

URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREATS TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

On 7 June Julio Cesar Rosero, a lawyer representing the family of a victim of an extrajudicial execution in Valle del Cauca Department, South-Western Colombia, received an email telling him he and others would be killed if members of the armed forces were convicted for the killing.

On 7 June **Julio Cesar Rosero**, a lawyer representing **Jenny Torres**, a member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE), received an email with death threats saying: “this message is for the lawyer Julio Cesar Rosero, for Martha Giraldo and all her organization of bandits, for Jenny Torres ... if the soldiers are convicted, the lawyer and *la negra* [Jenny Torres] will die, last warning, this is serious, very serious” (*este mensaje es para el abogado Julio Cesar Rosero, para Martha Giraldo y toda su organización de vandoleros [sic], para Jenny Torres ... si condenan a los militares muere el abogado y la negra ultima advertencia [sic] es en serio muy enserio [sic]*).

Julio Cesar Rosero is representing Jenny Torres in the trial of eight members of a Special Forces group of the armed forces. On 14 January 2007 Jenny Torres' husband, Edison Yimel Villanueva, and three other men were killed in the village of La Reforma, a rural area of Cali, Valle del Cauca Department. They were later falsely presented as guerrillas killed in combat. A captain, a lieutenant, a sergeant and five soldiers of the Urban Counter-Terrorism Special Forces Group (*Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Urbanas*, AFEUR) and the Group of Unified Action for Personal Liberty (*Grupo de Acción Unificada por la Libertad Personal*, GAULA) are currently on trial for the killings.

Martha Giraldo, one of the leaders of MOVICE in Valle del Cauca Department has received numerous death threats. She has been campaigning against extrajudicial executions. In March 2011 a sergeant in military intelligence was convicted of the extrajudicial execution of her father.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Express concern for the security situation of Julio Cesar Rosero, Jenny Torres and Martha Giraldo, calling on the authorities to ensure protection measures for those threatened in agreement with them;
- Urge the authorities to fully and impartially investigate the threats against them and prosecute those responsible;
- Demand commitment from the authorities to take decisive action to end extrajudicial executions and guarantee the protection of those campaigning for justice in line with United Nations human rights recommendations;
- Remind the authorities to fulfil their obligations to ensure human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JULY 2011 TO:

President

Señor Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente 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**

Defense Minister

Señor Rodrigo Rivera Salazar
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Carrera 54, no.26-29
 Bogotá COLOMBIA
 Fax: +57 1 266 1003 (say “me da
 tono de fax, por favor”)

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

And copies to:

NGO
 MOVICE
 K9 n° 4-53
 Barrio San Antonio
 Santiago de Cali
 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

Julio Cesar Rosero and Jenny Torres also received death threats on 2 June in a text message sent to both of them: "Son-of-a-bitch you are going to die for snitching on the heroes of the fatherland, greetings to *la negra* [Jenny Torres] son-of-a-bitch guerrillas" (*Hijo de puta te vas a morir por sapo at [sic] los héroes de la patria saludes a negra hp guerrilleros*).

During the 45-year-old armed conflict, extrajudicial executions carried out by the security forces as part of their counter-insurgency strategy have been widespread. The Attorney General's Office is investigating more than 2,000 cases of such killings reportedly committed by the security forces. Those campaigning for justice in these cases have repeatedly been subjected to death threats or have been killed, mainly by paramilitaries either acting alone or with the collusion of the security forces.

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 organization has documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups.

Members of MOVICE in Sucre Department, Northern Colombia, who are campaigning for the return of lands stolen by paramilitary groups, often with the support of the security forces, have repeatedly faced death threats. On 2 June Ingrid Vergara, one of the leaders of the MOVICE Sucre branch and Adriana Porras, a member of the Sucre leader network, received an email with death threats.

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