

URGENT ACTION

ATTACK SURVIVOR RECEIVES DEATH THREAT

Orlando Verbel Rocha's life is in danger. A threat was made against him through the daughter of his deceased brother, Eder Verbel Rocha, who was killed by paramilitaries on 23 March 2011, in San Onofre Municipality, northern Colombia. Orlando Verbel Rocha survived the attack in which his brother was killed.

On 16 January, the adopted daughter of Eder Verbel Roacha was riding on a bicycle along with her two younger sisters in the park of San Onofre Municipality, Sucre Department. A man approached her and told her "You are never going to find the culprits of Eder's death, those who are detained are going to be released, by what ever means necessary. Orlando got away that time but do not think that he is safe now" (nunca van a encontrar los culpables de la muerte de EDER, los que están presos van a salir libres a las buenas o a las malas, ORLANDO se salvó aquella vez pero no piense que ahora se va a salvar). **Orlando Verbel Rocha** had survived the attack carried out by two paramilitaries on 23 March 2011. Two paramilitaries have been detained in connection with the killing.

The Verbel Rocha family has been campaigning against impunity and human rights violations committed by paramilitaries in Sucre department. The family have been members of the Sucre branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (*Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas e Crímenes de Estado*, MOVICE) since 2006. The family is also facing threats apparently in an effort to force them to leave the land they own in the area.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Express concern for the safety of Orlando Enrique Verbel Rocha and other members of his family and MOVICE and urge the authorities to guarantee their safety in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Call on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Eder Verbel Rocha and previous attacks on the Verbel Rocha family, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urge the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 MARCH 2012 TO:

President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26,
Bogotá, Colombia
Fax: +57 1 596 0631

**Salutation: Dear President Santos/
Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos**

Minister of Interior

Señor Germán Vargas Lleras
Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá
Colombia
Fax: +57 1 242 7400 –ext. 2351 say "me
da tono por favor" Please keep trying.

**Salutation: Dear Minister Vargas /
Estimado Sr. Ministro Vargas**

And copies to:

NGO

Movice
Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de
Crímenes de Estado
Calle 38 No 28 A 30
Barrio Bogotá
Sincelejo, 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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prior to this latest threat members of the Verbel family found that a pit had been dug on their land on 13 December 2011. When excavating the pit further they found clothing and called the police. Based on the condition of the clothes the police came to the conclusion that there might have been a grave from which bodies had been removed. While the police and the family were examining the pit members of the family heard three gun-shots from the neighbouring land at about 100 metres distance. The family fears that the gun-shots were an attempt to stop them investigating the grave. Members of the armed forces present in the area who had been informed by the police of the gun-shots said that shots were frequently heard in the area, but that they had not investigated them or taken any other action.

On 23 March 2011 brothers Orlando Enrique Verbel Rocha and Eder Verbel Rocha, and the latter's son, were on their way home on a motorcycle after working in their fields in San Onofre Municipality, Sucre Department. Shortly before arriving at their home, two armed paramilitaries shot at them and beat them with their rifles and kicked them. Eder Verbel Rocha was fatally wounded. Orlando Verbel Rocha and the child managed to flee and inform some soldiers of the Marine Infantry (Infantería de Marina) that were nearby. Two paramilitaries who allegedly shot at the brothers and the child have been detained. They remain in detention pending trial. However, further investigations into who ordered these killings have not produced any results.

MOVICE is a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. The members of MOVICE have documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups in Sucre Department.

Activists campaigning for justice in cases of human rights abuses and for the return of lands stolen mainly by paramilitary groups over the course of the conflict have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killings in recent years. Most of these attacks are attributed to paramilitary groups. Guerrilla groups have also targeted human rights defenders and other social activists deemed to be a threat to their interests.

Despite government claims that all paramilitaries demobilized in a government-sponsored programme that began in 2003, such groups continue to operate and commit serious human rights violations against human rights defenders and other civilians. This is sometimes in collusion with the security forces, or with their consent.

Name: Orlando Verbel Roacha (male)

Gender m/f: (male)

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