

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK, 40+ DAYS OF VIGIL

84-year-old human rights defender Amparo Carvajal has spent over 45 days in vigil in cold temperatures outside the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights in Bolivia (APDHB) in La Paz. On 2 June, dozens of people raided the APDHB's office (of which Amparo is president) and forced staff to abandon the premises. On 12 July, Amparo managed to enter the offices by way of a ladder and has been sleeping on the roof of the office for days with no access to water nor bathroom or proper shelter. She and her colleagues are the subject of threats and intimidation. The APDHB offices remain occupied, and dozens of police are blocking the entrance. We demand authorities allow Amparo and members of the APDHB to enter the offices to carry out their human rights work, as well as guarantee their health, physical integrity, and safety.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of Bolivia
Luis Arce Catacora
Zona Central
Calle Ayacucho Esq. Potosí
La Paz – Bolivia
Email: minpres@presidencia.gob.bo
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Dear President Arce,

I am gravely concerned over the safety of Amparo Carvajal, president of the Permanent Assembly on Human Rights (APDHB), who has been sleeping for days on the roof of the APDHB's office with no access to water or a bathroom. Dozens of police officers block the entrance and remain stationed outside.

Amparo Carvajal had already spent weeks sleeping on the street outside the APDHB's office in almost freezing temperatures. On 12 July, a constitutional judge ordered the people occupying the APDHB offices to cease the psychological intimidation of Amparo and allow her access to a bathroom, for her health and safety.

I call on you to urgently ensure the health, physical integrity and safety of Amparo Carvajal and her colleagues, ensuring compliance with the Resolution 56/2023 of the Constitutional judge of La Paz.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Permanent Assembly on Human Rights in Bolivia (APDHB) was established in 1976 and is a confederation of volunteer lawyers and human rights defenders throughout Bolivia that offer pro bono legal assistance to victims of human rights violations as well as raising awareness about rule of law, justice and impunity in the country.

Amnesty International has documented how human rights defenders in Bolivia are routinely subjected to harassment, stigmatization, and threats from authorities. In 2018, we released a [public statement](#) about Amparo Carvajal, who was subject to unfounded criminalizing accusations against her.

According to personnel of the APDHB, the organization attends to approximately 10 to 15 people each day who come to their La Paz offices to seek legal advice and assistance. Throughout the country, the APDH also has representatives in each department of the country. On the 2 June, approximately 50 people stormed their offices, forcing the three volunteer lawyers and the secretary of the organization to abandon the premises. The information provided points to the involvement of figures involved with the ruling political party, who during 2021 and 2022 made attempts to revoke the status of Amparo Carvajal as the president of the APDHB and undermine her registration status in the national tax office.

Since the raid on the offices, several key documents of the APDHB appear to have been stolen, destroyed or removed from the offices. The APDHB works on several cases of grave human rights violations. Many of the APDHB's documents have been stolen or destroyed and the legal defense provided by the organization's lawyers has been brought to a halt.

Legal representatives of the APDHB filed a complaint before the public prosecutor's office in relation to the raid on its offices. Nevertheless, the public prosecutor rejected this complaint and has failed to open an investigation into the events.

Personnel of the APDHB told Amnesty International that representatives of the Human Rights Ombudsman's office visited Amparo Carvajal's encampment outside the APDHB office yet has done little to restore her or her colleagues to their premises.

On 12 July, Amparo Carvajal made her way onto the roof of the office of the APDHB by way of a ladder. Since then, the people that are occupying the offices have been denying her access to a bathroom or water and have also threatened her. On the same day, 12 July, a Constitutional judge ordered the people occupying the premises to cease their harassment against Amparo and to ensure her access to basic services. Noncompliance of the judicial resolution would involve a public prosecutor ensuring its enforcement. Authorities have also failed to provide access for Amparo's independent doctor and psychologist to be able to attend to her. Food is transported to her by way of a ladder, yet she had had no proper access to a bathroom for days, and this is seriously affecting her health.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 August 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Amparo Carvajal (She/hers)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr18/6937/2023/en/>