

Colombia

The Struggle for Justice

6pm, Wednesday 25th November 2009

Committee Room 18, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

All Welcome

Guest Speaker: **Martin Sandoval**, human rights defender and former Colombian political prisoner

Joined by **Sandra Osborne MP** and **Andy Love MP**, both of whom visited Martin in jail in Colombia, and **Kirsty Brimelow**, Vice-Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee

Chair: **Jim Sheridan MP**, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Colombia Group

Colombia is one of the most dangerous places in the world in which to engage in human rights work. It is also the most dangerous place in which to be a trade unionist. Hundreds of human rights defenders and trade union activists have been murdered in recent years - with little done to apprehend the perpetrators.

Human rights activist **Martin Sandoval** has spent the majority of his life working to end these abuses and bring those responsible to justice. He is a regional leader of Colombia's largest human rights group - the Permanent Committee for Human Rights - which works to protect and defend the human rights of civilians that are in danger in Colombia, be they trade unionists, community leaders, local councillors, journalists or other human rights advocates.

In November 2008, as a result of this work, the Colombian regime jailed Martin. He was never put on trial, never convicted of any crime, nor told when he might be released. Shortly after his arrest, British trade unionists, lawyers and MPs from several parties began campaigning for Martin to be set free. Letters were sent, meetings held with Colombian officials and a visit organised to see Martin in prison in Colombia. In May this year, after he had spent six long months in jail, he was finally released - a clear example of international pressure really making a difference.

The **Parliamentary Friends of Colombia Group** and the **Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales** are pleased to host Martin in Westminster. Please come along and meet Martin to find out why so many people continue to be jailed for political reasons in Colombia, what the conditions for these political prisoners are really like and what you can do to help win the freedom of others who are still being held.

More information: www.justiceforcolombia.org

