

# URGENT ACTION

## THREATS TO DEFENDER AND TRADE UNIONIST

**An armed man and woman forced entry into the home of a Colombian human rights defender, Jackeline Rojas Castañeda. They threatened to kill her daughter and demanded information about her husband, Juan Carlos Galvis, a trade unionist.**

On 9 November, the armed man and woman entered Jackeline Rojas Castañeda's home in Barrancabermeja, in Northern Colombia. Jackeline Rojas Castañeda is a leading member of the Popular Women's Organisation (*Organización Femenina Popular, OFP*). She has been working with the organization for 20 years.

The man and woman held Jackeline Rojas Castañeda and her 15-year-old daughter at gunpoint in separate rooms. They told Jackeline Rojas Castañeda that they would kill her daughter if she screamed or tried to call for help. She was tied up; gagged and red paint was sprayed on her body and clothes. Red paint was sprayed on photos showing Juan Carlos Galvis and "son of a bitch" (*HP perro*) and (*HP perra*) was daubed on the walls.

The attackers repeatedly demanded information on the whereabouts of her son and Juan Carlos Galvis, who is a director of the National Trade Union of Food Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Sistema Agroalimentario, SINALTRAINAL*). He is also a member of the executive committee of the Santander Department branch of the Trade Union Congress (*Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, CUT*).

In addition to the attack, two laptops, USB sticks, mobiles and documents were taken from Jackeline Rojas Castañeda's house. These contained information about Juan Carlos Galvis' work. On 10 November Jackeline Rojas Castañeda went to report the attack at the Attorney General's Office. Her complaint was not admitted initially after staff at the Attorney General's Office claimed she had invented the attack.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Express concern for the safety of Jackeline Rojas Castañeda and Juan Carlos Galvis and their family, and call for protection measures to guarantee their safety, in line with their wishes;
- Call on the authorities to launch a full and impartial investigation into the attack, and to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Remind the Colombian authorities to fulfil their obligations regarding the protections of human rights defenders as specified in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 2011 TO:**

#### President

Juan Manuel Santos  
Señor Presidente Juan Manuel Santos  
Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26, Bogotá, Colombia  
Fax: +57 1 596 0631

**Salutation: Dear President Santos/  
Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

#### Minister of Interior

Germán Vargas Lleras  
Ministerio Del Interior  
Carrera 9a. No. 14-10,  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Fax: +57 1 242 7400 ext 2351 say "me da tono por favor"

**Salutation: Dear Minister Vargas/  
Estimado Sr. Ministro Vargas**

#### **Copies to:**

Organización Femenina Popular  
Cra 22 No 52B – 36  
Barrancabermeja, Santander,  
Colombia  
And:  
SINALTRAINAL  
Carrera 15 # 35 – 18  
Bogotá,  
Colombia

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Jackeline Rojas Castañeda and Juan Carlos Galvis have been subject to repeated paramilitary death threats over the last 10 years. In the last month unknown persons have tried to force their way into their house on at least two previous occasions. Both Jackeline Rojas Castañeda and Juan Carlos Galvis have received several threats, including death threats over the years.

The OFP was founded in 1972 and has been working to promote women's human rights in the Magdalena Medio region, including Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. The members of the OFP have been victims of several threats and attacks.

Many women human rights defenders, including community and social leaders, continue to be threatened and killed because of their work in favour of women's rights and against violence. They are not only targeted in retaliation for their work as human rights defenders or as community and social leaders, but also in an effort to silence them when they expose abuses. Over the last few years, women human rights defenders and community leaders working with forcibly displaced communities and those campaigning for the restitution of stolen lands have also been the target of threats and killings, mainly by paramilitaries. Some of these women were also victims of sexual violence.

SINALTRAINAL is a trade union founded in 1982 to defend and promote the labour rights of workers in the food industry. Since its creation, at least 22 SINALTRAINAL members have been killed or forcibly disappeared by paramilitaries, either acting alone or operating in collusion with the security forces; dozens have been victims of attacks or have received death threats.

In recent years, SINALTRAINAL has been involved in a number of labour disputes, often involving large multinational companies. These disputes have often coincided with reports of threats and attacks against members of the union, mainly by members of the security forces or paramilitary groups.

More than 2,000 trade unionists have been killed and 138 have been victims of enforced disappearance in Colombia over the last two decades. In 2010 at least 51 trade unionists were killed, compared to 39 in 2007.

In the course of Colombia's long running armed conflict, human rights defenders and trade unionists have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killings. Most of these attacks are attributed to paramilitary groups. Guerrilla groups have also targeted human rights defenders, trade unionists and other social activists deemed to be a threat to their interests.

Name: Jackeline Rojas Castañeda and Juan Carlos Galvis

Gender m/f: Jackeline Rojas Castañeda (F); Juan Carlos Galvis (M)

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