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## A Senseless Extradition

*The Justice Department does the left's bidding in Colombia.*

By the Editorial Board

Political persecution drove former Colombian agriculture minister Andrés Felipe Arias to flee to the U.S. in 2014. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá helped him escape, and when he arrived in Florida he immediately applied for asylum.

But if Mr. Arias thought he was safe, he wasn't taking into account the U.S. Justice Department. For reasons that are hard to figure out, much less understand, Justice officials are working hard to send Mr. Arias back to Colombia.

Mr. Arias was once on track to succeed Álvaro Uribe, his political mentor, as president of Colombia. That's when trumped up corruption charges emerged in the media. The Colombian Supreme Court, which is notoriously political, convicted the UCLA-trained economist of corruption after he had fled the country. He received a 17-year sentence in exile—from a country where the narco-terrorists known as the FARC enjoy amnesty these days. Mr. Arias was given no opportunity to appeal.

The Supreme Court—a longtime opponent of Mr. Uribe and his political allies—has continued to pursue Mr. Arias in the U.S. and under Colombian law it has the power to do so. In 2016 it asked the U.S. to extradite Mr. Arias, using a treaty that Colombia has never ratified. The Colombian Supreme Court has said it was never ratified; Mr. Uribe and former President Juan Manuel Santos have said there is no valid extradition treaty.

That should be enough for the U.S. to deny extradition and grant Mr. Arias's asylum claim, which is making its way slowly through U.S. court. Meanwhile, Mr. Arias sits in a Florida jail. On Dec. 10 Colombia's ambassador to the U.S., Francisco Santos, wrote the Justice Department Criminal Division requesting bail for Mr. Arias. The ambassador said Mr. Arias is not a flight risk and asked for the "rapid implementation of the steps necessary to ensure Mr. Arias may be released on bond, so that he can spend time with his wife and young children, especially during the holiday season."

Colombia is the Justice Department's client in this case, yet Justice is fighting the bail request. That makes no sense, but then neither does its determination to help the partisan Colombian judiciary fulfill what on the evidence is an unjust political prosecution.