

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

2 June 2006

VENEZUELA **Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci (f)**
Adolfo Martínez Barrios (m)
Other members of their family

Human rights defender Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci and her husband, Adolfo Martínez Barrios, were victims of an assassination attempt by unknown assailants in the State of Guárico on 21 April. They currently have no official protection or security and Amnesty International is concerned for their safety and that of their family. The attack appears to be linked to Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci's accusations of human rights violations by the police in the State of Guárico.

The attackers shot at Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci and then, as her husband attempted to drive her to hospital, they were followed and shot at with a sub-machine gun. Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci was first shot in the face. She received three other shots in the thorax, in the right arm and in the stomach.

Her husband was also shot in three places, in the thorax, the left leg and the left arm. Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci's wounds were apparently so serious that she was transported to a hospital in the capital Caracas. Having recovered from her wounds she first reported the attack to the *Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas Penales y Criminalísticas* (Criminal Investigations Unit) on 3 May and she then later also informed the Attorney General. To Amnesty International's knowledge no investigation into the attack is being carried out.

Following the attack Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci was initially offered protection by the State. However, she was told she would have to pay for all costs incurred by the security agents, including food and lodging. As Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci does not have the economic means to do this, she is now without official protection.

Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci is now living alone in a hotel in Caracas, as she does not want to endanger family members by staying with them. Her husband, Adolfo Martínez Barrios, remains in the State of Anzoátegui where he too is seeking protection. Both are awaiting further treatment for the wounds they sustained in the attack.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders, victims of human rights violations, and their relatives are frequently subjected to attacks and intimidation. Despite this, they are almost never granted adequate or effective protection by the State. Venezuelan human rights organizations have documented over 100 police killings in Guárico State in recent years. In the vast majority of these cases the authorities have not investigated the complaints and the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Many Venezuelan states have a similar history of police abuse.

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

- expressing concern that Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci and her husband, Adolfo Martínez Barrios, were shot and injured by unknown assailants on 21 April 2006 in the State of Guárico;
- stating that this attack appears to be linked to Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci's work as a human rights defender;
- demanding that a thorough investigation into these events be carried out and that those found to be responsible are brought to justice.
- urging the authorities to provide immediate protection to Maria del Rosario Guerrero Galluci and her family, according to her wishes.

- calling on the authorities to investigate all cases of threats and acts of intimidation against human rights defenders, victims of human rights violations and their families, bring the perpetrators to justice and offer adequate protection to the victims, according to their wishes.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior and Justice

Sr. Jesse Chacón

Ministerio del Interior y Justicia

Ministerio del Interior y Justicia

Avenida Urdaneta Esquina de Platanal

Edificio Interior y Justicia Despacho del Ministro, Piso Tres

Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: +58 212 506 1685

Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister

Attorney General

Dr. Isaías Rodríguez Díaz

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República

Edificio sede del despacho del Fiscal General de la Republica

Av. Universidad, Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: +58 212 576 4419 / 578 3239

Salutation: Señor Fiscal General/ Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Association Life, Peace and Freedom

Asociación Vida Paz y Libertad

Dra. Sara Mier y Terán

Avenida Bolívar Oeste

Edificio Paris Piso 3-7

Al lado de El Siglo

Maracay, Estado Aragua

Venezuela

Apartado de Correo 2101

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and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 July 2006.