

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - PUBLIC STATEMENT

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ECUADORIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM MUST ACT WITH DUE DILIGENCE IN INVESTIGATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Salomé Aranda, an Indigenous woman and human rights and environmental defender, member of the Amazonian Women collective, has repeatedly been a victim of gender-based violence. According to the information received by the organization, on 29 October Salomé Aranda was physically and psychologically attacked and when she responded to her partner's assault, he reported her to the police. Since that day Salomé Aranda has been detained and sentenced to 10 days in prison for domestic violence in an expedited process established in the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code. Salomé Aranda's defence counsel is awaiting written notification of the judgment in order to appeal it.

In the context of her detention, Salomé and her partner received a medical examination that established three days of incapacity for both for the injuries suffered, however they did not receive a psychological examination. Salomé Aranda's defence counsel indicates that in the context of the proceedings against her, her condition as a woman victim of gender-based violence has not been taken into account, not her Indigenous identity, worldview and interculturality in accordance with the Ecuadorian constitution, therefore her defence counsel has lodged a writ of habeas corpus today challenging what it considers to be the unlawful deprivation of her liberty.

In regard to her detention and sentencing, the Amazonian Women stated, "we, as woman defenders, are the custodians of our communities and territories in the face of the expansion of extractive industries. However, we are exposed to situations of patriarchal violence both in our homes and in our territory due to our political work. In Salomé's case, her environmental activism has led to attacks and threats against her that remain unpunished by the Ecuadorian justice system".

The Ecuadorian authorities must respect the right to due process without any type of discrimination. In this case in particular, this means taking into account the specific conditions faced by Salomé Aranda as an Indigenous woman with limited resources and a survivor of gender-based violence, which puts her in a particular situation of vulnerability due to the context of structural discrimination that she is subjected to.

Amnesty International also remains concerned about the lack of progress in relation to the attacks and threats that Salomé Aranda faced for her work to defend human rights related to the environment. In the early hours of the morning of 13 May 2018, several unidentified individuals attacked Salomé Aranda and her family with stones and threatened them while they were in their home. Despite having filed a complaint, more than two years after the incident occurred the Pastaza Regional Prosecutor's Office has not managed to identify the material or intellectual perpetrators of the attack nor has there been any indication of a significant advance in the investigation, therefore the incident remains unpunished.

Amnesty International reminds the Ecuadorian judicial authorities that their obligation to act with due diligence in investigating and punishing human rights violations also applies to all cases of domestic violence.