

URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNIONISTS RECEIVE MORE DEATH THREATS

Several trade unionists in the mining industry have received further death threats from Colombian paramilitaries.

On 1 April the paramilitary group "Rastrojo Urban Commands" (Los Rastrojos - Comandos Urbanos) sent an email with death threats which named dozens of individuals including many trade union members and human rights defenders, as well as dozens of organizations and trade unions. The individuals and organizations named were declared military targets and accused of having links to guerrilla forces.

Amongst those threatened were the following members of the Colombian Union of Workers of the Mining, Petrochemical, Agro-Fuels and Energy Industries (Sindicato Nacional de la Industria Minera, Petroquímica, Agrocombustible y Energética, SINTRAMIENERGETICA): **Edgar Muñoz Araujo, Henry Ayala, Ricardo Machado, Cesar Florez, Juan Aguas Romero, Rubén Morrón Guerrero, Luis Manuel Mendoza, Yonis Ojeda Lobo, Miguel Corvacho Ortiz, Sabas Brito Mendoza, Horacio Llanos, and Sergio Becerra Moreno.** The death threat also named the National Trade Union of Coal Industry Workers (Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Industria de Carbón, SINTRACARBON). Since the beginning of this year members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA and SINTRACARBON have been subject to repeated death threats from paramilitaries. These death threats follow recent labour disputes in the coal mining industry.

This follows death threats made against Ricardo Machado and **Wilder Martínez**, president and treasurer of the La Jagua de Ibérico Branch of SINTRAMIENERGETICA on 3 March.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA including those named above and for members of SINTRACARBON;
- Demand that the authorities provide protection for those threatened in accordance with their wishes;
- Urge the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the death threats, and to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urge them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MAY 2013 TO:

President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República, Palacio de
 Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26,
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631 (keep trying)

Salutation: Dear President

Santos/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos

Labour Minister

Rafael Pardo Rueda
 Ministerio de Trabajo
 Carrera 14, No.99-33
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 489 3900 ext 2320

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado

Ministro

And copies to:

SINTRAMIENERGETICA

Calle 34 No. 44 - 63
 Piso 9
 Oficina 9A
 Barranquilla
 Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 66/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/013/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict between the left-wing guerrillas and the armed forces, which at times operate in collusion with paramilitaries, members of 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 2003, but it is clear from the threats against human rights organizations and trade unions that they are still operating.

Colombia has one of the highest rates of killings of trade unionists in the world. Trade unionists face repeated death threats or are killed during labour disputes and during campaigns for improvement of their pay and working conditions. They have been repeatedly threatened and many have been extrajudicially executed or subjected to enforced disappearance by paramilitaries either acting alone or in collusion with the security forces. In addition, the security forces and paramilitaries often accuse trade unionists of being guerrilla sympathizers or auxiliaries. Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for killing and threatening those they accuse of collaborating with their enemies.

For many years members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA have been killed and have received death threats by paramilitaries while the union has been seeking the improvement of working conditions. Over recent months members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA and SINTRACARBON have been the target of paramilitary death threats in the context of labour disputes.

Name: Edgar Muñoz Araujo (m), Henry Ayala (m), Ricardo Machado (m), Cesar Florez (m), Juan Aguas Romero (m), Rubén Morrón Guerrero (m), Luis Manuel Mendoza (m), Yonis Ojeda Lobo (m), Miguel Corvacho Ortiz (m), Sabas Brito Mendoza (m), Horacio Llanos (m), Sergio Becerra Moreno (m), Wilder Martínez (m), other human rights defenders and trade unionist named individually or as part of an organization

Gender m/f: male and female

Further information on UA: 66/13 Index: AMR 23/016/2013 Issue Date: 4 April 2013