

# URGENT ACTION

## PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS AT RISK

On 8 February, unidentified persons distributed threatening pamphlets giving 72 hours for Luis Alberto González López to leave the territory before becoming a military objective near the place of his residence in the city of Barrancabermeja. Luis González López is the vice-president of FEDEPESAN, an organization that protects the environment in the Magdalena medio region (central Colombia). The pamphlet was signed by the National Liberation Army (ELN). Since September 2020, armed groups sent at least 5 life threatening messages to the members of FEDEPESAN. We urge the Ministry of Interior to grant FEDEPESAN members collective protection measures consulted and agreed with their members.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Daniel Palacios*  
*Director of the Minister of interior*  
Carrera 8 No. 7 - 83,  
Bogotá D.C., Colombia  
Email: [daniel.palacios@mininterior.gov.co](mailto:daniel.palacios@mininterior.gov.co)  
Twitter: @DanielPalam

*Dear Mr. Palacios*

*I am writing to express concern for the safety of the members of the Federation of Artisanal, Environmental and Tourist Fishermen of the Department of Santander (Federación de Pescadores artesanales, ambientalistas, y turísticos del departamento de Santander, FEDEPESAN) an environmental organization that defends the water and ecosystems in their region.*

*Since September 2020, their members received at least 5 life threats, the last one on 8 February, when unidentified persons distributed a threatening pamphlet near to FEDEPESAN Vice President house, notifying him that he had 72 hours to leave the territory before becoming a militant target of the National Liberation Army, ELN.*

**We urge you to grant FEDEPESAN members collective protection measurement, in consultation and in agreement with their members.**

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Federation of Artisanal, Environmental and Tourist Fishermen of the Department of Santander -FEDEPESAN- (Federación de Pescadores artesanales, ambientalistas, y turísticos del departamento de Santander) is an organization that defends the environment in the department of Santander. FEDEPESAN had made public complaints about the contamination of the Ciénaga San Silvestre in the municipality of Barrancabermeja (northeast Colombia). The Ciénaga San Silvestre, supply water to around 300.000 persons of the Magdalena Medio region.

Due to their work various members of FEDEPESAN are victim of dead threats and security incidents, some of the latest are:

- On September 13, 2020, Luis Alberto González (Vice President of FEDEPESAN) found nearby his residence a small box with a toad with its throat slit inside and a note with the text "soon you will die. From the ELN" (Próximamente se va a morir. ATT comandante del ELN).
- On October 14, 2020, unidentified armed persons followed Luis González while he was traveling in the rural area of the municipality of Barrancabermeja.
- On January 20, 2021, Unknown people approached Yuly Andrea Velasquez Briceño, President of FEDEPESAN) house, and made gun shots. Yuly and her family were at home and they hid while they called the police. The armed persons left before the police arrived to her home.
- On November 04, 2020, 14 regional environmental leaders including the Vice President of FEDEPESAN, Luis Gonzalez, received a pamphlet, allegedly from the armed group Black Eagles stating "*You have 24 hour to leave the territory or else you will be declared as military target and killed by our units*" ("*A partir de la fecha tiene 24 horas para que desocupe el territorio o de lo contrario serán declarados objetivos militares y dados de baja por nuestras unidades*").

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for those who protect the land, the territory, and the environment. Human rights defenders risk their lives every day to protect their communities and to defend our natural resources. Due to their work the life of their families is at risk.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 9 March 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Member of FEDEPESAN (Them, They)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** N/A