

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

BOLIVIA

**Adalberto Rojas (m), President of the *Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos*, Permanent Human Rights Assembly, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Other members of the APDH**

Adalberto Rojas, lawyer and President of Bolivian non-governmental organization, the *Asamblea Permanente en Santa Cruz de la Sierra* (APDH), Permanent Human Rights Assembly in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Santa Cruz Department, has been threatened and intimidated. His life, and those of others working for APDH, may be in danger.

Adalberto Rojas and members of the APDH have been receiving threats and harassment since 2003 because of their legitimate work in defence of human rights of peasants, indigenous peoples and other members of the Santa Cruz de la Sierra community who face discrimination. In recent months, these threats have worsened as different groups in Santa Cruz Department struggle for power in the context of calls for regional autonomy. Adalberto Rojas and other members of the APDH have been accused of being traitors to the development of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

On 21 January 2007, several members of the *Comité Cívico Pro Santa Cruz*, Pro Santa Cruz Civic Committee, an elected committee in favour of regional autonomy, entered the ADPH office, threatening staff and claiming that they would come back with weapons and shoot at the building.

According to reports, on 7 December 2006 a group of approximately eight people who identified themselves as members of the *Union Juvenil Cruceñista*, the Youth Union of Santa Cruz, racially insulted Adalberto Rojas and four members of the APDH in a street close to their office in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The Youth Union is a group linked to the Pro Santa Cruz Civic Committee. One member of the group approached Adalberto Rojas, pushed him and shouted "we know what time you start and finish [work], we are going to kill you, you will not make it through the night, son of a bitch" (*sabemos a que horas entras y sales, te vamos a matar, de esta noche no pasas, hijo de puta*), before kicking him. Adalberto Rojas reported the incident to the police and asked for police protection to be placed at the entrance of the APDH office. The police provided this protection, and several members of the APDH had been living in the office as they were in fear for their safety in their own homes, but the authorities stopped the police presence on 7 January, citing financial reasons. Adalberto Rojas has been forced to leave his home, fearing for his own safety and that of his family.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Adalberto Rojas and members of APDH in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, who have been repeatedly threatened, and were attacked on 7 December 2006 by a group who identified themselves as members of the Union Juvenil Cruceñista;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and effective action to protect Adalberto Rojas and members of APDH in accordance with their wishes, thus enabling them to perform their legitimate human rights work without fear of attack or harassment;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the attack and threats received by Adalberto Rojas and members of the Asamblea Permanente, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to recognize the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in

the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties.

APPEALS TO:

President of Bolivia

Excmo Sr. Presidente de la Republica de Bolivia
Sr. Evo Morales
Palacio de Gobierno, plaza Murillo, La Paz, Bolivia
Fax: +5912 220 3303

Email: webmaster@presidencia.gov.bo

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President Morales

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Ministra de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Sra. Celima Torrico
Ministerio de Justicia, Piso 5
Av. 16 de Julio No. 1769 (al lado del Gran Hotel Plaza)
La Paz, Bolivia

Fax: +5912 212 4726

Salutation: Sra. Ministra

Santa Cruz Authority-Governor

Sr. Prefecto del Departamento de Santa Cruz
Sr. Rubén Costas Aguilera
Av. Omar Chavez Ortiz, esq. Ana Barba.
Edificio ex CORDECRUZ
Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Fax: + 591 3 312 5928

Salutation: Sr. Prefecto

COPIES TO:

Non-Governmental Organization

Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Santa Cruz
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Presidente APDH – Santa Cruz
Av. Santa Cruz N° 2515
2do. Anillo Esq Virgen de la Cotoca. Edif. Caritas
Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Email: apdh_sc@latinmail.com OR apdh_sc@cotas.com.bo

and to diplomatic representatives of Bolivia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 April 2007.