

# URGENT ACTION

## DAUGHTER OF COLOMBIAN DEFENDER THREATENED

**Cendy Torres Vergara, the daughter of human rights defender Ingrid Vergara, has received death threats by telephone. Her mother is one of the leaders of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes, MOVICE, in Sucre Department, Northern Colombia.**

On 30 March, **Cendy Torres Vergara** was in school in Sincelejo, Sucre Departement, when she received a call to her mobile phone telling her that she would end up dead on the road.

Cendy Torres has received several death threats over the past years, supposedly in reprisal for her mother's work as a human rights defender. Ingrid Vergara, of the Sucre branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE), has been campaigning against impunity in cases of human rights violations committed by paramilitary groups, who have often operated with the support of the armed forces and local politicians, and on the issue of return of lands stolen during the course of paramilitary operations. On 1 December 2010, armed men entered Ingrid Vergara's home, physically and verbally attacked Cendy Torres, and threatened to kill her. The men left the home after forcefully removing the hard drive of a computer containing work Ingrid had been carrying out related to land issues, specifically documentation for a public meeting scheduled for two days later.

On 10, 11 and 12 March 2011 MOVICE held its fifth national conference calling for an end to impunity. Cendy Torres participated in this conference.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Cendy Torres, Ingrid Vergara and their family and urging the authorities to guarantee their safety in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into all threat including previous death threats against Ingrid Vergara, her daughter Cendy Torres and her colleagues, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligations regarding the situation of human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 MAY 2011 TO:

#### President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos  
 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 and Justice

Señor Germán Vargas Lleras  
 Ministerio Del Interior y De Justicia  
 Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá  
 Colombia

**Fax: +57 1 599 8961**

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

#### **And copies to:**

Movice  
 Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado  
 Calle 38 No 28 A 30  
 Barrio Bogotá  
 Sincelejo, Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 301/09. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/027/2009/en> <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/007/2010/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR23/019/2010/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/036/2010/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/007/2011/en>.

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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## COLOMBIAN DEFENDER'S DAUGHTER THREATENED

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 23 March 2011 Eder Verbel Rocha, a member of MOVICE in Sucre Department killed. (see UA 94/11 AMR 23/007/2011 Colombia).

On 18 May 2010 Rogelio Martínez, one of the leaders of MOVICE in Sucre Department was shot dead. He had been campaigning for the right to truth, justice and reparation for communities forcibly displaced communities during the course of attacks carried out by army-backed paramilitaries in previous years.

On 2 April 2008, unknown men threatened to kill Cendy Torres, supposedly in reprisal for her mother's work as a human rights defender. On 26 October 2009, Cendy Torres received a death threat addressed to Ingrid Vergara.

On 12 October 2010, when Ingrid Vergara was in Majagual Square, in Sincelejo, one of the bodyguards, provided to her by the Ministry of Interior's protection programme, noticed three suspicious men near Ingrid Vergara, talking about the absence of her second bodyguard. When two more men approached Ingrid Vergara on a motorcycle the bodyguard urged her to quickly leave the square. She thinks that they may have been planning to kill her.

On 20 November 2010, Ingrid Vergara received a call on her mobile phone. The caller told her "don't get into land issues" and then hung up after a silence.

MOVICE is a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. Ingrid Vergara and her colleagues in MOVICE have documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups in Sucre department.

The Colombian government has implemented some protection measures for Ingrid Vergara and Cendy Torres, including the provision of bodyguards, a mobile phone and a vehicle, but restrictions on the use of fuel have apparently limited Ingrid Vergara's mobility.

Activists campaigning for the return of lands stolen mainly by paramilitary groups over the course of the conflict have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killings in recent years. Most of these attacks are attributed to paramilitary groups. Guerrilla groups have also targeted human rights defenders and other social activists deemed to be a threat to their interests.

Despite government claims that all paramilitaries demobilized in a government-sponsored programme that began in 2003, such groups continue to operate and commit serious human rights violations against human rights defenders and other civilians. This is sometimes in collusion with the security forces, or with their consent.

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