

URGENT ACTION

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS NGO THREATENED

Iván Madero Vergel, the director of the non-governmental human rights organization Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CREDHOS), based in Barrancabermeja, northern Colombia, has been threatened twice in recent days.

On 25 June the secretary of the non-governmental human rights organization Regional Human Rights Corporation (Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, **CREDHOS**), based in the city of Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, received a threatening telephone call. The caller, apparently referring to CREDHOS president **Iván Madero Vergel**, stated: "Tell that son-of-a-bitch that he should stop getting involved in investigations which have nothing to do with him; we are going to burn his ass", (*dígale a ese hp, que deje de estar metiéndose en investigaciones que no le interesan; que le vamos a quemar el culo*). This threat followed another call made on 23 June in which the anonymous caller told CREDHOS's secretary "tell that son-of-a-bitch that he is going to die" (*dígale a ese perro hijueputa que se va a morir*).

Over recent months CREDHOS has actively denounced the ongoing and strengthening presence of paramilitary groups operating in Barrancabermeja. These groups have been responsible for numerous killings in the city. Currently, the paramilitary group known as Los Urabeños Gaitanistas has a dominant presence in many parts of the city.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Iván Madero Vergel and other members of CREDHOS;
- Calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the threats and to take all necessary measures to guarantee their safety, in accordance with their wishes;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Urging them to dismantle paramilitary groups and break any links with the security forces in line with repeated United Nations recommendations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 AUGUST 2015 TO:

President

Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República
 Casa de Nariño
 Calle 7. No 6-54.
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631

**Salutation: Dear President Santos/
 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

Minister of Interior

Juan Fernando Cristo
 Calle 12B No 8-46, Primer Piso
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 283 9876

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Estimado
 Sr. Ministro**

And copies to:

Human rights organization

CREDHOS
 Av. 52 No. 25-49
 Barrancabermeja, Santander
 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

CREDHOS is a regional human rights organization campaigning for justice for human rights violations around Barrancabermeja and the Magdalena Medio area. Over the years, members of CREDHOS have repeatedly faced death threats. David Ravelo Crespo, a member of CREDHOS, has been detained by the authorities, accused of links with guerrilla groups, since September 2010. Human rights organizations have expressed concerns that the case against David Ravelo is part of an effort to discredit and silence CREDHOS. The organization has played a key role in campaigning for justice in cases of human rights violations committed by paramilitaries operating in collusion with the security forces and directly by the security forces. Criminal investigations into paramilitary involvement in these crimes have advanced as a result of this work and several paramilitaries have been detained.

The security forces and paramilitary groups have frequently labelled human rights organizations including members of CREDHOS as guerrilla collaborators or supporters. In this context, CREDHOS members have been repeatedly threatened by paramilitaries. Numerous human rights defenders have been killed after being labelled guerrilla sympathizers.

Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders and trade unionists who they consider to be siding with their enemies.

Over the last year there have been repeated death threats against human rights organizations in Barrancabermeja, including human rights NGOs, trade unions and members of the LGBTI movement.

Name: Iván Madero Vergel

Gender m/f: m

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