

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALISTS THREATENED AND AT RISK

Journalists at Radio Victoria in Cabañas, a department in El Salvador, have received repeated death threats. Amnesty International believes that staff at Radio Victoria are at risk.

Pablo Ayala and **Manuel Navarrete** are journalists at Radio Victoria in El Salvador, a community radio station committed to social and human rights reporting. On 30 April Pablo Ayala spent the night at the Radio Victoria office due to heavy rainfall. At around 4:00 he heard a noise and discovered a letter had been delivered, containing death threats against him and Manuel Navarrete. The letter stated that they had three days to leave the area or they would suffer the consequences. The letter stated "Those rubbish news bulletins [where] you broadcast only negative criticism [...] you don't know what is waiting for you, we have photos and videos of you" ("*Esa porqueria del noticiero que asen [sic] solo de criticas destructivas [...] no saben los que les espera les tenemos en fotos y videos*"), the author said the threat came from a "death squad" ("*grupo de exterminio*"). .

On 2 May, Pablo Ayala received two text messages at 20:00 sent via the internet to his mobile phone and signed by "death squad". One message read "from Wednesday onwards if you are at the radio station you will regret it. You have made us lose our patience, let's see what it will take you to stop talking" ("*del miercoles para alla si estas en la radio te lamentaras ya nos rompieron la paciencia vamos a ver que ganas tu por que no paras de hablar*"). On the same day, also at around 20:00, **Marixela Ramos**, a news producer at Radio Victoria, received two text message threats. One of the messages read "Look fool, we already know where you live [...] stop that news bulletin you are the coordinator you also have a daughter" ("*Mira mage ya sabemos donde vives [...] ponle paro a ese noticiero tu que eres la coordinadora tu tambien tienes a tu hija*").

On 4 May, Radio Victoria staff held a press conference in the capital San Salvador regarding the threats they had received. A few hours later, at 20:00, Pablo Ayala and Marixela Ramos both received two text message threats. Pablo Ayala's message read "Today you should have left like we ordered you, if you haven't done so it is not a problem we will finish our work" ("*hoy deviste aver salido como te lo ordenamos si no lo as echo no es problema nosotros terminaremos nuestro trabajo*").

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights deemed the threat to Radio Victoria staff to be so great that it issued Precautionary Measures which required that the authorities ensure their safety.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Call for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against staff at Radio Victoria, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- Urge the authorities to take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection to staff at Radio Victoria in accordance with their wishes and in compliance with the Precautionary Measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JUNE 2011 TO:

Attorney General

Romeo Benjamín Barahona Meléndez
Fiscalía General de la República
Final 4ª Calle Oriente y 19ª Av. Sur,
Residencial Primavera, Santa Tecla,
La Libertad, San Salvador, El
Salvador
Fax: +503 2523 7421

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear
Attorney General**

Head of National Police

Carlos Antonio Ascencio Giron
6ta. Calle Oriente entre 8va y 10ma
Ave. Sur # 42 Barrio La Vega, San
Salvador, El Salvador
Fax: +503 2527 1145

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Comisionado/
Dear Commissioner**

And copies to:

Radio Victoria
Av. José Matías Delgado #47
Victoria, Cabañas, El Salvador
E-mail: radiovictoriapopular@yahoo.es

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

Amnesty International has issued several urgent actions on the situation of human rights defenders and media workers in the Cabañas department of El Salvador between 2009 and 2011.

Gustavo Marcelo Rivera, an environmental activist, was killed on 30 June 2009. Later on that year, his brother Ramiro Rivera, a community leader who campaigned against mining in the area and against impunity in his brother's case, survived an armed attack in August and was eventually killed in December. Also in August 2009, Héctor Antonio García Berríos was warned by a man he knew that if he and Gustavo Marcelo Rivera's brother, Miguel Rivera continued campaigning for justice for the murder, their lives would be at risk. (UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29/001/2009 Issue Date: 27 August 2009).

On 23 January 2011, Hector Berríos, a community activist and human rights lawyer in Cabañas, a department of El Salvador, received death threats by phone. (UA: 13/11 Index: AMR 29/001/2011 Issue Date: 25 January 2011)

In December 2009, staff at Radio Victoria received a number of threats by phone and e-mail. On 26 December 2009, another member of the Cabañas Environment Committee was killed. Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto, who was eight months pregnant, was shot dead, and her two-year-old child was wounded. (Amnesty International Urgent Action Further information on UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29/001/2010 Issue Date: 4 January 2010).

UA: 131/11 Index: AMR 29/002/2011 Issue Date: 10 May 2011

