

URGENT ACTION

PERUVIAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SUFFER INTIMIDATION

The home of lawyer and human rights defender, Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin, has been raided twice in three weeks. Other members of the organization where she works in Peru have also faced intimidation in the past month.

The home of **Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin**, who works for Comprehensive Training for Sustainable Development (Grupo de Formación Integral para el Desarrollo Sostenible, GRUFIDES), was broken into for the first time on 24 November. Nothing of value was taken, but the doors were left wide open. Her home was then broken into a second time on 15 December, while her daughter and her childminder were out for a walk. A glass panel was smashed, but nothing valuable was taken. On 8 November, the home of GRUFIDES secretary, **Ivett Sanchez**, was also broken into. On 14 December **Sergio Sanchez**, a consultant working for the same organization on environmental issues, had his car vandalized. All of these incidents took place while the individuals concerned were away, which suggests they may be under surveillance.

These incidents took place shortly before the official investigation into the torture of **Father Marco Arana** is due to start. Father Marco Arana, another human rights defender with GRUFIDES, was arrested and beaten by police officers on 4 July, when he was peacefully protesting against the Conga gold mining project in Cajamarca Department, northern Peru. The organization has been actively supporting communities who oppose the mine and who fear the potential environmental impact of the expansion of the project. Father Marco Arana was conditionally released a day after his arrest. In July, he filed a complaint for torture and abuse of authority against the police officers responsible. In August, a regional court ruled in favour of a habeas corpus writ on his behalf saying that his arrest had been unlawful and arbitrary.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern that Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin and other members of GRUFIDES have suffered acts of intimidation and that the incidents appear to be linked to their human rights work;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and that human rights defenders working with GRUFIDES receive adequate protection in accordance with their wishes;
- Reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have a right to carry out their activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JANUARY 2013 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Wilfredo Pedraza Sierra
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n Urb. Corpac -
San Isidro, Lima, Peru
Fax: +511 204 81 10 (If someone
answers, ask "¿Me puede dar tono de
fax, por favor?")
Email: jfjimene@minjus.gob.pe
Salutation: Dear Minister/ Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. José Antonio Peláez Bardales
Fiscal de la Nación
Av. Abancay cdra. 5 s/n, Lima
Peru
Fax: +511 4271792
Email: ministeriopublico@mpfn.gob.pe
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Sr. Fiscal de la Nación

And copies to:

GRUFIDES

Jr. José Galvez 430 – A,
Barrio San Pedro – Cajamarca, Perú
E-mail: info@grufides.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

GRUFIDES is a non-governmental organization that focuses on sustainable development and environmental issues and is based in the city of Cajamarca, Cajamarca Department, northern Peru. The organization has been actively supporting communities opposing the Conga gold mine, an expansion of the larger Yanacocha mining project, led by a US corporation. Following an accident in 2000, in which a lorry carrying mercury spilled some of its load near the Yanacocha mining project, rural communities fear the potential environmental impact of the expansion of the project. Allegedly, local residents were not informed of the spill, and symptoms of mercury poisoning were apparently experienced by some members of the community.

In 2006, Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin and Father Marco Arana received death threats and were followed and watched (see UA 312/06), shortly after GRUFIDES became involved in supporting the cases of two *campesino* activists who were killed in August and in November 2006 respectively, apparently as a result of their opposition to the expansion of the Conga mining project. The threats against GRUFIDES staff and members started shortly after the first killing.

As a result of these incidents, the Inter-American Commission on Rights ordered the Peruvian authorities to provide Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin and Marco Arana with security measures when they are in the office of GRUFIDES and when they travel to rural communities. The measures also ordered Peru to conduct an investigation in order to bring to justice those responsible for the threats. However, according to members of GRUFIDES, the security measures put in place have been inadequate and nobody has been brought to justice.

Name: Dr Mirtha Vasquez Chuquilin (f), Marco Arana (m), Ivett Sanchez (f), Sergio Sanchez (m)
Gender m/f: Both

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