

Language Students and staff interpreting for Human Rights lawyers in Colombia

In August, Rebecca Latter, Niall Flynn and James Ellis, three of this summer's graduates from the School of Modern Languages together with Angela Uribe de Kellett, a lecturer in the Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies section participated in the Colombian Caravana's 2014 visit to Colombia. The [Colombian Caravana](#) is an international group of human rights lawyers who monitor the human rights situation in Colombia and undertake advocacy work to try to improve the dangerous situation faced by Colombian human rights lawyers and the plight of the vulnerable communities they represent.

As part of the [Real Translation Project](#) and thanks to funds from the SML, Banco Santander, Newcastle University and generous contributions and donations from SML and GPS staff, the team were able to act as interpreters for the delegation and facilitate communications during numerous meetings with human rights victims, Colombian lawyers and national authorities including the Vice President's office and the prosecutor general. The visit allowed the students to put the skills acquired through their degree to practical use for a very worthy cause.

The Caravana are currently writing a report regarding Colombia's situation which will be presented to the Colombian authorities in early 2015 with the hope of highlighting key issues. This report is an integral part of the ongoing monitoring and advocacy work. One Colombian lawyer summed up the delegation visit in the following way *"A bulletproof vest may protect us when a gun is fired but the work of the Caravana and the international community is helping to prevent the bullet being fired in the first place."*

We are grateful to have had the chance to participate in this project and hope to witness improvement in the lives of those that we met.



Launch of the Caravana



Niall, Angela, Rebecca and James in Colombia, August 2014