

PUBLIC

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UA 83/08 Fear for safety/Death Threats

COLOMBIA Frank William Cayapur Delgado (m)] Members of the *Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y*
Edward Mina Cuero (m)] *Paz, Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission*
Yimi Armando Jansoy Muñoz (m)]

Isabelino Valencia (m), Member of the Naya river basin Community Council

An army-backed paramilitary group calling itself the "Black Eagles" has sent death threats to the four human rights defenders named above, who have been helping Afro-descendant communities living in the Naya river basin area, located in the western departments of Cauca and Valle de Cauca, to secure the ownership of the land they farm. They are in grave danger.

Three of the group work for the non-governmental human rights organization Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz, Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission. Isabelino Valencia is a member of the Naya river basin Community Council. In the Afro-Colombian areas holding collective title to land, the Community Councils are responsible for regulating local affairs, including the control of resources.

Isabelino Valencia received a call on his mobile phone on 24 March at 7pm, from a man who told him, "We are following you. Watch what you say." (*nosotros los estamos siguiendo cuiden lo que hablan y dicen*). Before this, three death threats had been delivered to the house in the municipality of San Francisco Naya, department of Valle del Cauca, where the members of *Justicia y Paz* were living. The first arrived on 19 March at approximately 1am, and included drawings of a skull and of a gravestone. It read: "Death. Read on and take heed, *Justicia y Paz*. After monitoring your work we ask you to leave the area as we do not want any obstacles. William we know a lot about you. Eduar Yimy you should take care of yourself and know that we are also following that big mouth, Isabelino. Leave the area soon. We do not want you and we are talking seriously. We are the para [military] group in control - the Naya Black Eagles in Buenaventura. We are waiting for you." *Muerte. lease y cumplase justicia y paz. por el seguimiento realizado a su trabajo les pedimos el favor de salir de la zona no queremos obstáculos. William sabemos mucho de uste (sic.), eduar yimy mejor protejense, y sepan que al bocón de isabelino tambien lo seguimos. salgan pronto no respondemos no recochamos no los queremos. somos el grupo de control para-el naya aguilas negras en buenaventura. los esperamos.*)

Two similar letters were delivered shortly afterwards. One was found in the backyard at around 10am the same day; the other was found on one of the window ledges the following day.

The four human rights defenders have sought refuge outside the area, but intend to return. The death threats are aimed not only at them personally, but at the work of *Justicia y Paz* helping Afro-descendant communities to secure their rights to their land. If the organization is driven out, the communities will be far more vulnerable to paramilitary attack.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Legislation was passed in the 1990s that allowed Afro-descendant communities to have their ownership of their land formally recognised. Many of the communities, including those of the Naya river basin, have sought to use this legislation to secure ownership of land on which their communities have lived for many years. They have faced repeated death threats from paramilitaries and the security forces. Paramilitaries have forced them

to grow coca to produce cocaine and have reportedly occupied some of their land. There have been similar reports of guerrilla groups targeting Afro-descendant communities living on the Pacific coast. The communities, together with *Justicia y Paz* and other human rights organizations working in the area, have attempted to assert their right as civilians not to be drawn into the security forces and paramilitary groups' conflict with guerrilla forces. The government claims that paramilitary groups have all demobilized, but they are still operating.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for *Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz* members Frank William Cayapur Delgado, Edward Mina Cuero and Yimi Armando Jansoy Muñoz, and also Isabelino Valencia, who have received death threats because of their work on behalf of Afro-descendant communities in the departments of Valle del Cauca and Cauca;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all four are protected in accordance with their own wishes;
- calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups and investigate and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890 / 342 0592

Salutation: Dear President Uribe/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Minister of the National Defence

Sr. Juan Manuel Santos, Ministro de Defensa Nacional

Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52 OFI. 217

Centro Administrativo Nacional (CAN), Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 266 03 51 (when voice answers, ask: "me da tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Sir/Estimado Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental human rights organization

Justicia y Paz Intereclesial

Calle 61 A, No. 17-26

Bogotá, Colombia

Human Rights Ombudsman

Sr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz, Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 oficina 301, Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 May 2008.