

URGENT ACTION

PEASANT FARMER LINKED TO PEACE COMMUNITY KILLED

Paramilitaries killed a peasant farmer with close links to the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in north-western Colombia. Other peasant farmers in the area have been labelled guerrilla fighters and may therefore be at risk.

On 21 September paramilitaries killed **Ernesto Guzmán** in the hamlet of Mulatos, Apartadó Municipality, Antioquia Department. Although he was not a member of the **Peace Community of San José de Apartadó**, he used to sell them produce and some of his relatives were members of the Peace Community. On 21 September several armed men came to the place where Ernesto Guzmán lived. They shot him and attacked him with a machete. He died as a result of his injuries. According to the Peace Community, paramilitaries have a constant presence in that hamlet and own property next to Ernesto Guzmán's property. About three months ago paramilitaries had urged Ernesto Guzmán to sell his property to them.

On 11 September the same group of paramilitaries stopped peasant farmers from Mulatos who had travelled to the hamlet of Playa Larga to use the threshing machine in that hamlet for their rice. The paramilitaries wore military style fatigues and carried arms. They accused the peasant farmers of Mulatos and La Resbalosa of being guerrilla fighters and told them they were not allowed to pass through Playa Larga. In the past those labelled guerrilla fighters have subsequently been killed or threatened. The presence of paramilitaries in the area persists, despite the heavy presence of the security forces and warnings by Amnesty International and other non-governmental organizations, as well as the Peace Community, who have repeatedly denounced the presence of paramilitaries in the area.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of the members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó and other civilians living in the area;
- Urging the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the killing of Ernesto Guzmán and the threats by and presence of paramilitaries, to bring those responsible to justice and publish the results;
- Reminding them that civilians, including the San José de Apartadó Peace Community and other civilians living in the area, have the right to not be drawn into the armed conflict;
- Urging them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated government commitments.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

President

Señor 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

Defence Minister
 Señor Luis Carlos Villegas
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Carrera 54, no.26-29
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 266 1003

Salutation: Dear Minister /

Sr. Ministro
And copies to:
Peace Community
 Comunidad de Paz de
 San José de Apartadó
 AA 243 de Apartadó
 Antioquia, 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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó is made up of people living in a number of hamlets in the municipality of Apartadó, in Antioquia Department, north-western Colombia, who maintain their right to not be drawn into Colombia's armed conflict and refuse to take sides with any of the parties to the conflict. They refuse to bear arms or provide information or logistical support to either side. In return, the members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó demand that the parties to the conflict stay out of their communities and respect their decision not to participate in or to collaborate with the warring parties.

Since the Peace Community was established on 23 March 1997, more than 200 of its members have been killed or subjected to enforced disappearance, while others have been threatened or sexually assaulted. Those in the Peace Community are in constant danger. The majority of those killed lost their lives at the hands of paramilitaries, who operate with the support and acquiescence of members of the armed forces in the area. Guerrilla forces have also killed members of the Peace Community. Over the last decade many civilians who are not members of the Peace Community, but have links to them or live in the area, have also been killed.

Civilians who maintain their right not to be drawn into Colombia's armed conflict are met with suspicion and hostility from the army, the paramilitaries, and guerrilla groups.

Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly began demobilizing in 2005 under the Justice and Peace Law, but it is clear from the killing of human rights defenders, and the threats against them and other vulnerable sectors of civilian society in different parts of the country, that they are still operating. Under the Justice and Peace Law they received a maximum of eight years in prison in return for confessing their responsibility in human rights violations and handing over stolen assets, including land, to their rightful owners. However, since the start of the process only relatively few paramilitaries have been convicted of human rights violations. Those paramilitaries who have served the maximum eight years in prison stipulated under the law are now eligible for conditional release. However, the legal processes against the vast majority of those who have applied for conditional release have not been concluded. There is concern that effective measures are not being put in place to ensure that these paramilitaries do not pose a threat to their victims and others in the communities to which they return.

Name: Ernesto Guzmán (m), members of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó and other civilians living in the area
Gender m/f: both