

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety

03 February 2004

ECUADOR    **Leonidas Iza (m), President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador**  
**Javier Iza (m), his son aged 23**  
**Rodrigo Iza (m), his brother**  
**David Tixe (m), his nephew**  
**Josefina Anguisaca (f), his wife**  
**And the rest of his family**

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On 1 February, an assassination attempt was made on Leonidas Iza, the President of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, *Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador* (CONAIE) in the capital Quito. He escaped unharmed, but four of his relatives, who were accompanying him at the time of the attack were injured. His 23 year-old son Javier was seriously hurt and his wife, Josefina Anguisaca was hit on the face with a gun by one of the attackers.

Leonidas Iza had just arrived at the airport in Quito from Cuba, where he had taken part in a meeting against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). As he and his family were getting out of a taxi outside the CONAIE offices, two unknown individuals reportedly got out of their car and shouted "we are going to kill you" (Te vamos a matar) at Leonidas Iza. They then opened fire, forcing the family to seek cover in the CONAIE building. Despite this, bullets went through a metal door injuring Leonidas Iza's son Javier and two other relatives. Immediately afterwards, the whole family were taken to hospital.

President Lucio Gutiérrez has condemned the attack and called for an investigation.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

By the end of December 2003, Ecuador's indigenous alliance including the CONAIE, called for the resignation of President Lucio Gutiérrez, due to his failure to fulfil his election manifesto.

The recent assassination attempt against Leonidas Iza took place in a context of threats and intimidation against indigenous and community leaders, who oppose government policies. In December 2003, indigenous leader Humberto Cholango was detained for a few hours by police officers following a critical statement he made against President Gutiérrez.

In December, the Inter-American Commission ordered the Ecuadorian state to protect the indigenous community of Sarayacu after they received several death threats and was physically and verbally assaulted during a demonstration in the same month. The Sarayacu community opposes the concession given by the Ecuadorian state to oil companies to start extraction work in their territory.

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

- expressing serious concern at the attempted killing of Leonardo Iza and his family;
- calling on the authorities to ensure their safety;
- noting that President Gutiérrez has condemned the assassination attempt and ordered an investigation to be carried out;
- calling for the investigation to be full and independent, for the findings to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

#### **APPEALS TO: (Please keep trying the fax numbers which should work)**

Minister of the Interior

Ing. Raúl Baca Carbo

Ministro de Gobierno, Policía,

Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades  
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía  
Benalcázar y Espejo  
Quito  
ECUADOR

**Telegrams:** **Ministro de Gobierno, Quito, Ecuador**  
**Fax:** **+ 593 2 2580 067 (if someone answers, say "Tono de fax, por favor")**  
**Salutations:** **Dear Mr. Minister / Estimado Sr. Ministro**

Attorney General

Dra. Mariana Yépez de Velasco  
Ministra Fiscal General del Estado  
Fiscalía General del Estado  
Av. Eloy Alfaro N° 32-240 y República  
Quito  
ECUADOR

**Telegrams:** **Attorney General, Quito, Ecuador**  
**Fax:** **+ 593 2 2558 561 (if someone answers, say "Tono de fax, por favor")**  
**Salutation:** **Dear Attorney General / Sra. Fiscal General**

**COPIES TO:**

Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos  
"Segundo Montes Mozo SJ@ CSMM  
Nicolás Jiménez, E 4, 223, piso 5 y Av. 12 de Octubre, dep. E- 3  
Quito, ECUADOR

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 March 2004.