

# URGENT ACTION

## COLOMBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS THREATENED LGBTI activists, trade unionists, victims associations and human rights defenders in Barrancabermeja, Northern Colombia, have received death threats from paramilitaries.

On 18 August a flyer produced by the paramilitary group "Rastrojos Comandos Urbanos", which contained death threats, was left at the office of Colombian NGO Gente en Acción (People in Action) in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department. Several activists, including the LGBTI activist **Ovidio Nieto Jaraba** of People in Action, **William Mendoza**, president of the Barrancabermeja branch of the Colombian Union of Food Industry Workers (Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Sistema Agroalimentario, SINALTRAINAL) and **Himad Abdala Choser**, a local human rights defender, were named in the leaflet and accused of "provoking and organizing protest marches" and supporting guerrillas. It also stated that "there will be no more threats but actions [...] we are regaining the control of all entities" and appeared to issue those named with a death sentence. These are the latest of several threats following an LGBTI march which took place in Barrancabermeja on 27 July.

Other local organisations were also threatened in the flyer: the Regional Human Rights Corporation (Corporación Regional para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CREDHOS), the Association of Victims of State Crimes in Magdalena Medio Region (Asociación de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado del Magdalena Medio, ASORVIMM), the Peasant Farmer Association of the Cimitarra River Valley (Asociación Campesina del valle del Río Cimitarra, ACVC) and the Association of Displaced People Settled in the Municipality of Barrancabermeja, (Asociación de Desplazados Asentados en el Municipio de Barrancabermeja, ASODESAMUBA).

### Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Ovidio Nieto Jaraba, William Mendoza and Himad Abdala Choser and the members of ACVC, ASODESMUBA, ASORVIMM, CREDHOS, People in Action and SINALTRAINAL in the light of death threats against them, and calling on the authorities to protect them, in line with their wishes;
- Urging the Colombian authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats; to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Remind the Colombian authorities to fulfil their obligations regarding the protections of human rights defenders as specified in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, to which Colombia is a state party;
- Urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 OCTOBER 2012 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/  
Estimado Sr. Presidente Santos**

#### Minister of Interior

Señor Federico Renjifo Vélez  
Ministerio Del Interior  
Carrera 8 No. 7-83, Bogotá, Colombia  
Fax: +57 1 283 9876

**Salutation: Dear Minister Renjifo /  
Estimado Sr. Ministro Renjifo**

#### **And copies to:**

People in Action  
Gente en Acción  
Calle 54 No 35-38  
Barrio 1 de mayo  
Barrancabermeja  
Colombia

**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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## COLOMBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS THREATENED

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the armed conflict in Colombia, which has lasted over four decades, the security forces and paramilitary groups have frequently labelled human rights organizations and trade unions as guerrilla collaborators or supporters, and have gone on to threaten, abduct or kill them. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders and trade unionists they consider to be siding with their enemies.

Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2003, but it is clear from the continuing threats against human rights defenders and other vulnerable groups in different parts of the country that they are still operating.

On 27 July 2012 the local LGBTI community of Barrancabermeja organized a march. It was the first march in the municipality of Barrancabermeja for the respect and recognition of the LGBTI community. Since then those involved in the organization of the march and those supporting them have been threatened. Ovidio Nieto Jaraba received several threatening phone messages. On 14 August an envelope with a bullet cartridge and a flyer with a death threat were found in Himad Abdala Choser's home. The flyer also threatened CREDHOS, ASORVIMM, People in Action, SINALTRAINAL, ACVC and ASODESMUBA.

Name: Ovidio Nieto Jaraba, William Mendoza, Himad Abdala Choser, ACVC, ASODESMUBA ASORVIMM, CREDHOS, People in Action and SINALTRAINAL

Gender m/f: Ovidio Nieto Jaraba (M); William Mendoza (M); Himad Abdala Choser (M); There are both female and male members of the NGOs and trade union

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