

# URGENT ACTION

## FEARS FOR FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES AFTER KILLING

Human rights defender Mijail Martínez was shot dead on 26 November in Venezuela. He was working on a documentary film that featured the stories of people who have suffered human rights violations at the hands of police officers. There are concerns for the safety of his family and of his colleagues.

Mijail Martínez was allegedly shot dead by two unknown men who had asked to speak to his father, Víctor Martínez, at his home in Barquisimeto, the capital of Lara state in western Venezuela. Mijail Martínez was an audio visual producer working for the Committee of Victims Against Impunity on documenting cases of human rights abuse. The Committee of Victims Against Impunity is a human rights organisation based in Lara that was founded in 2004. Mijael Martínez's father, Víctor Martínez is a former member of the Legislative Council of the state of Lara and he has supported the work of the Committee of Victims Against Impunity since it began.

During Víctor Martínez's tenure at the Legislative Council, he often publicly denounced police officers suspected of acts of corruption and human rights violations. Amnesty International believes that Victor Martinez, and other members of Mijail Martinez's family as well as his colleagues at the Committee of Victims against Impunity are at risk following his killing.

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

- Urging the authorities to guarantee protection for Víctor Martínez and staff at the Committee of Victims against Impunity, in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Mijail Martínez which, appears to be in reprisal for his work as a human rights defender on behalf of relatives of victims of alleged killings and disappearances by police officers in Lara state;
- Reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their legitimate activities without any illegitimate restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- Call on the authorities to reveal what progress has been made into investigations of complaints regarding killings and disappearances by police officers in Lara state.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JANUARY 2010 TO:

#### Minister of Interior and Justice

Ministerio del 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: + 58 212 506 16 85**

Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear  
Minister

#### Governor of Lara State

Gobernador de Lara  
Abg. Henri Falcón Fuentes  
Carrera 19 esquina calle 23.  
Barquisimeto, Estado Lara  
**Email; gobernador@lara.gob.ve**  
**Salutation: Señor**  
**Gobernador/Dear Governor**

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

COFAVIC  
Avenida Urdaneta,  
Esquina El Candilito,  
Edificio El Candil, piso 1, Oficina  
1-A.  
Apartado postal 16150.  
Código postal 1011-A.  
La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela.  
**Fax + 58 212 572 99 08**  
(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

Attacks, threats and harassment of human rights defenders in Venezuela are widespread. Investigations into these allegations are rarely carried out and the authorities do not condemn these grave human rights violations neither do they acknowledge the legitimacy of their work.

Human rights defenders work for the protection and realization of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. They act in many different ways and in different capacities to protect and promote human rights. What they have in common is that they uphold the principle that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or any other status. They also share a commitment to respect the rights and freedoms of others in their own actions. Whatever the particular focus of human rights defenders' work, they are entitled to the full recognition, respect and protection of their rights as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

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