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## **Colombia urged to investigate shooting of human rights activist**

Amnesty International has called on the Colombian authorities to investigate the killing of a human rights defender who was campaigning against abuses committed by paramilitaries and the security forces in the north-western region of Sucre.

Rogelio Martínez, who represented displaced rural communities in the area of San Onofre, was shot dead by a group of hooded men dressed in black as he travelled home by motorbike taxi on Tuesday.

"Rogelio Martínez campaigned long and hard to ensure that peasant farmers in the area could reclaim lands stolen from them by paramilitaries in collusion with the security forces, and he was dedicated to exposing human rights violations committed by these groups," said Marcelo Pollack, Colombia researcher at Amnesty International.

Martínez was also a member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE). He had been repeatedly threatened with death because of his work, along with other MOVICE members and land right activists in Sucre.

Activists campaigning for the return of lands stolen by paramilitary groups have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killings in recent years.

"Those campaigning for truth, justice and reparation and for the return of lands stolen by paramilitary groups in the context of Colombia's long-running armed conflict continue to pay a heavy price for their human rights work," said Marcelo Pollack.

"The Colombian authorities also have a responsibility to ensure that human rights defenders in Sucre, and in the country as a whole, are effectively protected so that they can carry out their work safely and free from fear", said Marcelo Pollack.

Amnesty International has condemned the killing of Rogelio Martínez and urged the authorities to carry out an immediate and impartial investigation to ensure that those responsible for his death are brought to justice.