

PUBLIC

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25 July 2007

UA 193/07 Fear for safety

ECUADOR **Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero (m), community leader in García Moreno parish**
Mercy Catalina Torres Terán (f)
Others opposed to the Intag copper mining project

According to reports, community leader Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero has been threatened and activist Mercy Catalina Torres Terán has been attacked, as a result of their opposition to a mining project close to their homes in the Intag area of Imbabura province, northern Ecuador. Their lives, and those of others who voice opposition to the mine, are in danger.

Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero, from Garcia Moreno parish in Imbabura, a group of villages close to a site where the authorities and a mining company are planning to excavate for copper, has received a series of death threats in recent months. In December 2006, while he was taking part in a protest against the mining project, Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero was reportedly approached by an armed civilian. The armed man told Jaime Polivio Pérez: "*Si te sigues oponiendo a la minera vamos a tener que matarte*" (if you continue to oppose the mining company we will have to kill you). According to reports, the armed civilians and security guards used tear gas and shot at the demonstrators, injuring several people. Among those injured was Jaime Polivio Pérez's brother, Israel Pérez, who was shot.

Following the incident, Jaime Polivio Pérez reportedly received several anonymous calls on his mobile phone, in which the caller said, "*Si no abandonas la dirigencia te vamos a matar. Deja de subir a Barcelona porque de caso contrario tendrás tu merecido*" (If you do not quit the leadership [of a community organization in García Moreno] we are going to kill you. Stop going to Barcelona [one of the communities of the García Moreno parish] or you will get what you deserve).

On 23 June 2007, according to reports, another member of the community received an anonymous email referring to a plan to kill Jaime Polivio Pérez.

On 9 July, activist Mercy Catalina Torres was outside her home in Garcia Moreno when she was reportedly beaten by a man wearing a balaclava. She was cut and bruised in the attack. Mercy Catalina Torres had allegedly been threatened in her home two months before the attack, when a man apparently shouted at her: "*porque ya vino el carro, te salvaste perra*" ("because someone just arrived in a car, you saved yourself, bitch").

Jaime Polivio Pérez and Mercy Catalina Torres reported the incidents to the local Attorney's Office. However, to date, Amnesty International is not aware of any investigation being opened into the threats or the attack, and no protection has been granted to them.

Both Jaime Polivio Pérez and Mercy Catalina Torres have been very active and outspoken in their campaigning against the planned copper mine. They believe that the communities which will be affected by the mining project have not been consulted in a meaningful, open and transparent way by the authorities. Members of these communities are concerned about the environmental impact it might have on the area, a nature reserve where most inhabitants depend on agriculture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During a visit to Ecuador in November 2006, Amnesty International visited Imbabura and met with some members of the communities affected by the mining project in Intag. The delegation received testimonies and reports of acts of intimidation, harassment and attacks against those who campaign against the mining

project. Amnesty International wrote to the authorities asking for investigations to be opened into these incidents. However, to date, the organization is not aware of any investigations into these events.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero, Mercy Catalina Torres Terán, and other inhabitants of the Intag area, Imbabura, who are opposed to the copper mining project;
- expressing concern that Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero has been repeatedly threatened with death since December 2006, and that Mercy Catalina Torres Terán was beaten in July 2007;
- stating that these acts of intimidation appear to be linked to their campaigning actions to defend the rights of the communities in Intag to a meaningful, open and transparent consultation prior to the development of any mining project in the area;
- urging the authorities to take steps to guarantee the safety of Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero and Mercy Catalina Torres Terán, in accordance with their own wishes;
- urging the authorities to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the death threat received by Jaime Polivio Pérez Lucero and the attack against Mercy Catalina Torres Terán, making the results public and bringing those responsible to justice;
- asking to be informed of the results of these investigation.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Gustavo Larrea

Ministro de Gobierno, Policía,
Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades

Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Espejo y Benalcázar, Quito- Ecuador

Fax: +593 22955666 Ext. 155 or +593 22955666 Ext. 150 – 151 (ask for fax tone)

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. Jorge Germán

Ministro Fiscal General del Estado
Fiscalía General del Estado

Av. Eloy Alfaro N° 32-240 y República, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 22558561 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Minister of Energy and Mines

Econ. Alberto Acosta

Ministro de Energía y Minas

Ministerio de Energía y Minas

Juan León Mera N° 26-220 y Orellana, Quito - Ecuador

Fax: +593 22906350

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Sr. Ministro Fiscal

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Non-governmental Organization

Comisión Ecumenica de Derechos Humanos - CEDHU

Carlos Ibarra 176 y 10 de Agosto

Edif. Yuraj Pirca, 9no. Piso, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 258 9272

E-mail: denuncias@cedhu.org

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 September 2007.