

# URGENT ACTION

## RAID ON HUMAN RIGHTS NGO PUTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

Amparo Carvajal is a 84-year-old human rights defender and president of the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights in Bolivia (APDHB). On 2 June, dozens of people raided the APDHB's office in La Paz and forced staff to abandon the premises. Since then, Amparo and colleagues have been sleeping on the street outside the offices as a form of protest, and to attend to victims who seek support. The APDHB offices remain occupied, and dozens of police are blocking the entrance. We demand authorities allow Amparo and members of the APDH to enter the offices to carry out their work, as well as guarantee their health, physical integrity, and safety.

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

**President of Bolivia**  
**Luis Arce Catacora**  
Zona Central  
Calle Ayacucho Esq. Potosí  
La Paz – Bolivia  
Email: [minpres@presidencia.gob.bo](mailto:minpres@presidencia.gob.bo)  
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Dear President Arce,

*I am gravely concerned over the safety of Amparo Carvajal, president of the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights (APDH), who, alongside colleagues, was forced to abandon the APDHB's office on 2 June by dozens of people that press reported as linked to politicians opposing APDHB's work. Dozens of police officers blocked the entrance and remain stationed outside.*

*Amparo Carvajal has spent weeks sleeping outside the APDHB's office in almost freezing temperatures. She and her colleagues have no bathroom and have had repeated respiratory ailments. Many of the APDHB's documents have been stolen or destroyed and the legal defense provided by the organization's lawyers has been brought to a halt.*

***I call on you to urgently ensure the health, physical integrity and safety of Amparo Carvajal and her colleagues and restore their access to the offices of the APDHB to ensure the continuity of their vital work defending human rights.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Permanent Assembly on Human Rights in Bolivia (APDHB) was established in 1976 and is a confederation of volunteer lawyers and human rights defenders throughout Bolivia that offer pro bono legal assistance to victims of human rights violations as well as raising awareness about rule of law, justice and impunity in the country.

Amnesty International has documented how human rights defenders in Bolivia are routinely subjected to harassment, stigmatization, and threats from authorities. In 2018, we released a [public statement](#) about Amparo Carvajal, who was subject to unfounded criminalizing accusations against her.

According to personnel of the APDHB, the organization attends to approximately 10 to 15 people each day who come to their La Paz offices to seek legal advice and assistance. Throughout the country, the APDH also has representatives in each department of the country. On the 2 June, approximately 50 people stormed their offices, forcing the three volunteer lawyers and the secretary of the organization to abandon the premises. The information provided points to the involvement of figures involved with the ruling political party, who during 2021 and 2022 made attempts to revoke the status of Amparo Carvajal as the president of the APDHB and undermine her registration status in the national tax office.

Since the raid on the offices, several key documents of the APDHB appear to have been stolen, destroyed or removed from the offices. The APDHB works on several cases of grave human rights violations.

Legal representatives of the APDHB filed a complaint before the public prosecutor's office in relation to the raid on its offices. Nevertheless, the public prosecutor rejected this complaint and has failed to open an investigation into the events.

Personnel of the APDHB told Amnesty International that representatives of the Human Rights Ombudsman's office visited Amparo Carvajal's encampment outside the APDHB office yet has done little to restore her or her colleagues to their premises. Authorities have also failed to provide medical and sanitary services for the colleagues and human rights defenders who are camped outside the offices.

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 15 August 2023

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

### **NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Amparo Carvajal (She/hers)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** NA