

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS OF WATER AT RISK

Members of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water are facing death threats because of their work defending the right to water in Petorca Province, central Chile.

On 28 March, an unidentified person threatened human rights defender **Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera**, calling him on the telephone and stating: “we are going to kill you motherfucker, we will kill you”. Rodrigo Mundaca is a member and spokesperson of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water (Movimiento de Defensa por el Acceso al Agua, la Tierra y la Protección del Medio Ambiente, MODATIMA) in Petorca Province, Chile.

He and other MODATIMA members have faced threats in previous years. In March 2015, unidentified people physically attacked Rodrigo Mundaca from behind. **Verónica del Carmen Vilches Olivares**, another member of MODATIMA, told Amnesty International that unidentified people have verbally threatened her from inside vehicles without license plates, saying: “When are you going to stop with the fucking water?”. The last threat she reported receiving was on 10 March 2017.

Members of MODATIMA are afraid to leave their houses because they fear these death threats will become reality. Rodrigo Mundaca told Amnesty International that defenders of water in Petorca face serious obstacles being hired and are losing their jobs because of their work opposing the illegal extraction of water in the region.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to provide protection measures to Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera, Verónica del Carmen Vilches Olivares and other members of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water, in consultation with them and in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on them to initiate prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the threats made against members of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and for the Access to Water, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to publicly recognize the important and legitimate work of human rights defenders working to promote the right to water.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 MAY 2017 TO:

Minister of Interior and Public Security

Mario Fernández Baeza
Palacio de La Moneda,
Santiago de Chile, Chile
Email: rfernandez@interior.gov.cl
Twitter: @min_interior

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Señor Ministro

Attorney General

Jorge Abbott Charne
General Mackenna 1369, Santiago,
Región Metropolitana, Chile
Email: gabinetefn@minpublico.cl
Twitter: @FiscaliadeChile

Salutation: Dear Attorey General/Estimado Señor Fiscal

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 Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water is working to make visible the illegal extraction of water as well as its impacts on rural communities in Petorca Province, central Chile, a region that has been seriously impacted by water scarcity. Rodrigo Mundaca lives in the area and in 2012, he began to denounce politicians and businesses' illegal extraction of water in the zone. As a result, authorities initiated four criminal cases against the defender. One of the cases resulted in a sentence of 61 days in prison, suspended under the condition that Rodrigo Mundaca would present himself monthly to the Chilean police for a year.

Latin America is the most dangerous region in the world for human rights defenders working on issues related to the environment, land and territory. These defenders are frequently the targets of threats, monitoring and surveillance and arbitrarily subjected to criminal proceedings for their activities. They are criminalized, stigmatized, declared the enemies of development and even accused of terrorism. Excessive force is used against them, for example during evictions by state security forces or to disperse public protests.

Chile is not an exception to this pattern. Amnesty International has confirmed the existence of intimidations against attorneys providing legal assistance to Indigenous Mapuche human rights defenders (see Amnesty International's *Speak out for defenders!* online platform: <http://speakout4defenders.com/en/single/58484d0fde7ed16d3aba1898>) and attacks on Mapuche human rights defenders (see: <http://speakout4defenders.com/en/single/58484aa8de7ed16d3aba1897>).

Name: Rodrigo Mundaca Cabrera (m), Verónica del Carmen Vilches Olivares (f), and other members of the Defence Movement of Earth, Environmental Protection and Access to Water

Gender m/f: all

UA: 82/17 Index: AMR 22/6028/2017 Issue Date: 5 April 2017