

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST KILLED, OTHER MEMBERS AT RISK

On 17 December armed people were looking for peasant farmer leader Olga Lucía Quintero at her home in Cúcuta, north-eastern Colombia. Another peasant farmer from the same organisation had been found dead on 2 December.

On 2 December **Jorge Eliécer Calderón**, peasant farmer and member of Peasant Farmer Association of Catatumbo (*Asociación Campesina del Catatumbo*, **ASCAMCAT**), was killed in the hamlet Campo Seis, Tibú municipality, Norte de Santander Department. In a statement the security forces have claimed that he was killed in combat with an unspecified armed group. His relatives and members of the Community Action Councils (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*, JAC) of the hamlets Campo Seis and Miramonte, also in Tibú municipality, stated that whilst there had been no combat in the area, they had heard gunfire before the body was found.

On 17 December an armed man and woman forced their way into the home of peasant farmer leader **Olga Lucía Quintero** and human rights defender **Mauricio Ramos**, in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander Department. Olga Lucía Quintero, who is also a member of ASCAMCAT, was not at home. The armed people searched the home and stole information about ASCAMCAT, including their members' details and work plans, stored on electronic devices and on paper. Since November Olga Lucía Quintero has been left without the bodyguard assigned to her by the state's protection programme. The bodyguard's gun had been confiscated by the police and his contract was terminated. The bodyguard assigned to another NGO has provided Olga Lucía Quintero with some support.

ASCAMCAT was among the organisations leading the peasant farmer protests in June and July in the Catatumbo region. During the protest government officials, including President Santos, claimed that the guerrilla had infiltrated the protests. The leaders of ASCAMCAT are still in negotiations with the government. In November members of the armed forces repeatedly stopped and questioned **Juan Carlos Quintero**, also a leader of ASCAMCAT, as well as his bodyguards in Norte de Santander Department.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of human rights defender Mauricio Ramos and ASCAMCAT members Olga Lucía Quintero, Juan Carlos Quintero and other members of the organisation and urging the authorities to provide them with effective protection measures in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Urging the authorities to order immediate, full and impartial investigations in the civilian justice system into the killing of Jorge Eliécer Calderón, the break-in into the home of Olga Lucía Quintero and to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JANUARY 2014 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**

Defence Minister

Señor Juan Carlos Pinzón
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Carrera 54, no.26-29
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 266 1003

**Salutation: Dear Minister Pinzón/
 Sr. Ministro Pinzón**

And copies to:

NGO
 ASCAMCAT
 Calle 7AN No 3E 85
 Barrio Ceiba 2
 Cúcuta, 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

All the warring parties in Colombia's long-running armed conflict have repeatedly failed to respect the civilian population's right not to be dragged into the conflict and have been responsible for serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Amnesty International has repeatedly called on both sides in the conflict – guerrilla groups and the security forces – to put an immediate and unconditional end to human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

In the past, accusations by state and government officials and the security forces which have sought to link the peasant farmer movement to guerrilla groups have often been followed by the killing of leaders from these communities by paramilitary groups. Many leaders have also been killed by the FARC, which have accused some communities and their leaders of collaborating with the security forces and paramilitaries.

In June and July thousands of peasant farmers protested in the Catatumbo area demanding the creation of a Peasant Farmer Reservation Zone (*Zona de Reserva Campesina, ZRC*). The creation of the ZRC had been agreed with the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural, INCODER). Peasant farmers had also called for the implementation of a programme to support the substitution of illicit crops. Four protesters were fatally injured during the June-July demonstrations (for more information see: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/028/2013/en>).

The ZRC are established by INCODER and aim to support the stabilization and consolidation of the peasant farmer economy. They also provide a means to secure land tenure, provide access to social services and to guarantee food security.

On 13 March an explosive device was thrown at the gate to the offices of ASCAMCAT and the Luís Carlos Pérez Lawyers' Collective (Corporación Colectivo de Abogados Luís Carlos Pérez, CCALCP). The device exploded but no one was injured. Members of ASCAMCAT have repeatedly reported that they have been followed by unknown individuals, for example on 22 June.

The Catatumbo area, which borders Venezuela, is an area of economic and military strategic importance. In an attempt to establish control of the Catatumbo, army-backed paramilitaries launched a series of incursions in the area in 1999 and subsequently consolidated their presence in the region with serious human rights violations against the civilian population. Guerrilla forces for their part responded to the paramilitary presence in the region with numerous killings of civilians they accused of collaborating with their enemies, including massacres of peasant farmers working on coca plantations in areas of paramilitary control.

Name: Mauricio Ramos (m), Olga Lucía Quintero (f), Juan Carlos Quintero (m), Jorge Eliecer Calderón, members of ASCAMCAT
Gender m/f: both