

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 28/005/2006

08 June 2006

Further Information on UA 134/06 (AMR 28/004/2006, 16 May 2006) Fear for Safety

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| ECUADOR   | Guadalupe de Heredia (f) and her family |  |
|           | Dr Alejandro Ponce Villacís (m)         | ]  |
|           | Dr Pablo Fajardo Mendoza (m)            | ] Members of the legal team              |
|           | Ermel Chávez Parra (m)                  | ] representing                           |
|           | Cármen Allauca (f)                      | ] indigenous communities in legal action |
|           | Luis Yanza (m)                          | ] against ChevronTexaco                  |
| New name: | Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez (m)         | ]  |

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Six of the people named above are members of a legal team representing indigenous communities taking legal action against the multinational oil company ChevronTexaco for failing to clean up the pollution allegedly caused by decades of drilling in the oil-rich Sucumbios region. Guadalupe de Heredia is their Press Officer. On 19 May, Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez's office was broken into, in what appears to be the latest attempt to stop him and his colleagues from carrying out their work. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

In the early hours of 19 May, security guards informed Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez that his office, in the capital Quito, had been broken into. Nothing was apparently taken despite the fact it contained expensive equipment. However, someone had gone through the paper files. Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez filed a complaint with the attorney general's office in Quito on 28 May. It is not known if the police have investigated the incident.

In 2005 and 2006 Amnesty International has documented several acts of intimidation, death threats and attacks against six of those named above. The organization has also received reports of a previous break-in at the offices of Alejandro Ponce Villacís. On that occasion the burglars took three computers and a hard disk, leaving behind other valuable equipment and money.

On 22 December 2005, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Ecuadorean government to provide protection to four of the lawyers named above, Alejandro Ponce Villacís, Pablo Fajardo Mendoza, Ermel Chávez Parra and Luis Yanza. On 28 April 2006, human rights non governmental organisations (NGOs) petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to extend existing precautionary measures to Guadalupe de Heredia. To Amnesty International's knowledge the Ecuadorean government has still to provide any of them with protection.

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

- expressing concern that the office of lawyer Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez was broken into on 19 May 2006;
- expressing concern that this seems to be the latest in a series of acts of intimidation, threats and violent attacks against members of the legal team representing indigenous communities taking legal action against the multinational oil company ChevronTexaco;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation into this intimidation, for the findings to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to comply with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' request for precautionary measures, and to take steps to guarantee the safety all the legal team members, in accordance with their own wishes.

**APPEALS TO: (It may be difficult to get through to these fax numbers: please keep trying)**

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Dr. Felipe Vega de la Cuadra  
Ministro de Gobierno, Policía, Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades  
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía  
Benalcázar y Espejo, Quito, Ecuador

**Fax:** +593 2 2282770 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

**Salutation:** Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Minister of Energy and Mines

Ing. Iván Rodríguez Ramos  
Ministro de Energía y Minas, Ministerio de Energía y Minas  
Juan León Mera N° 26-220 y Orellana, Quito, Ecuador

**Fax:** +593 2 2906 350 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

**Salutation:** Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Acting Attorney General

Dra. Cecilia Armas Tobar  
Ministra Fiscal Subrogante, Fiscalía General del Estado  
Av. Eloy Alfaro N°32-240 y República, Quito, Ecuador

**Fax:** +593 2 255 9959 (ask for "Extension uno-zero-cuatro" and then "tono de fax, por favor")

**Salutation:** Dear Acting Attorney General/Sra. Ministra Fiscal Subrogante

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organisation

Frente de la Defensa de la Amazonía  
José Abscal E 1279  
y Portete esquina, Quito, Ecuador

**Email:** casotexaco@uio.satnet.net

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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 20 July 2006.