

Colombia

"You are already feeling it and you're going to feel it more": Death threats against member of Colombian Trade Union Confederation.

The security forces and their paramilitary allies have often accused trade unionists of being guerrilla sympathizers which has led to trade unionists being frequently harassed, tortured and killed, often by army-backed paramilitaries. Trade unionists belonging to national trade union confederations are amongst those trade union sectors facing repeated death threats and human rights violations committed by army-backed paramilitaries.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of **Domingo Tovar Arrieta**, Director of the Human Rights Department of the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, (CUT), Colombian Trade Union Confederation, and his family. Domingo Tovar Arrieta has received death threats and his daughter, **Ana Paulina Tovar González**, has twice been targeted by kidnappers.

At around 6.20 am on 21 March 2003, as Ana Paulina Tovar González was walking to the Barranquilla Hospital in Atlántico department, where she is working on a university placement, she was reportedly stopped by two unidentified men. One of the men allegedly grabbed her and pushed her into a waiting car. She was reportedly punched several times in the car before she was able to climb out and get away.

This is the second attempted abduction of Ana Paulina Tovar González this year. On 17 January she and her sister were reportedly followed by a group of men who tried to force Ana Paulina Tovar González into their car. A passer-by came to the girls' aid and Ana Paulina Tovar González was able to escape.

At the beginning of March, Domingo Tovar Arrieta gave information to the authorities about a paramilitary plan to kill several national trade union leaders, including Domingo Tovar Arrieta himself. On 28 March, he reportedly received a threatening call on his radio telephone, which had been provided by government human rights officials for his protection after previous threats and fears for his safety. The telephone call was from an unidentified woman who said, "*ya estas sintiendo y vas a sentir más*" ("you are already feeling it and you're going to feel it more").

The threats against Domingo Tovar and his family heighten concerns for the safety of other members of the CUT.

TAKE ACTION NOW

Please send appeals

- Expressing concern for the safety of Domingo Tovar Arrieta, his daughter Ana Paulina Tovar González and other members of his family and other members of the CUT;
- Asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;
- Calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced in order to provide more effective protection to trade unionists;
- Calling for full and impartial investigations into the two kidnapping attempts against Ana Paulina Tovar González and the reported plan to kill Domingo Tovar Arrieta, with the results of both investigations made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- Calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, for the results to be made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;
- Urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the United Nations (UN) and other intergovernmental organizations.

Send them to:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 342 0592**

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

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia
Ministerio del Interior
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 1 566 4573**

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

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,
Fiscal General de la Nación,
Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),
Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor por Dr Osorio")

Salutation: Dear Dr Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

Send appeals to your own government

- Urging that decisive action is taken by the Colombian authorities to guarantee the security of trade unionists, including members of the CUT, urging full and impartial investigations into reported attempts on their lives and death threats against CUT members in Colombia and to urge your government to support the call for an investigating commission at the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Urging your government to inform you of what efforts it is taking in this respect.

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