

UA 288/07

Fear for safety/ Death threats

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Johnny Rivas (m), human rights defender Members of his family Haitian migrant workers and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the community of Ranchadero
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At midnight on 28 October, a group of Haitian migrant workers and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the community of Ranchadero, in the municipality of Guayabín (Monte Cristi Province), were victims of a racist motivated attack. A number of people were reportedly wounded with machetes, houses were attacked, causing the destruction of three and money was stolen. Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of those affected including Johnny Rivas and his family.

As soon as the attacks by a group of armed men started, some of those whose houses were being targeted went to the home of Johnny Rivas, coordinator of ASOMILIN, Asociaciones Solidarias de Trabajadores Migrantes de la Línea Noroeste (Solidarity association of migrant workers in the Northwest region) to ask for help. He phoned the police who were not able to intervene as there was only one police officer on call that night.

The following morning, on 29 October Johnny Rivas went to a sister organisation, Solidaridad Fronteriza (Border solidarity), based in the town of Dajabón near the Haitian Border to report the attack and seek assistance. They sent a delegation to investigate the incident and raised their concerns with the police and military authorities.

Later on that day, a group of people gathered around Johnny Rivas's house and reprimanded him for raising the issue with other organizations and for his work in favour of Haitian migrant workers and Dominicans of Haitian descent. They told him that getting involved in these issues is dangerous and he could be shot for it.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Racist and xenophobic attacks against Haitian migrant workers and Dominicans of Haitian descent are reported frequently in the Dominican Republic. Amnesty International has received reports in recent years of Dominican citizens armed with firearms, sharp instruments, baseball bats and rocks attacking the homes and property of people believed to be Haitian, often solely on the basis of the colour of their skin, and causing serious injuries and even death.

Although the authorities intervene in some cases to try to contain infuriated mobs and prevent further acts of violence, racist and xenophobic attacks are seldom investigated in a thorough and impartial manner and those responsible are rarely held accountable.

A preliminary report presented by the UN appointed Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the UN appointed Independent Expert on minority issues after a visit in October 2007, concluded that there is a "profound and entrenched problem of racism and discrimination" against blacks in general – and Haitians in particular

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Johnny Rivas and Haitian migrant workers and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the community of Ranchadero, which is located in the municipality of Guayabín ;
- urging the authorities to ensure that they receive protection, in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for a thorough and impartial investigation into the armed racist attack against the community of Ranchadero on 28 October and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Secretary of State for the Interior and Police

Sr. Franklin Almeyda Rancier

Secretario de Estado de Interior y Policía

Avenida de México, esq. Leopoldo Navarro,

Edif. Oficinas Gubernamentales,

Santo Domingo, República Dominicana

Fax: +1 809 685 1194

Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

Chief of Police

Mayor General Ingeniero Guillermo Guzman Fermin
Jefe de la Policía Nacional
Oficina del Jefe de la Policía Nacional
Palacio del la Policía Nacional
Santo Domingo, República Dominicana
Fax: +1 809 685 4510
Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

COPIES TO:

ASOMILIN- Johnny Rivas
c/o Solidaridad Fronteriza
c/Manuel Roca n.13, Esq. P.Santa Anna
Dajabón, República Dominicana
Fax: +1 809 579 7012

and to diplomatic representatives of Dominican Republic accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 December 2007.
