

URGENT ACTION

THREATENED AND ATTACKED FOR SEEKING JUSTICE

Colombian human rights lawyer Andrea Torres Bautista has been threatened with sexual violence and death. A few days earlier the son of a victim of enforced disappearance, who is being represented by Andrea Torres Bautista, was stabbed with a knife.

On 24 June **Andrea Torres Bautista**, a lawyer for the human rights organization Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista (FNEB), which represents relatives of victims of enforced disappearances, received a threatening phone call. In it a man told her "[...] didn't you understand that you should stop annoying us, we are going to kill you, but first we will rape you so that you respect men" (*[...] no entendió que deje de joder, le vamos a pegar una matada [...] pero primero le pegamos una violada pa' que respete a los hombres*).

On 20 June **Jhon Alexander Holguín Ramírez** was stabbed with a knife and had to be taken to hospital in Tuluá Municipality, Valle del Cauca Department. He is the son of James Holguín, who together with four other men, was forcibly disappeared by paramilitaries operating in collusion with the police in Monterrey Municipality, Casanare Department, on 16 August 2003. Jhon Alexander's mother **Jacqueline Ramírez**, a witness to the enforced disappearances which are collectively known as the La Combinada case, has received repeated death threats in the context of ongoing court proceedings. Andrea Torres Bautista is their lawyer.

On 23 June, a day before receiving the threatening telephone call, Andrea Torres Bautista had phoned the Court in Yopal, Casanare Department, to request that the judge presiding over the La Combinada case recuse himself from this and other enforced disappearance cases. In May, a court in Yopal issued a sentence removing the judge from his post and sentencing him to 66 months in prison for "perverting the course of justice" in a case related to enforced disappearances. Court hearings relating to enforced disappearance cases, which would be presided over by the judge, are scheduled for 13 and 30 July.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Andrea Torres Bautista, as well as Jhon Alexander Holguín Ramírez, Jacqueline Ramírez and other relatives and witnesses of the La Combinada case, and urging the authorities to take measures to guarantee their safety, in strict accordance with their wishes and needs;
- Calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the threats and the attack mentioned and to take all necessary measures to ensure that criminal investigations into enforced disappearance cases are carried out, that the results be made public and all those involved be brought to justice;
- Calling on them to recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider communications on this and other cases from or on behalf of victims or other states parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 AUGUST 2015 TO:

President

Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República
 Casa de Nariño
 Calle 7. No 6-54.
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631
**Salutation: Dear President Santos/
 Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

Attorney General

Eduardo Montealegre
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Diagonal 22B No. 52-01 (Ciudad Salitre)
 Bloque C Piso 4,
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax +57 1 570 2000 (when recorded
 voice answers, dial ext 2023)
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General**

And copies to:

Human rights organization
 Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista
 Carrera No 20 No 35-45
 Bogotá, Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 116/15. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/1740/2015/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Impunity continues to be a hallmark of Colombia's 50-year-old internal armed conflict, and is one of the reasons why human rights violations and abuses persist. Very few of those suspected of criminal responsibility for human rights abuses and violations committed during the course of the ongoing conflict, including enforced disappearances, have ever been brought to trial. As of 1 June 2015 the state's Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, UARIV) had recorded over 45,000 enforced disappearances since 1985.

The La Combinada case refers to the enforced disappearance of five men by paramilitaries operating in collusion with the police in Monterrey Municipality, Casanare Department, on 16 August 2003. The Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista (FNEB) has been representing the victims in criminal proceedings relating to this case since 2009. The commander of the Monterrey police station has been convicted to 48 years in prison, but remains a fugitive. A further eight police officers and several paramilitaries are under investigation. The whereabouts of the bodies of the five forcibly disappeared men are still unknown.

FNEB was created in 1997 after the family of Nydia Erika Bautista de Arellana was forced into exile after they received threats because of their human rights work. Nydia Erika Bautista de Arellana was a student activist and member of the M-19 guerrilla group, who was forcibly disappeared in 1987. FNEB has sought to bring to justice those responsible for the enforced disappearance of Nydia Erika Bautista. They also work on other cases of enforced disappearances. There have been repeated threats against members of FNEB and witness in cases they represent (see <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/1740/2015/en/>).

Name: Andrea Torres Bautista (f) and other members of the human rights organization Fundación Nydia Erika Bautista, Jhon Alexander Holguín Ramírez (m), Jacqueline Ramírez (f) and other relatives and witnesses in the La Combinada case
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 116/15 Index: AMR 23/1948/2015 Issue Date: 26 June 2015