

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDERS' LIVES AT RISK

Human rights defenders Waldo and Franco Albarracin reported that since 19 October 2020, one day after the presidential elections, they have received several death threats from unidentified persons through their mobile phones and social media. Two social media videos accused Waldo of participating in a coup against the Morales' government. One included him in a "blacklist of traitors of Bolivia" and the other accused him of planning the burning of his own home. We call on the Minister of Government to immediately provide comprehensive and sustainable protection measures to Waldo and Franco Albarracin and their family, in consultation with them.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Arturo Murillo
Minister of Government

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La Paz, Bolivia

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Dear Minister of Government,

I write to you in relation to the threats faced by human rights defenders Waldo and Franco Albarracin.

They reported receiving several death threats through their mobile phones and social media since 19 October 2020. In two videos Waldo is accused of participating in a coup against the Morales' government. In the first one, a leader of Comité de Defensa de la Democracia included him in a "blacklist of traitors of Bolivia" and, in the second one, a former authority of the Morales' government accused him of burning down his own home.

On 26 October 2020, Waldo Albarracin filed a criminal complaint about these threats before the Attorney General's Office in La Paz. Earlier in the year he requested precautionary measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

We call on you to immediately provide comprehensive and effective protection measures to Waldo and Franco Albarracin and their family, in consultation with them.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In December 2018, the Bolivian government publicly identified 43 people, including Waldo and Franco Albarracin, as promoting “violence and racism” during the protests of 6 December 2018 against a then possible further presidential term for Evo Morales.

Following the 2019 elections in Bolivia, on 21 October 2019, a peaceful vigil was held outside the vote counting centres. Waldo Albarracin has stated that when he arrived at that location, and without any violence taking place, the Police “sprayed them in the face with gas.” Waldo Albarracin said: “the moment I covered my face and turned my back to the police, someone came and hit me with a blunt object on the head, I presume it was with an iron bar.” The forensic medical certificate attested to the injuries and granted him 14 days’ sick leave. A criminal complaint was filed about the attack, which Waldo Albarracin said has stalled.

On 10 November 2019, after the announcement of President Morales resignation, a group of approximately 400 people attacked Waldo Albarracin’s house, destroying doors with dynamite and causing a fire. Waldo Albarracin told Amnesty International that he requested police intervention but that the Police said that they were unable to come to his house.

After their house was burned down, they have also struggled to find a stable place to live and ensure their safety, since they continued to receive death threats on social media from unidentified persons.

In view of the possible risk of irreparable harm to his life and personal integrity, given the gravity and urgency of the situation, on 28 February 2020, Waldo Albarracin requested precautionary measures from the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). To date, however, these have not yet been granted.

On 18 October 2020, general elections were held in Bolivia and Luis Arce, candidate of party the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), the party of former President Evo Morales, won the Presidency.

The defenders and their family lack protection from the Bolivian authorities and impunity persists for the attacks against them. In the context of their extensive work as a human rights defenders, Waldo and Franco Albarracin and their family have been victims of attacks, threats, stigmatization, as well as smear campaigns through public statements by senior officials who have sought to delegitimize their work defending human rights.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [23 December 2020]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Waldo and Franco Albarracin (They, them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a