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Spain

Amnesty International demands halt to ETA killings of political representatives

Amnesty International has expressed its disgust at the murder this morning of 42-year-old Popular Party councillor Manuel Zamarreño in the Basque town of Rentería, and demanded a halt to the killing of political representatives.

Manuel Zamarreño was killed in the explosion, next to his car, of a device attached to a motorbike in the Capuchinos area of Rentería. The killing was reported to bear all the hallmarks of an attack by the Basque armed group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA). The councillor's bodyguard, an officer of the Basque regional police force, the *Ertzaintza*, was taken to hospital with a number of injuries, but his life is not thought to be in danger.

Manuel Zamarreño, married with four children, was the fifth Popular Party (PP) councillor to be murdered by ETA since the kidnapping and killing of Miguel Angel Blanco in July 1997. He had recently replaced José Luis Caso as councillor for the ruling PP in Rentería, in the full knowledge that he would become an ETA target. He was reported to have received numerous death threats from ETA.

His predecessor, José Luis Caso, was shot in the head by ETA members in a bar in December 1997, and for some months had been under threat by ETA. PP councillor for Pamplona, Tomás Caballero, was killed by ETA in May; PP councillor Alberto Jiménez Becerril and his wife were killed in Seville on 30 January and PP councillor José Ignacio Iruretagoyena on 9 January.

On each of these occasions Amnesty International reiterated its unreserved condemnation of the human rights abuses committed by ETA. The Basque armed group flouts humanitarian principles and the dictates of public conscience in no less abominable a way than the human rights violations committed by governments when they carry out torture, "disappearances" and extra-judicial executions.

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