

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND PROTECTION FOR MAN AND FAMILY

Two men tried to kill Néstor Caudi Barrios on 2 January. He and his family have been subjected to a campaign of intimidation by the police in northern Venezuela since 2003, during which five male members of the family have been killed, allegedly by the police.

Néstor Caudi Barrios was shot by two men on motorbikes on 2 January. The men were wearing civilian clothes and motorcycle helmets. This took place outside the house of Néstor Caudi Barrios' aunt Eloisa Barrios, in the town of Guanayén, in Aragua State, northern Venezuela. He is currently in hospital, awaiting an operation on his arm. According to reports, he has not been provided any protection. The attempted killing was reported to the prosecutor's office in the State of Aragua on 13 January.

The Barrios family has been subjected to a harassment and intimidation from the police since they reported the 12 December 2003 killing of **Narciso Barrios**, allegedly by police officers. At the request of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, members of the Barrios Family have been receiving police protection since June 2004. The protection given to the family has been sporadic and ineffective: four members of the Barrios family have been killed in this time. Prior to the attempted killing of Néstor Caudi Barrios, Wilmer José Flores Barrios was killed in September 2010, Oscar Barrios was killed in October 2009, Luis Barrios was killed in September 2004 and Rigoberto Barrios was killed in January 2005.

The family had reported that one of the police officers accused of the killing of Narciso Barrios was seen outside the house of Eloisa Barrios on 29 November 2010. They reported the incident to the Public Prosecutor's Unit for Victims' Care (Unidad de Atención a la Víctima) on 17 December 2010, but no action was taken.

Néstor Caudi Barrios was a witness to the killing of Narciso Barrios and received multiple death threats by police officers. Néstor Caudi Barrios reported the threats to the authorities who apparently failed to provide him any protection.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Spanish or your own language:

- Demanding that the authorities take decisive action to guarantee the protection of Néstor Caudi Barrios and the Barrios family, in accordance with their wishes;
- Urging the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the attempted killing of Néstor Caudi Barrios;
- Calling on the authorities to reveal what progress has been made in the investigations into the killings of Narciso, Luis and Rigoberto, Oscar and Wilmer José Barrios and into the intimidation and threats reported by the family.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 03 MARCH 2011 TO:

Ministerio de Interior y Justicia

Tareck El Aissami

Ministerio del Interior y Justicia

Avenida Urdaneta Esquina de Platanal

Edificio Interior y Justicia Despacho del

Ministro, Piso 3, Caracas, VENEZUELA

Fax: + 58 (0) 212 506 1557

Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister

Sr. Gobernador del Estado de Aragua

Sr. Rafael Isea

Palacio de Gobierno

Avenida de Miranda, Maracay

Estado de Aragua, VENEZUELA

Fax: + 58 (0)243 233 6186

Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

And copies to:

Comisión de Derechos Humanos de

Justicia y Paz del Estado Aragua

Calle Negro Primero, Oeste

N 98, frente al Liceo 'Valentin Espinal',

Cruce con Av. Ayacucho

Maracay, Estado Aragua, VENEZUELA

Fax: + 58 243 233 6363 (if voice answers, say 'tono de fax, por favor')

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

A campaign of intimidation has been waged against the Barrios family since 12 December 2003, when Narciso Barrios was, according to reports, killed by police officers, days after an argument between Narciso and Aragua State police officers on 30 November 2003. Members of the Barrios family have been arbitrarily arrested, threatened, harassed and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Four other members of the family, were also allegedly killed by police officers. Luis Barrios was shot dead at his home by two hooded men on 20 September 2004. Two days prior to his killing the family had been told by police officers not to be surprised if hooded men paid them a visit. On 9 January 2005, Rigoberto Barrios was shot eight times by two men who were allegedly wearing Aragua State police uniform hats and trousers. Rigoberto Barrios died in hospital ten days later from his wounds.

Oscar Barrios was killed on 28 October 2009. He was shot dead by two armed men who were wearing similar clothes to those worn by police officers. Oscar Barrios had survived an attempt on his life on 18 June 2005, when five unidentified armed men, wearing civilian clothes, reportedly pursued Oscar Barrios and attempted to shoot him as he was leaving the home of Luis Barrios' widow.

On 1 September, 2010, Wilmer José Flores Barrios became the fifth member of the Barrios family to be killed in circumstances suggesting the involvement of members of the Aragua State Police.

Between March and September 2005, members of the Barrios family, including Rigoberto Barrios and Oscar Barrios were detained and ill-treated by police officers before being released with no charge.

Amnesty International is unaware of any progress in the investigations into the murders of Narciso Barrios, Luis Barrios, Wilmer José Flores Barrios and Rigoberto Barrios, nor of investigations into complaints made by the family regarding death threats and intimidation from state police officers.

On 26 July 2010, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights submitted the case of the Barrios family to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The Inter-American Commission concluded that the Venezuelan State had violated the rights to life, physical integrity and freedom of several members of the Barrios family.

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