

# URGENT ACTION

## COMMUNITY LEADERS ACCUSED OF 'TERRORISM'

**Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco, community leaders in San Pablo de Amalí, central Ecuador, are facing unsubstantiated charges of organized terrorism. These criminal proceedings appear to be an attempt to silence their campaigning to demand their community's right to consultation on the construction of a hydroelectric plant which they claim will affect the community's right to water.**

**Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco** have been accused of committing organized terrorism, a charge which carries a maximum sentence of eight years in prison. The hearing against them is due to start on 19 January. They are charged in relation to an attack on four police officers travelling in a vehicle on 14 August 2012. Local human rights organizations state that clashes broke out that morning between the police and community members in San Pablo de Amalí, Bolívar Province, and community members complained of excessive use of police force. The attack on the vehicle occurred in the evening when community members confronted a police officer who had fired his gun into the air. According to eye witnesses, neither Manuel Trujillo nor Manuela Pacheco were present at the time of the attack on the vehicle. They are awaiting the outcome of the trial on bail.

Local human rights organizations claim that the Public Prosecutor's Office has failed to present any solid evidence to prove that Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco were present and responsible or involved in the attack against the police officers, and based the charges on statements by police officers who claimed they were both present during the attack.

Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco are both well-known community leaders in San Pablo de Amalí who have campaigned highlighting concerns on the implementation of the Hidrotambo hydroelectric plant, which they believe will negatively impact on the community's right to water. They have also complained at the lack of participation and consultation with those affected. The unsubstantiated charges against them seem to be an attempt to silence them and put an end to the community's long-standing opposition to the hydroelectric project.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Expressing concern that the criminal proceedings against Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco appear to be an attempt to silence their campaigning to demand their community's right to consultation on the construction of a hydroelectric project which they claim will affect their right to water;
- Urging the authorities to drop the unsubstantiated charges against Manuel Trujillo and Manuela Pacheco;
- Urging them to ensure the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and acknowledging the state has a duty to maintain public order.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 FEBRUARY 2016 TO:**

#### Provincial Prosecutor of Bolívar

Dr. Manuel Sanchez Guillén  
Fiscalía Provincial de Bolívar  
Calle Cándido Rada y 9 de Abril  
Guaranda, Ecuador  
Fax: +593 3 2980 619 / +593 3 2985 666  
/ +593 3 2984 953

**Salutation: Dear Fiscal Provincial/Sr.  
Fiscal Provincial**

#### Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Workshop

Dra. Ledy Zúñiga Rocha  
Ministerio de Justicia, Derechos  
Humanos y Cultos  
Av. Colón entre Diego de Almagro y  
Reina Victoria  
Quito, Ecuador  
Email: comunicacion@minjusticia.gob.ec  
**Salutation: Dear Minister/Sra. Ministra**

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

Local human rights NGO  
INREDH  
Avenida 10 de Agosto N34-80 y  
Rumipamba. Piso 1  
(Frente a la parada El Florón, del  
Trolebus)  
Quito, Ecuador

**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

In 2002 the Ecuadorian State granted a private company the concession for the construction of the Hidrotambo hydroelectric plant in an area where seventy *campesino* (peasant farmer) and Indigenous communities live in San Pablo de Amalí, Bolívar Province. Soon after, the San Pablo de Amalí community raised concerns about the impact of the project on the community's right to water, the possible displacement of people due to floods and the lack of consultation about the project, especially with regards to the Environmental Impact Study. According to local human rights organizations, between 2006 and 2008, several clashes took place between the community and the company and security forces, as community members protested against the building work. Leaders and community members were charged with various crimes, including sabotage, terrorism, and rebellion. Among them was Manuel Trujillo, who had 30 legal proceedings opened against him during this period. He was later part of a congressional amnesty and cleared of all charges.

The hydroelectric project was then suspended for four years until 2012. The community's concerns about the project remained when the project was reactivated. They also complained of several incidents in 2012 in which the company entered their land without prior notification or consent. The building work of the project is now completed. Although the hydroelectric plant is not operational, the river flow has been diverted closer to the community. In March 2015 the river overflowed, causing three deaths and damage to the houses and crops of some community members.

Amnesty International has raised concerns that in recent years in Ecuador, spurious criminal charges have been brought against Indigenous and *campesino* leaders, in what appears to be a deliberate attempt to curb their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association. The organization has documented cases of leaders who have been charged with criminal offences such as terrorism, sabotage, illicit association, kidnapping, murder, causing injury, robbery, trespassing and illegal obstruction of public roads in the context of protests against laws and policies, particularly those that relate to natural resources (see the report: '*So that no one can demand anything*': *Criminalizing the right to protest in Ecuador?*, <https://www.amnesty.org/es/documents/amr28/002/2012/en> and Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/1604/2015/en/>).

Name: Manuel Trujillo (m) and Manuela Pacheco (f)  
Gender m/f: both

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