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Colombia: Amnesty International condemns the killing of two human rights defenders and repeats its urgent appeal to the Colombian authorities

The killing of Julio González and Everardo de Jesús Puerta, both members of the *Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos*, Committee of Solidarity with Political Prisoners, makes it all the more necessary for the Colombian authorities to take urgent steps to protect human rights workers, Amnesty International said today.

“Last Friday, in reaction to the kidnapping of four human rights defenders in Medellín, Amnesty International appealed to the Colombian authorities not to let their commitment to human rights remain as empty rhetoric but to translate it into concrete protection for human rights defenders,” the organization pointed out. “Today, Monday, the international community has sadly witnessed the loss of two further lives at the hands of the paramilitary forces in Colombia.”

According to reports, Julio González and Everardo de Jesús Puerta were killed on Saturday by a paramilitary group as they were travelling from Medellín to Bogotá. The bus in which they were travelling was intercepted in the locality of Doradal by a group of armed men who forced them to get out of the vehicle before riddling them with bullets.

“The terrible loss of these two lives inevitably increases concern for the security and personal safety of the four leaders of the *Instituto Popular de Capacitación (IPC)*, Popular Training Institute, who were kidnapped on 28 January in Medellín,” Amnesty International said.

“The Colombian authorities have a duty to investigate the killings that occurred on Saturday and to take all necessary measures to bring those responsible to justice,” the organization stated. “At the same time, the authorities must do everything possible to guarantee the lives, personal safety and eventual release of Jairo Bedoya, Jorge Salazar, Claudia Tamayo and Olga Rodas, the four IPC leaders who were kidnapped last week.”

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please call Amnesty International's Press Office: +44 171 413 5562 or 5566