

URGENT ACTION

PEASANT FARMERS THREATENED, FORCIBLY EVICTED

A leader of the peasant farmers of El Tamarindo, Northern Colombia, received a death threat on 25 March. Days before, several armed men, suspected to be paramilitaries, attacked and threatened peasant farmers of El Tamarindo following the forced eviction of 43 families from their land.

On 25 March Juan Martínez, a leader of the Association of Land Workers (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo, ASOTRACAMPO) was in his home in **El Tamarindo** farm, Galapa municipality, Atlántico Department, when a woman involved with an armed group, suspected to be paramilitaries, threatened “until today you are alive Juancito, we already have the people to kill you” (*Hasta hoy está vivo Juancito, ya tenemos a la gente para que lo maten*).

On 22 March 15 men armed with machetes, suspected to be paramilitaries, blocked the exit road of El Tamarindo farm. They stopped the car in which peasant farmers from El Tamarindo were travelling and tried to drag Juan Martínez out of the car and beat Rainil Marmolejo, also a member of ASOTRACAMPO, who was driving the car. One of the armed men said “be careful, because this is not going to stay like this”. Later that day one of the armed men threatened to burn the houses of the peasant farmers. On 21 March, 43 families of the El Tamarindo farm had been forcibly evicted from the Campo Natasha area following an order from the mayor of Barranquilla.

ASOTRACAMPO represents some of the families living in El Tamarindo. Since 2001 the El Tamarindo farm has been peacefully occupied by 130 families, who had been forcibly displaced in the course of the armed conflict. There have been repeated attempts to force them off the land in El Tamarindo, resulting in the forced eviction of some families in May, June, July and November 2013. On 30 October 2013 they had been declared military targets by the paramilitary group Rastrojos Urban Commands Barranquilla (Rastrojos – Comandos Urbanos Barranquilla).

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to guarantee the safety, in strict accordance with the needs and demands of the families and supporters of El Tamarindo to continue their campaign for the recognition of their rights to the El Tamarindo land;
- Calling on them to order full and impartial investigations into the attack and threats by the armed men, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding the authorities to guarantee the right to an effective remedy to victims of forced evictions and the right of forcibly displaced people living in El Tamarindo to resettlement in conditions of security and dignity in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 MAY 2014 TO:

President

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**

Mayor of Barranquilla

Elsa Noguera
 Alcaldesa de Barranquilla
 Calle 34 No. 43 - 31
 Barranquilla, Colombia
 Fax +57 5 339 9800 (say “deme tono por
 favor”)
**Salutation: Dear Mayor/ Estimada Sra.
 Alcaldesa**

And copies to:

MOVICE Atlántico
 c/o Nevys Niño Rodríguez
 Carrera 21C No 25-42
 Las Nieves
 Barranquilla, Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 103/13. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/051/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Millions of hectares of land have been seized during Colombia's long-running armed conflict, often through violence against the rightful owners, especially Indigenous People, Afro-descendant and peasant farmer communities. The various parties to the conflict – paramilitaries and the security forces, acting either separately or in collusion, and guerrilla groups – have driven over five million people from their homes during the course of Colombia's long-running armed conflict.

Some 130 families who had been forcibly displaced from their homes in Cesar, Córdoba, Magdalena and Sucre departments in the course of Colombia's long-running armed conflict, occupied 120 hectares of the El Tamarindo farm, in Atlántico Department, in 2001. The farm had been abandoned. In 2007, the state authorities announced that a Free Trade Zone would be established in an area including the El Tamarindo farm. In 2008 a local business began legal proceedings claiming ownership of the land.

A group of armed men, suspected to be paramilitaries operating in the area linked to business interests, has repeatedly threatened to kill peasant farmers living in El Tamarindo. The local civilian authorities used the security forces in an unsuccessful attempt to enforce orders to evict the peasant farmers on 28 January 2012; these orders reportedly had been obtained by powerful economic interests who are claiming ownership of the land. This was one of the instances when local armed men threatened the peasant farmers during an attempted eviction.

Narciso Enrique Tehrán Mejía, the son of the vice-president of ASOTRACAMPO was shot dead as he slept on 12 April 2013 in El Tamarindo.

There have been repeated attempts to forcibly evict those living in El Tamarindo, some of them successfully carried out. On 7 November 2013, 28 families were forcibly evicted from their land in the Beitjala area of the El Tamarindo farm by the anti-riot police ESMAD and police. Three people were injured and taken to a hospital following the forced eviction. The peasant farmer families lost their crops and some of their animals. The forced eviction came a few days after death threats by the Rastrojos Urban Commands Barranquilla (Rastrojos – Comandos Urbanos Barranquilla).

Between 9 November 2013 and 10 March 2014 members of the II Brigade of the Military Police set up a post on the El Tamarindo farm. Witnesses in the area report that they have seen the military police and the armed men together and have seen them undertaking joint patrols.

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. Its members have documented and exposed many killings and enforced disappearances carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups.

Name: families of El Tamarindo

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 103/13 Index: AMR 23/013/2014 Issue Date: 27 March 2014