

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS THREATENED

On 8 May, three human rights defenders and a lawyer in Sucre, northern Colombia, received death threats. All four have been supporting peasant farmers to get back land seized during the armed conflict. Other human rights defenders, also working on land restitution and campaigning against impunity, were threatened at the end of April.

On 8 May, human rights defenders **Franklin Torres, Pedro Geney and Ingrid Vergara**, members of the Sucre branch of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE) and **Jeison Pava**, a lawyer from the Permanent Human Rights Committee (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH), received an email with a death threat naming all four. The threat was sent in the name of an undertaker, who was offering a deal to buy four coffins for the price of two. The four have been supporting peasant farmer communities in Sucre Department in the land restitution process.

On 29 April, **Rosa Amelia Hernández**, a community leader linked with MOVICE in Córdoba Department, northern Colombia, found a bullet on the doorstep of her home. Two days before, she had represented victims at a meeting about land restitution. On 28 April, **Hermés Verbel Rocha**, a member of MOVICE, was on the terrace of his daughter's house, in Sucre, when two men rode up on a motorcycle. One of the men got off the motorcycle and approached Hermés Verbel Rocha with a gun in his hand. Hermés Verbel Rocha ran inside the house and the two men left. His family has been campaigning about human rights violations committed by paramilitaries.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to guarantee the safety of Franklin Torres, Pedro Geney, Ingrid Vergara, Jeison Pava, Hermés Verbel Rocha and Rosa Amelia Hernández, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Urge the Colombian authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats against Franklin Torres, Pedro Geney, Ingrid Vergara and Jeison Pava and Rosa Amelia Hernández and into the attempt on the life of Hermés Verbel Rocha; to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Remind the Colombian authorities to fulfill their obligations regarding the protections of human rights defenders as specified in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JUNE 2012 TO:

President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República de Colombia
 Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26,
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 337 5890

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

Director of the National Protection Unit of the Ministry of Interior

Sr. Andrés Villamizar
 Unidad Nacional de Protección
 Ministerio del Interior
 Carrera 9a. No. 14-10,
 Bogotá, Colombia

**Salutation: Dear Mr Villamizar
 /Estimado Sr. Villamizar**

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 check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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. On 6 March, MOVICE organized protest marches with a special appeal for the implementation of an effective and comprehensive process for the restitution of lands violently seized by all parties to the conflict – the paramilitaries, the security forces and guerrilla groups.

The Verbel Rocha family along with other members of MOVICE Sucre branch participated in the marches. Among those participating were also the peasant farmers of La Europa farm in Ovejas Municipality, Sucre Department. In 1994, 12 peasant farmers were killed and 80 displaced from La Europa farm by paramilitaries. MOVICE Sucre branch has been campaigning for the restitution of the La Europa farm. Some peasant farmers have returned and their homes have been repeatedly burnt (see further information on UA: 18/12 Index: AMR 23/014/2012 Colombia)

Hermés Verbel Rocha's brother, Eder Verbel Rocha, was killed by paramilitaries on 23 March 2011.

Rosa Amelia Hernández is a community leader and member of the Organization of afro-descendants or displaced black communities and victims of violence in the Municipality of Planeta Rica (Odeprivicor), in Córdoba Department, northern Colombia. In March 2012, Rosa Amelia Hernández was subjected to intimidation and harassment in connection to her collaboration with MOVICE in the organisation of demonstrations held across Colombia on 6 March 2012.

Name: Franklin Torres, Pedro Geney, Ingrid Vergara, Jeison Pava, Hermes Verbel Rocha and Rosa Amelia Herández

Gender m/f: Franklin Torres (male), Pedro Geney (male), Ingrid Vergara (female), Jeison Pava (male), Hermes Verbel Rocha (male), Rosa Amelia Herández (female)

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