

URGENT ACTION

MAN WHO SAW BROTHER'S MURDER THREATENED

Gersaín Rodríguez witnessed his brother's murder by Colombian paramilitaries in January. His son and his nephew have been forcibly disappeared within the last decade. On 30 October paramilitaries beat and tried to kidnap him. Amnesty International believes his life is in danger.

On 30 October **Gersaín Rodríguez** was driving his motorbike in Zarzal Municipality, Valle del Cauca Department, Colombia, when a car containing three men blocked his path, forcing him to stop. One of the men beat him and apparently attempted to take him away, but Gersaín Rodríguez managed to keep hold of his motorbike and flee. The men followed him until he encountered the local police commander and asked him for help. The commander said that he could do nothing.

On 31 October a friend received a text message while she was with Gersaín Rodríguez. It said: "Very happy with the triumph? You will be more happy when you see what we can do to Gersaín" (*Muy contenta con el triunfo? Más contenta se va a poner cuando vea lo que le vamos a hacer a Gersaín*). Gersaín Rodríguez went to the police and the commander told him that he should not denounce the threat to the Attorney General's office.

On 10 January Gersaín Rodríguez witnessed the killing of his brother, Libardo Rodríguez, by paramilitaries. His son and nephew were forcibly disappeared in 2003 and 2006. Gersaín Rodríguez is a member of the Nydia Erika Bautista Human Rights Foundation and one of the leaders of the families of forcibly disappeared people in Zarzal Municipality campaigning for information on their relatives. Since witnessing his brother's murder, Gersaín Rodríguez has repeatedly requested protection measures, which have not been granted.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Express concern for Gersaín Rodríguez's safety and call for protection measures to guarantee his safety, in line with his wishes;
- Call on the authorities to launch a full and impartial investigation into the attack, threats and attempted kidnapping of Gersaín Rodríguez as well as the killing of Libardo Rodríguez, and to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urge the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break any links to the security forces, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 DECEMBER 2011 TO:

President

Juan Manuel Santos
Señor 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**

Minister of Interior

Germán Vargas Lleras
Ministerio Del Interior
Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá, Colombia
Fax: +57 1 242 7400 ext 2351 say "me da tono por favor"

**Salutation: Dear Minister Vargas/
Estimado Sr. Ministro Vargas**

Attorney General

Sra. Viviane Morales
Fiscal General de la Nación
Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C
Piso 4, Bogotá, Colombia
Fax: +57 1 570 2000 ext 2023 "me da tono por favor"

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Estimada Sra. Fiscal General**

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**



URGENT ACTION

MAN WHO SAW BROTHER'S MURDER THREATENED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Earlier this year, after the witnesses denounced the killing of Libardo Rodríguez to the Office of the Attorney General, one of the witnesses received a call on his mobile phone from the alleged killer asking if “the death had hurt him much” (*le había dolido mucho el muerto*) and made a reference to the recent statements made to the Office of the Attorney General. In another call he was told “we are also going to kill you” (*también lo matamos*). It is not clear how the paramilitary who allegedly killed Libardo Rodríguez obtained the number of the mobile phone of the witness he called. This is especially concerning given that the calls happened shortly after the witness gave his testimony at the Office of the Attorney General.

Gersaín Rodríguez's son Gersaín Andrés Rodríguez, was forcibly disappeared from his grandmother's house in Medellín and his body was found on 19 June 2003 in Guarne Municipality, Antioquia Department. His brother's son, Julián Alberto Rodríguez López, was forcibly disappeared in 2006

Human right defenders and those campaigning for justice have been particularly vulnerable to threats and killings in recent years. Most of these attacks are attributed to paramilitary groups often operating in collusion with the security forces. Guerrilla groups have also targeted human rights defenders and other social activists deemed to be a threat to their interests.

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, in Valle de Cauca and elsewhere, that they are still operating.

Name: Gersaín Rodríguez

Gender m/f: male