

PUBLIC

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UA 12/07 Fear for safety

CHILE **Staff at the organization *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas*
(Observatory for Indigenous People's Rights)
Members of the indigenous Mapuche community in Temucucui**

The offices of the non-governmental organization *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas* (Observatory for Indigenous People's Rights) in the city of Temuco, in Chile's IX Region, was broken into on 9 December 2006. Sensitive information related to the indigenous Mapuche community in Temucucui, in the IX Region, was stolen. Members of this community, as well as staff of the organization, may be in danger following the burglary.

An unknown number of burglars broke into the office of the *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas* and took six hard disks from the organization's computers, which contained valuable information related to their work on behalf of the indigenous Mapuche community of Temucucui. Other objects like printers, musical instruments, telephones and a valuable painting were not stolen during the raid. It is feared that the motive behind the burglary was to intimidate the organization's staff and disrupt their work. The organization has reported the burglary to the authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas* is dedicated to promoting, defending and documenting the rights of indigenous peoples in Chile. It was created in 2004 in the city of Temuco by a group of citizens of different professional and ethnic backgrounds concerned by the lack of legal recognition and respect for indigenous peoples' rights in the country.

The *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas* has been documenting and publishing information on human rights violations committed against members of the indigenous Mapuche community by police (*carabineros*). The burglary took place two days after the *Observatorio* published information on a police operation which left 10 Mapuche individuals injured, including a pregnant woman and an eight-year-old child.

Chile is a member of the Organization of American States (OAS). In June 2004, the OAS General Assembly adopted a resolution reiterating its support for the work of human rights defenders and recognizing their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas, and to the representation and defence of individuals, minorities, and other groups whose rights are threatened or violated.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of all staff at the *Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas*, whose offices were burgled on 9 December 2006;
- calling for a prompt and impartial investigation into the break-in and theft of sensitive information, with the findings made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee that organization's staff are able to carry out their work in defence of indigenous people's rights without fear for their safety, in accordance with Chile's obligations under the UN Declaration of Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups, and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Organisation of American States' resolution on human rights defenders of June 2004;

- urging the authorities to ensure that members of indigenous communities referred to in the *Observatorio's* files receive adequate protection, if required.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Señor Ministro del Interior
Sr. Belisario Velasco Baraona
Ministerio del Interior
Palacio de la Moneda
Santiago, Chile

Fax: + 56 2 699 2165

Salutation: Dear Minister/Senor Ministro

Regional Governor IX Region

Señor Intendente IX Región
Región Araucanía
Sr. Eduardo Klein Koch
Bulnes 590 piso 2
Temuco, Chile

Fax: + 56 45 208217

Salutation: Señor Intendente/ Dear Regional Governor

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Señor Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Sr. Alejandro Foxley Rioseco
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Edificio Jose Miguel Carrera
Teatinos 180
Santiago, Chile

Fax: + 56 2 6994202 / 698 3592

Email: minrel@minrel.cl or via website: <http://www.minrel.gov.cl/webMinRel/contactenos.do>

Non-governmental Organization

Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indigenas
Antonio Varas 428
Temuco, Chile

and to diplomatic representatives of Chile accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 February 2007.