

URGENT ACTION

POLICE BREAK UP PEACEFUL PROTESTS VIOLENTLY

The police violently dispersed a peaceful protest against corruption in the Dominican Republic's capital, Santo Domingo, on 24 November. Protestors are at risk of further attacks as they plan to continue demonstrating.

About 30 people from the anti-corruption coalition of civil society organizations Citizens' Power (Poder Ciudadano) staged a peaceful human chain protest on 24 November outside the institution in charge of supervising the construction of public buildings, the Office of Engineers Supervising the State's Public Works (Oficina de Ingenieros Supervisores de Obras del Estado – OISOE) in the capital, Santo Domingo, at around 4pm. An hour later, more than 100 police officers broke up the demonstration violently, using pepper spray on some of the protesters.

According to the president of the human rights organization National Commission of Human Rights (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos – CNDH), who was among the demonstrators, the police made no attempt to negotiate with the demonstrators and immediately used force on them.

Citizens' Power has been holding demonstrations every Wednesday afternoon to call for an investigation into allegations made at the end of September that several OISOE officers are corrupt. The Ministry of the Interior and the police have repeatedly refused to allow these demonstrations to be held outside the OISOE and confined them to a nearby area, despite a judgement by the Administrative Supreme Court recognizing the protestors' right to demonstrate peacefully outside the office. The demonstration on 24 November had been organized without giving notice to the authorities, in protest at their refusal to comply with the court ruling. Citizens' Power is planning to continue holding human chains on Wednesdays and surprise protests. They fear further repression by the police.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern to the Dominican authorities that police violently dispersed a peaceful demonstration on 24 November in Santo Domingo;
- Urging the authorities to investigate this promptly and independently, through the chain of command, and bring those suspected of responsibility to justice in fair trials before ordinary civilian courts.
- Calling on them to comply with the Administrative Supreme Court's ruling that peaceful demonstrations can be organized outside the OISOE office, and ensure that the protestors' right to freedom of assembly is fully respected, protected and fulfilled.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JANUARY 2016 TO:

President of the Republic

Danilo Medina
Palacio Nacional
Avenida México esquina Doctor Delgado
Gazcue, Santo Domingo
Dominican Republic
Fax: +1809 682 0827
Email: prensa2@presidencia.gob.do
Twitter: @PresidenciaRD

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

Minister of Interior and Police

José Ramón Fadul
Av. México esq. Leopoldo Navarro
Edificio de Oficinas Gubernamentales
Juan Pablo Duarte
Santo Domingo, República Dominicana
Email: info@mip.gob.do
Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister

And copies to:

Poder Ciudadano
Email: podciudadanord@gmail.com

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

Investigative journalists revealed allegations of corruption and wrongdoing by the OISOE, at the end of September 2015, after the suicide of one of the architects working for the institution. The Office of the Prosecutor General has opened an investigation and two officials are in pre-trial detention. Since the allegations were revealed, Citizens' Power has been holding peaceful assemblies outside the OISOE calling for a thorough investigation of all those involved in the alleged corruption and for the institution to be closed.

The National Commission for Human Rights has announced its intention to file a judicial complaint against the National Police general who ordered the violent dispersal of the demonstration on 24 November.

Dominican human rights organizations frequently report allegations of excessive use of force by the National Police, including in policing demonstrations.

Amnesty International's October 2011 report "*Shut up if you don't want to be killed*" *Human rights violations by police in Dominican Republic* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr27/002/2011/en/>) documented numerous cases of crimes under international law and human rights violations committed every year by the police in the Dominican Republic, including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances.

Dominican authorities have acknowledged the need to reform the police. A draft law for police reform was introduced in parliament in May 2013, but has yet to be adopted.

Names: Peaceful protesters

Gender m/f: both

UA: 271/15 Index: AMR 27/2945/2015 Issue Date: 27 November 2015