

URGENT ACTION

FORMER MAYOR KILLED AHEAD OF ELECTIONS

Benicio Flor Belalcazar, the former mayor of Suárez Municipality, who had been active in the current local election campaign was killed by two armed men. His wife survived the attack but there are concerns for the safety of members of their community and candidates in local and regional elections, scheduled to take place on 25 October.

On 11 October the social and political leader **Benicio Flor Belalcazar** was killed. He was the former mayor of Suárez Municipality, Cauca Department, and a member of the Indigenous community of Cerro Tijeras. In recent weeks he had been supporting the campaign of **César Lizardo Cerón**, a candidate in the Suárez mayoral election.

On the morning of 11 October Benicio Flor Belalcazar left his farm in the hamlet of Senderito, Suárez Municipality, on a motorbike with his wife **Deysi Grajales**, when two armed men on another motorbike stopped them in the Montañita area. One of the men fired six shots at Benicio Flor Belalcazar, killing him with a shot to the head. Deysi Grajales survived the attack. A few days earlier on 6 October, Benicio Flor Belalcazar had received a threatening phone call. His son **Eider Flor** is a leader of the Indigenous community of Cerro Tijeras.

According to the NGO Electoral Observation Mission (Misión de Observación Electoral, MOE) there have been six killings, 50 threats, one enforced disappearance and several attacks against government officials, candidates and campaign staff since 25 July in the context of the local and regional elections in Colombia.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Deysi Grajales, Eider Flor and other members of the Indigenous community of Cerro Tijeras in northern Cauca Department, as well as César Lizardo Cerón and other candidates in the 25 October elections, and urging the authorities to guarantee their safety in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Benicio Flor Belalcazar and the threats against Indigenous Peoples in northern Cauca Department, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 NOVEMBER 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:

NGOs
 NOMADESC
 Carrera 4-53,
 Barrio San Antonio
 Cali, 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

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict between left-wing guerrillas and the security forces, which at times operate in collusion with paramilitaries, members of opposition parties, human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been threatened, subjected to enforced disappearance or killed. Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2005, but there is overwhelming evidence that they are still operating and committing human rights violations.

César Céron, whose campaign Benicio Flor Belalcazar was supporting, is a candidate for the Independent Social Alliance party (Alianza Social Independiente). Candidates and politicians who belong to opposition parties campaigning for socio-economic rights have over the years faced serious human rights problems. Since 1985, when it was formed, thousands of members of the Patriotic Union party (Unión Patriótica, UP) have been killed, the majority by paramilitaries. The UP is again contesting elections, after having lost its official status as a political party. There have also been reports that candidates and activists belonging to the political movement Patriotic March (Marcha Patriótica), which was formally established in 2012, have been killed and threatened.

Formal peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) have been taking place in Havana, Cuba, since 2012. On 23 September 2015 the government and the FARC announced an agreement on the issue of transitional justice and that a peace deal would be signed no later than 23 March 2016. The FARC has agreed to lay down its arms 60 days later.

Benicio Flor Belalcazar was a leader for the Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities living in the area of the Salvajina Dam and involved in capacity building of activists in these communities. His son Eider Flor actively participates in the campaign for adequate compensation for the socio-economic and environmental impact of the construction of the Salvajina Hydroelectric Dam. Several Indigenous and Afro-descendant community leaders have been killed and threatened since the dam was built in the 1980s as a result of their campaigns on this issue.

Name: Benicio Flor Belalcazar (m), Deysi Grajales (f), Eider Flor (m), César Céron (m), other candidates and people involved in the political campaign, and other members of the Cerro Tijeras community.

Gender m/f: both