statement, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010**  
**International Federation of LIBertad Committees (FICIB-ex Betancourt Committees)**

With many citizens and also without doubt, the vast majority of humanitarian organisations and associations, we back and take part in the campaign in support of the two French hostages held in Afghanistan. This campaign has just witnessed a pivotal moment with the hostages now held for three hundred days and the huge support rally held at the Zénith in Paris, where in 2007, along with many entertainers, we called for the release of Ingrid Betancourt and all those held hostage in Colombia. Herve Gherquieres and Stéphane Taponier were captured in the course of their work as journalists, nothing justifies their detention and we support unreservedly all efforts that the French government can undertake to free them.

In Colombia 18 men remain in FARC hands. They are not journalists but policemen and soldiers, servants of the Colombian state who were also carrying out their duties when they were captured.

On 14 October last, we acknowledged at a rally in the Trocadero in Paris, the twelfth anniversary of the capture of two of the hostages, Colonel Edgar Yesid DUARTE and Lieutenant Elkin Hernandez RIVAS (4,383 days)

On 1 November Sergeant Cesar Augusto Lasso Monsalve will have been held for twelve years (4,383 days as well).

On 9 December, two other policemen, Luis Alberto Erazo Maya and Alvaro Moreno, will complete their eleventh year in captivity (4,018 days).

Finally, 21 December, Jose Libio Martinez Estrada will have finished his thirteenth year in the jungle(4,748).

These men, along with their twelve other companions, have been abandoned by the media and by governments in Colombia and abroad.

However, during the captivity of Ingrid Betancourt, the France's diplomatic service and government undertook to work for her release and that of all the hostages and prisoners in Colombia. Under the gildings of the Republic, in the drawing rooms of the Elysée Palace, on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008, the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy again promised Ingrid Betancourt and members of her support committees gathered there, that France would continue its efforts to help her former companions in adversity.

Today, who remembers these promises? Who thinks of the reclusive existence suffered by these men over the years? Some of them have lost members of their families, parents, brothers; their families, their marital life often destroyed... Jose Libio Martinez has never seen his son Johan Steeven, born three months after his capture by FARC in December 1997, in the last century.

Is the freedom of a man or woman worth more or less according to their nationality or profession? Do the soldiers and policemen in Colombia deserve as much as Herve and Stephane to return home to their families and friends? Are their broken families condemned to weep and cry their despair in total indifference?

You will see below a statement from ASFAMIPAZ CALI, the Association of Families of Soldiers and Military issued for the 1 December, the anniversary of the day when Cesar Augusto Lasso Monsalve was captured which is also the National Children's Day in Colombia.

We would be grateful if you could bring this statement which we fully endorse, to the attention of as big an audience/readership as possible.

Freedom and Peace in Colombia  
Freedom for All and Everywhere!

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## ASFAMIPAZ PRESS STATEMENT

SANTIAGO DE CALI OCT 21 2010

On the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the capture of Mitu (Department of Vaupes- Colombia), the family of LASSO MONSALVE, his relations and friends issue their appeal 1 to FARC to return home to his family the last policeman held hostage following this attack, as all his fellow hostages have been released.

Police Sergeant Cesar Auguste Lasso Monsalve

His father Daniel Lasso died having hoped he would be able to welcome his son again and now we are asking him to intercede on his son's behalf with Our Heavenly Father to touch the hearts of those who should never have stolen twelve years of his life.

As relatives we ask that there would be an end to this war, that political solutions be found to the various conflicts and that captivity, a cruel torture, would no longer be used as a means of getting advantage.

We are asking the various European committees that still campaign for our soldiers and policemen to continue to act so that our country will view the situation in a sympathetic and humane manner. Thank you for not abandoning us in the search for solutions and for being with us in this difficult task. (God said that those who work for Peace will be called Children of God).

We invite the various media to answer our call and to help us to bring about solutions that will allow Peace return to our country.

We request FARC to respect the lives of our soldiers and policemen and that they end this long wait. Their prisoners get remission of jail sentences ...how long more must our soldiers and policemen remain in their hands?

We ask the National Government to show care regarding the release of information about relatives held hostage because that affects the health of the families and we now call for a concerted effort to find ways to have the soldiers and policemen released from FARC hands, without endangering their lives.

FARC and the government are responsible for the life of each hostage.

We now demand their release, without condition or delay. We want them home for Christmas, free and at peace.