

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Spain: Amnesty International condemns killing of Ignacio Uría Mendizábal

(London/Madrid) Ignacio Uría Mendizábal, joint owner of one of the construction companies involved in the high speed train route connecting key towns in the Basque Country with Madrid, was shot dead today outside a restaurant in Azpeitia. Initial reports indicate the killing was most likely carried out by members of the armed Basque group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA). Amnesty International unreservedly condemns this killing and reiterates its call on ETA to put an immediate and permanent end to its campaign of killings, kidnappings, hostage-taking and other gross abuses of human rights.

Since work began on the high speed train route the companies involved in its construction have suffered threats and acts of sabotage by ETA. Altuna y Uría, the company jointly owned by Ignacio Uría Mendizábal, suffered acts of sabotage in March 2007. In August 2008, ETA claimed responsibility for three bomb attacks on companies involved in the construction works (in Zarautz on 1 June, Hernani on 9 June and Orío on 28 July) and reiterated threats against them. According to police sources cited in Spanish press, Ignacio Uría Mendizábal had received various threats in the past few years for refusing to pay money, so called "revolutionary taxes", to ETA.

Background

Amnesty International has consistently condemned the human rights abuses committed by ETA and has categorically refuted any arguments or objectives which attempt to justify the grave abuses of human rights. Following the killing on 7 March 2008 of a former Socialist Party town councillor, the organization again called on ETA to put a definitive and immediate end to its campaign of such killings, threats and other grave human rights abuses (AI Index: EUR 41/007/2008). The organization previously called on ETA to put an end to its campaign of deliberate killings of civilians (AI Index: EUR 41/007/2000) and has made numerous public appeals to ETA to respect human rights.

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