

URGENT ACTION

GUATEMALAN ACTIVISTS IN DANGER

The members of a network of activists in Guatemala are in grave danger. Three members of the network have been killed since October 2009. Most recently, FRENA member Octavio Roblero was killed on 17 February. The motive for the attacks is not clear, and nobody has been brought to justice for any of the killings. Other leading members of FRENA have received death threats.

Three members of FRENA, the Resistance Front for the Defence of Natural Resources and People's Rights, (*Frente de Resistencia en Defensa de los Recursos Naturales y Derechos de los Pueblos*) have been shot dead. Octavio Roblero, a male leader of FRENA, was shot outside his office in the municipality of Malacatán, close to the border with Mexico. Seventeen spent shells were found after the incident. Octavio Roblero had received death threats by telephone prior to this attack, which he believed to be connected to his activities with FRENA. He had also been pressing for progress in the official investigation into the death of Victor Galvez, his brother-in-law and another leading FRENA member, who was killed in October 2009. Victor Galvez was shot 10 times as he left the FRENA office. He had just spoken at a public meeting about FRENA's campaigning to highlight the alleged poor quality and high charges by the regional electricity company. Victor Galvez had also received death threats, and had been verbally threatened and physically attacked in relation to his work.

The third FRENA leader to be killed was a woman, Evelinda Ramirez, who lived in the municipality of Ocos, near Malacatán. She was killed on 13 January, as she returned to her home from the capital, Guatemala City, where she had met with government officials in relation to her work for FRENA. She was travelling in a car with three other FRENA activists when shots were fired at them from a white pick-up truck which had been following them. Evelinda Ramirez was shot several times in the chest.

Other leading members of FRENA have received death threats. FRENA has identified 289 activists who may be at risk due to their work coordinating the organization's activities. None of these people has been given protection by the authorities.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- urging the authorities take immediate steps to provide all necessary protection to the leading members of FRENA in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the assassinations of Octavio Roblero, Evelinda Ramirez Reyes and Victor Galvez with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2010 TO:

Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's Office

Lic. José Amílcar Velásquez Zárate
Fiscal General de la República y Jefe del Ministerio Público
8ª Avenida 10-67, Zona 1, Antiguo Edificio del Banco de los Trabajadores,
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: +502 2411 9124/+502 2411 9326

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Estimado Sr. Fiscal General

Minister of the Interior/ Ministro de Gobernación:

Lic. Raúl Antonio Velásquez Ramos
Ministro de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1,
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: +502 2413 8658

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Sr. Ministro

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Guatemala 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

FRENA is a civil society group working in 17 municipalities in the department of San Marcos near Guatemala's Mexican border. Activities are coordinated by elected committees for each department.

Since 2008, the members of FRENA have been defending consumers' rights against alleged misconduct by an electricity company, including charging for services not provided, overcharging for services and frequent power cuts in the region. FRENA believe the electricity company is acting in bad faith. FRENA has been involved in high level discussions with the company and the government's regulatory body and is calling for a public investigation and sanctions against the electricity company. FRENA is also campaigning to end the contract with the existing electricity company and for a new local company to be created which is more accessible for communities and gives communities more control.

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