

URGENT ACTION

INVESTIGATE THREATS AGAINST CREDHOS

On 1 June, a leaflet supposedly signed by the armed group Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN) was publicly distributed, threatening the lives of several people in Puerto Wilches, a municipality in the Santander department, in Colombia's Magdalena Medio region. Those threatened included several members of the human rights NGO CREDHOS. We call on the Attorney General to carry out prompt, thorough and effective investigations into those responsible for these threats, bring them to justice, and prevent further attacks against people defending human rights in Magdalena Medio.

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

Luz Adriana Camargo

Attorney General

Attorney General's Office

Avenida Calle 24 No. 52 – 01

Bogotá D.C.

Email: direccion.derechoshumanos@fiscalia.gov.co

X: @FiscaliaCol

Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the risks to the lives, safety and security of human rights defenders, particularly members of the civil society organisation Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CREDHOS), in the municipality of Puerto Wilches, Santander department, in Colombia's Magdalena Medio region.

On 1 June, a leaflet supposedly signed by the armed group Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN) was publicly distributed, declaring several people in Puerto Wilches to be "military objectives" of the group and ordering them to leave the municipality within 48 hours. Those threatened included members of CREDHOS's municipal human rights committee.

Furthermore, this threat is one in a series of threats and attacks committed in recent months by armed groups in the Magdalena Medio region, including the Ejército Gaitanista de Colombia (EGC). These attacks have targeted members of CREDHOS and directly affected their work defending the human rights of communities across the municipalities of Santander, Bolívar and Antioquia that form part of the Magdalena Medio region.

For years, Amnesty International has documented both the human rights work carried out by CREDHOS and the risks faced by its members. They continue to be attacked because of their efforts to defend the rights of the communities of Magdalena Medio, while the state's response remains insufficient.

I urge you to exercise the utmost diligence in effectively fulfilling the Attorney General's Office's duty to investigate the threats and attacks against members of CREDHOS, establish who is responsible for ordering and carrying out these acts, and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials. Effective investigations are essential to prevent further attacks against human rights defenders in the Magdalena Medio region.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The **Magdalena Medio** is an extensive valley between the Colombian mountain ranges crossed by Colombia's main river, the Magdalena River. Oil is one of the major sources of economic activity in the region, where the country's largest refinery operates in the city of Barrancabermeja, Santander, at the heart of the Magdalena Medio. The area also engages in agro-industry, mining, livestock, among other economic activities. Due to its location and the abundance of valuable resources like oil and water, the region is considered strategic and has been the subject of continuous disputes between the State and armed groups present in the country. The Magdalena Medio has also been a stage for sustained processes of popular mobilization and human rights advocacy for decades. The combination of unions, feminist, popular movements, and human rights defence has created particularly strong scenarios of assertion and resistance. This, coupled with the dispute for territorial, political, and economic control of the region by interest groups and armed factions, has fostered a breeding ground for violence against human rights defenders that has persisted since at least the 1980s. Alarming figures of violence against the civilian population, especially homicides, have been recorded in the Magdalena Medio during the last years.

All of this unfolds in a context of conflict between several armed groups present in the region, ranging from the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrilla and groups formed after the demobilisation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Army of the People (FARC-EP) guerrilla in 2016 (known today as FARC dissidents), to armed organisations formed after the demobilisation of the former paramilitary groups in the mid-2000s, which include the Ejército Gaitanista de Colombia (EGC), also known as AGC or Clan del Golfo; and more recently the Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN), from northern Colombia but recently reported to advance towards the south to the Magdalena Medio region.

The Regional Corporation for the Defence of Human Rights (**CREDHOS**), based in Barrancabermeja, was founded in 1987 and Amnesty International has monitored its situation for several years. In the year 2000, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) issued precautionary measures to CREDHOS due to threats from paramilitary groups. In 2016, the Colombian Government's Victims Unit recognized CREDHOS as a subject of collective reparation for having suffered, as a collective, serious human rights violations. Amnesty International's report [Hope at risk](#) of 2023 documented CREDHOS work defending human rights and the risk and threats faced by the organization because of its work.

CREDHOS has highlighted recent operations of the Colombian police and of the General Attorney Office against the EGC, for example, the capture of AKA "Bernabé" in September 2024, accused of being responsible of the murder of Filadelfo Anzola, a human rights defender member of CREDHOS. But CREDHOS analysis emphasises the involvement of members and retired members of the military forces in the armed group EGC. For instance, in September 2024 a Police operation against the EGC resulted in the killing of AKA "Zeus", a retired member of the Army of Colombia, who until August had been accepted to testify before the transitional justice tribunal (the Special Jurisdiction for Peace – JEP) and who had previously been denounced by CREDHOS as a commander of the EGC in the Magdalena Medio region. Also, the capture by the police of the retired colonel of the Army of Colombia José Alejandro Castro Cadavid, who was an active member of the Army until 2022, and is accused by the General Attorney Office of being a commander of the EGC in the south of the Bolívar department, an area that is part of the Magdalena Medio region.

Amnesty International has confirmed that the threats and victimization of individuals belonging to CREDHOS as a collective have persisted in recent years, in the context of the presence of armed groups in the territory where it works. Amnesty International has warned about this kind of threats issuing urgent actions since at least [2015](#), with concerning events of threats occurring again in [2021](#), [2023](#), [2024](#) and [2025](#), involving threats and attacks from different armed groups.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 September 2026

NAME: CREDHOS

PREVIOUS UA: N/A