

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Colombia: Two women must be released immediately**

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate release, as well as respect for the lives and personal safety, of Élide Parra Alfonso and Gina Paola Uribe Villamizar, who have been held hostage since 24 July 2012. A communiqué sent to family members on 30 July in the name of the National Liberation Army (Ejército Nacional de Liberación, ELN) guerrilla group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. Subsequently a video was issued to the media in which gunmen with ELN insignia are seen guarding the two women.

Elida Parra Alfonso, a journalist from Radio Sarare, was kidnapped on 24 July from her home in Saravena Municipality, Arauca Department in northern Colombia. Gina Paola Uribe Villamizar, an environmental engineer, was kidnapped in the same municipality on the same day. Both work for the Oleoducto Bicentenario de Colombia project, an oil pipeline that is being built to transport crude oil to export it via Colombia's Caribbean ports.

Amnesty International expresses its concerns for the safety of the two women being held and calls on the authorities to take, with the agreement of the women's relatives, the necessary measures to ensure their immediate release and the protection of their lives and personal safety.

Amnesty International condemns hostage-taking and the unlawful holding of individuals. Hostage-taking is a serious breach of international humanitarian law. We are calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the women and any other civilians being held by the parties to the Colombian armed conflict. Amnesty International also calls on the authorities to identify those responsible for this and other cases of kidnapping and hostage-taking and ensure that they are brought to justice.

This kidnapping comes at a time when flyers announcing "social cleansing" by the Black Eagles (Águilas Negras) paramilitary group have been circulated in Arauca Department. These death threats label several local government authorities as guerrilla supporters.