

URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKING FARMER MISSING IN VENEZUELA

Franklin Brito Rodríguez, a farmer, went missing from a military hospital in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, on 9 January. Staff at the hospital, where he is being treated for the effects of a hunger strike, are said to have sedated him and taken him from his bed. There has been no news of his whereabouts since then.

Franklin Brito Rodríguez a farmer from the village of La Tigresa, Bolivar state, southeastern Venezuela, has been on hunger strike since July 2009, outside the office of the intergovernmental body, the Organization of American States (OAS) in Caracas. In December 2009, the Public Prosecutor's Office requested a court order to put him in hospital, as they feared for his health. This court order was granted, and Franklin Brito has been in a military hospital under military guard since 10 December, a decision that he and his family contested, demanding that he be treated by a doctor of his choice. An appeal against the court order was rejected on 21 December.

On 9 January, hospital staff told Franklin Brito's daughter, who was visiting him, that he was being taken for therapy. She says that they sedated him before taking him away. His family has not seen him since or been told where he is, and they are concerned for his safety. On 11 January, after Franklin Brito was taken away from hospital, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on the Venezuelan government to allow him visits as well as access and treatment from a doctor of his choice, or one provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Franklin Brito began protesting in 2006 against a decision by the Instituto Nacional de Tierras (National Land Institute), a government body, to take ownership of some of his land. This decision appeared to be in reprisal for allegations he made that the mayor of the nearby city of Sucre was corrupt. His protests have included several hunger strikes. According to sources in Venezuela, the central government has given him back ownership of the disputed land and offered him compensation. However, the authorities have failed to evict a group of people who have occupied this land, leading Franklin Brito to begin his most recent hunger strike.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- urging the authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Franklin Brito Rodríguez, to guarantee his safety and ensure he has access to the health care of his choice;
- calling on them to guarantee that he is able to keep in contact with his family and lawyers;
- asking the authorities to inform you of the actions they have taken in response to Franklin Brito Rodríguez's demands in relation to his land.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Tarek El Aissami
Ministerio del Poder Popular para
Relaciones Interiores y Justicia
Av. Urdaneta, Edif. Sede MIJ, Piso 1,
Carmelitas, Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 506 1557

Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister

Attorney General

Dra. Luisa Ortega Díaz
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
Avda. México, Manduca a Pelelojo,
Edif. Sede Fiscalía General de la
República, La Candelaria, Caracas,
Venezuela

Fax: +58 212 509 8504

Email: mp@fiscalia.gov.ve

**Salutation: Señora Fiscal General/
Dear Attorney General**

AND COPIES TO:

Human rights organization
PROVEA

Bulevar Panteón, Puente Trinidad a
Tienda Honda, Edif. Centro Plaza
Las Mercedes, PB. Local 6
Apartado Postal 5156, Carmelitas
1010-A, Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: +58 212 862 1011

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKING FARMER MISSING IN VENEZUELA

UA: 13/10 Index: AMR 53/001/2010 Issue Date: 15 January 2010

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

