

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS THREATENED

Paramilitaries have sent death threats to several Colombian human rights defenders and organizations, accusing them of being guerrillas. Some, including women's rights NGOs, have been told to leave Bogotá and others have been declared military targets.

On 28 February a death threat was sent to several NGOs. Bogotá-based human rights defenders and women's rights NGOs were named in the threat as well as NGOs working on the restitution of lands misappropriated as a result of human rights abuses and violations. The Black Eagles Capital Bloc paramilitaries said that organizations were "brainwashing the displaced, acting as if they were Human Rights Defenders", and told them to "stop making trouble with the issue of the land restitution, because everyone working on this will be killed by us, no matter how protected you are, we are giving you 30 days to leave the city." These threats come only a week before a national demonstration organised by National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE), one of the NGOs named in the threat. The demonstration will demand effective and complete land restitution and will support the rights of victims of human rights violations.

A day earlier, a courier delivered a death threat to the office of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo, CCAJAR) in Bogotá. In this second threat, another paramilitary group, Los Rastrojos Urban Commands, named three national NGOs as well as trade unionists and NGOs from Antioquia Department, Tolima Department and Valle del Cauca Department, declaring them military targets. The threat made explicit reference to the intelligence work that had been undertaken against these organizations "surveillance and infiltration and extraction of information from politicians, human rights organisations, trade unionists and displaced people". CCAJAR, the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos, CSPP), and MOVICE have all been subject to illegal surveillance and threats coordinated by the then civilian security department (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS) which had a long history of working in collusion with paramilitary groups.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urge the Colombian authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats against the organisations and individuals named; to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Remind the Colombian authorities to fulfil their obligations regarding the protections of human rights defenders as specified in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, to which Colombia is a state party;
- 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 12 APRIL 2012 TO:

President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República,
 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 1 599 8961 (keep trying)

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

Minister of Agriculture

Juan Camilo Restrepo
 Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo
 Rural, Avenida Jiménez No 7-65
 Piso 3, Bogotá,
 Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 286 2649

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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives 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

Among those threatened with death on 28 February by the Black Eagles Capital Bloc were the NGOs Casa de La Mujer, Ruta Pacifica de las Mujeres, Nacional Foundation Defending the Women Human Rights (Fundación Nacional Defensora de los Derechos Humanos de la Mujer, FUNDHEFEM), Sisma Women's Corporation (Corporación Sisma Mujer), Afro Women's Association for Peace (Asociación Afro Mujeres por la Paz, AFROMUPAZ), the Corporation Nuevo Arco Iris (Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris), the Consultancy for *Human Rights* and Displacement (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento, CODHES) and MOVICE. The threat also mentions twelve women and three men, most of them work on women human rights issues.

In the second threat, on 29 February, the Rastrojos Urban Commands declared as military targets CCAJAR, CSPP, MOVICE, the Corporation Humanitarian Aid (Corporación Ayuda Humanitaria) in Antioquia Department, the Association of Displaced of Antioquia O.P.D. (*Asociación de desplazados de Antioquia O.P.D.*, ASODOP) in Antioquia Department, the Colombian Human Rights Foundation in Tolima Department and the Association Grupos Juveniles Libertad in Valle del Cauca Department. Among the individuals threatened are the three trade unionists and three politicians.

Women's rights organizations and those campaigning for the restitution of stolen lands have been repeatedly threatened by paramilitaries over the past few years. On 19 June 2011, ten NGOs, most of which were women's rights NGOs, and 18 individuals were told in almost the same wording as the current threat by the Black Eagles Capital Bloc that they had 20 days to leave the city no matter how protected they were.

Activists campaigning for justice in cases of human rights abuses and for the return of lands have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killing. These lands were stolen mainly by paramilitary groups, often operating in close collusion with the armed forces over the course of the conflict. 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: Colombian human right defenders, organizations and trade unionists
Gender m/f: both

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