

URGENT ACTION

AFRO-DESCENDENT MEN FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

Francisco Pineda and Everto González, two members of the community council of Caracolí, north-west Colombia, have been subjected to enforced disappearance by paramilitaries. Amnesty International fears their lives and the lives of other members of the Afro-descendant community may be at risk.

On 1 August a group of paramilitaries was seen approaching **Francisco Pineda**, a member of the community council of Caracolí, in La Florida area in the Curvaradó River Basin region. They then told him they were going to “resolve some land issues” and took him with them. Later on the same day, Francisco Pineda managed to contact his relatives to inform them he was being held by paramilitaries. His relatives have not heard from him since and his whereabouts remain unknown.

On 23 July, **Everto González**, also a member of the community council of Caracolí, was approached by a paramilitary group in Gengadó Medio, Curvaradó River Basin region. They told him “you must come with us, we are going to resolve the land problem”. He was forced to leave with them and has not been seen since. On 1 August relatives and neighbours of his nephew, **Álvaro González**, were told by paramilitaries that they were now looking for Álvaro González to kill him.

Many members of the Afro-descendant communities in the area, including members of the community councils, have been threatened by paramilitaries because of the stance they have adopted in defence of their land rights and against palm oil companies. **Enrique Petro**, leader of the community council of Andalucía, is among those recently threatened with death. Paramilitary activities have been repeatedly denounced in the area of the Curvaradó River Basin, in areas where members of the XVII Brigade of the armed forces are present.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Express concern for the safety of Francisco Pineda, Everto González, Álvaro González, Enrique Petro, and other members of the Afro-descendant community;
- Call on the authorities to do everything necessary to establish the whereabouts of Francisco Pineda and Everto González, and to guarantee their safety and the safety of Álvaro González, Enrique Petro and other members of the Afro-descendant community who have been threatened;
- Call on them to launch a full, impartial and independent investigation into the enforced disappearance of Francisco Pineda and Everto González and death threats against Alvaro González, Enrique Petro and other members of the Afro-descendant community, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urge them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other bodies.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 SEPTEMBER 2011 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

Salutation: Dear President Santos/

Estimado.Sr. Presidente Santos

Minister of Interior and Justice

Señor Germán Vargas Lleras
 Ministerio Del Interior y De Justicia
 Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá,
 Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 599 8961

Salutation: Dear Minister Vargas/

Estimado Sr. Ministro Vargas

And copies to:

Human rights organization

Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz
 Calle 61A, No. 17-26 (Chapinero),
 Bogotá, Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

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

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Residents of the Curvaradó and neighbouring Jiguamiandó River Basins were driven off their land in 1997 by paramilitaries, who have since killed over 100 members of these communities, leaving the land free for illegal plantations of African palm. After the national government recognized their collective land title in 2000, many of those members of Afro-descendant communities who had been driven off their land returned to find that it had been illegally occupied by African palm and other commercial farming interests. As well as continual threats and killings, those who returned have faced repeated attempts by African palm growers to falsify title deeds to the land to drive them off again, despite the fact that their collective land title has been recognized by the government.

The residents of Caracolí returned to the area in 2007. Since then, many of their members have been threatened and killed by paramilitary groups either acting alone or in collusion with the government armed forces. In 2000 Jorge González, Everto González's brother, was killed by paramilitaries because he refused to give the land to paramilitaries.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States has repeatedly called on the Colombian authorities to take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of members of the Afro-descendant communities of Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó. However, the Colombian authorities have failed to take effective action to implement the Court's requests.

The NGO Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace (Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz), working with the communities in the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River Basins has documented two enforced disappearances, eight displacements and threats to 32 people, including members of community councils, since Santos government took office.

Name: Francisco Pineda, Everto González, Álvaro González, Enrique Petro
Gender m/f: all male

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