

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RECEIVES DEATH THREAT

**Hector Berríos, a community activist and human rights lawyer in Cabañas, a department of El Salvador, received death threats by phone on 23 January. Amnesty International believes he is being targeted for his human rights work, and is at risk.**

On 23 January, at 12.20 pm **Hector Berríos** received a phone call on his landline from an unknown man who claimed to be a friend, and asked where Hector was. Around a minute later, the same person called Hector Berríos' mobile phone, saying that they had been paid a lot of money to kill him, or a member of his family "Nos han pagado mucho dinero para asesinarlo...ya sea a vos o a uno de tu familia". The man continued by saying "We have been watching you in San Isidro and Mejicanos, we have got you close, look, we know you work for the people" ("...Te hemos estado observando en San Isidro y Mejicanos, te tenemos cerca, mira sabemos que trabajas para la gente..."). The caller made an offer to Hector Berríos: if Hector withdrew from his work, they would not kill him. At this point Hector Berríos put the phone down.

The previous day, on 22 January, starting at 10.00 pm Hector Berríos received ten anonymous phone calls. He has not received further calls.

Hector Berríos' activism in his community has resulted in threats and intimidation before, due to his campaigns against mining, impunity and his legal defence of human rights activists. Hector Berríos has received threats on previous occasions. On 7 October 2009, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ruled that El Salvador should provide protection to Hector Berríos. However, despite the demands from the IACHR, Hector Berríos has not yet received appropriate protection, and remains at risk.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging that the authorities take immediate steps to fully comply with the IACHR order of 7 October 2009. The form of protection provided to Hector Berríos must be agreed with him and reflect his own wishes
- Calling for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Hector Berríos, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 MARCH 2011 TO:

#### Attorney General

Romeo Benjamín Barahona Meléndez

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República

Final 4ª Calle Oriente y 19ª Avenida

Sur, Residencial Primavera,

Santa Tecla, La Libertad, San Salvador,

Salvador

Fax: +503 2523 7409

**Salutation: Estimado Sr.**

**Fiscal/Dear Attorney General**

#### Human Rights Director, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs

David Morales

Director General de Derechos Humanos

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de

El Salvador - Calle El Pedregal, Blvd.

Cancillería. Ciudad Merliot, Antiguo

Cuscatlan El Salvador

Fax: +503 2231 1152

**Salutation: Estimado Director/ Dear Director**

**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

Amnesty International has issued various urgent actions on the situation of human rights defenders in the Cabañas department of El Salvador in 2009 and 2010. (UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29/001/2009 Issue Date: 27 August 2009).

Gustavo Marcelo Rivera, an environmental activist, was killed on 30 June 2009. Later on that year, his brother Ramiro Rivera, a community leader who campaigned against mining in the area and against impunity in his brother's case, survived an armed attack in August and was eventually killed in December. Also in August 2009, Héctor Antonio García Berríos was warned by a man he knew that if he and Gustavo Marcelo Rivera's brother, Miguel Rivera continued campaigning for justice for the murder, their lives would be at risk. (UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29/001/2009 Issue Date: 27 August 2009).

On 26 December 2009, another member of the Cabañas Environment Committee was killed. Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto, who was eight months pregnant, was shot dead, and her two-year-old child was wounded. (Amnesty International Urgent Action Further information on UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29/001/2010 Issue Date: 4 January 2010).

UA: 13/11 Index: AMR 29/001/2011 Issue Date: 25 January 2011

