

URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNIONISTS FACE CONTINUED DEATH THREATS

Colombian trade union leaders involved in labour negotiations continue to receive threats against their lives. On 13 June four of the union leaders received death threats by text message.

On 13 June trade union leaders **Juan Aguas, Edgar Muñoz, Estivenson Avila** and **Rubén Morrón Guerrero** received a death threat by text message. It read "The extermination of the union will not stop [...] death to the trade unionists" (*el exterminio sindical no se detendra [sic] [...] muerte a los sindicalistas*). All four are members of the Colombian Union of Workers of the Mining, Petrochemical, Agro-Fuels and Energy Industries (Sindicato Nacional de la Industria Minera, Petroquímica, Agrocombustible y Energética, **SINTRAMIENERGETICA**). They are also part of a union delegation negotiating a new labour agreement with the mining company Drummond Ltd.

The attack comes in the wake of several recent death threats against members and leaders of SINTRAMIENERGETICA. On 28 May, on the eve of trade union negotiations, gunmen fired shots at a taxi in which Rubén Morrón Guerrero was travelling, in the city of Barranquilla, department of Atlántico. In the past, members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA have been killed and threatened in the context of such negotiations with companies.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Juan Aguas, Edgar Muñoz, Estivenson Avila and Rubén Morrón Guerrero, and other members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA;
- Demanding that the authorities provide protection for Juan Aguas, Edgar Muñoz, Estivenson Avila and Rubén Morrón Guerrero, in accordance with their wishes;
- Urging the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the death threat and previous attacks and threats, and to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2013 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 (keep trying)

Salutation: Dear President

Santos/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Santos

Minister of Foreign Affairs

María Ángela Holguín
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Palacio San Carlos
 Calle 10 No. 5-51
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 381 4742 (keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimada

Ministra

And copies to:

SINTRAMIENERGETICA

Calle 34 No. 44 - 63
 Piso 9
 Oficina 9A
 Barranquilla
 Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 66/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/026/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict between left-wing guerrillas and the armed forces, which at times operate in collusion with paramilitaries, members of human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been threatened, subjected to enforced disappearance or killed. Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2003, but it is clear from the threats against human rights organizations and trade unions that they are still operating.

Colombia has one of the highest rates of trade unionist killings in the world. Trade unionists face repeated death threats or are killed during labour disputes and during campaigns for improvement of their pay and working conditions. They have been repeatedly threatened and many have been killed or subjected to enforced disappearance by paramilitaries either acting alone or in collusion with the security forces. In addition, the security forces and paramilitaries often accuse trade unionists of being guerrilla sympathizers or auxiliaries. Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for killing and threatening those they accuse of collaborating with their enemies.

For many years members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA have been killed and have received death threats by paramilitaries while the union has been seeking the improvement of working conditions. Over recent months members of SINTRAMIENERGETICA have been the target of paramilitary death threats in the context of labour disputes.

Name: Juan Aguas, Edgar Muñoz, Estivenson Avila and Rubén Morrón Guerrero

Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 66/13 Index: AMR 23/027/2013 Issue Date: 14 June 2013