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Ecuador: Increased intimidation of activists

The rising attacks against those who oppose government policies in Ecuador have prompted Amnesty International to issue two urgent actions on behalf of activists who have been targeted by the authorities.

Over the past few months, during his weekly televised speeches President Rafael Correa has repeatedly targeted several activists, including Carlos Zorrilla, a founding member of Intag Environmental Defense and Conservation (*Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag*, DECOIN), an environmental organization working in northern Ecuador. Carlos Zorrilla was accused of inciting local communities to oppose governmental policies and of acting on behalf of foreign interests. See *Ecuador: Fear for safety of environmental activist* <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR28/004/2013/en>

At the end of November, again on national television, the President harshly criticized Fundación Pachamama, an NGO working on Indigenous Peoples and environmental rights. A few days later Fundación Pachamama was closed by ministerial order using a recently issued decree granting the authorities wide powers to monitor and dissolve NGOs. The authorities justified the closure claiming it was interfering with public policies and threatening the security of the state. (See *Ecuador: Ecuadorian police shut down NGO*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR28/003/2013/en>).

For some time, the Ecuadorian authorities have sought to intimidate and cast doubt on the legitimate work of NGOs and activists who protest and express criticism to government's policies. This is a very dangerous move which Amnesty International fears is designed to deter opposition to government policies.

Since 2012 Amnesty International has campaigned against the criminalization of those opposing government policies. See *Criminalizing the right to protest in Ecuador*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR28/002/2012/en>

Amnesty International spokespeople are available to talk about this issue. If you want to arrange an interview or receive additional information, please contact:

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