

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Colombia: Guerrilla groups must release all hostages**

Amnesty International today urged guerrilla groups in Colombia to put an immediate and unconditional end to kidnapping and hostage-taking, following yesterday's release by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) of local councillor Marcos Baquero.

Marcos Baquero had been in captivity for 19 months. Two members of the armed forces, Salín Antonio Sanmiguel Valderrama and Henry López Martínez, one police officer, Guillermo Javier Solórzano, and local councillor José Armando Acuña Molina are expected to be released later this week.

Amnesty International welcomed the release of Baquero but said that many other individuals are still being held by the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN) across Colombia.

The human rights group said both guerrilla groups must urgently and unconditionally release all those civilians still being held captive.

Furthermore, all those reasonably suspected of having committed serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law must be brought to justice in legal proceedings that meet international standards on fair trials.

Amnesty International has reiterated that hostage-taking is a serious violation of international humanitarian law, which can constitute a war crime.

Although the number of kidnappings have fallen in recent years, hundreds continue to be taken against the will. Although criminal gangs are responsible for most cases, guerrilla groups account for the overwhelming number of conflict-related kidnappings.

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