

URGENT ACTION

MEMBERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP THREATENED

Members of a Colombian human rights organization supporting land restitution and the peace process have received a series of death threats by phone. Their safety is at risk.

On 22 February, **Diego Martínez**, the executive secretary of the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH), received a call on his landline in Bogotá, the capital, and was told "With pleasure we have a plot at the cemetery completely free for you" (*Con gusto tenemos un lote en el cementerio totalmente gratis para Usted*). The next day, on 23 February, a man telephoned the CPDH office asking for Diego Martínez and, when he was asked to identify himself, said: "Do you know how snitches die? Snitch" (*¿Usted sabe como mueren los sapos? ¡Sapa!*).

On 28 February, **Hugo Salazar**, who is in charge of protection at CPDH, received a phone call in which he was called a snitch. CPDH also reported that its members **Erika Gómez, César Murillo** and **Nathalia Ruano** had been under surveillance by unidentified individuals in Bogotá on repeated occasions in the past months.

CPDH has been campaigning to ensure that the victims of human rights violations and human rights organizations are heard at the negotiating table in Havana, where the Colombian government and the country's main guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC), are holding peace talks. For many decades CPDH has been representing victims of human rights violations committed by the security forces in legal proceedings, including proceedings related to extrajudicial executions, such as recently in the Sumapaz region of Cundinamarca Department. CPDH is also representing peasant farmers who were forcibly displaced in their legal proceedings to achieve sustainable land restitution, in cases such as the La Europa farm in Sucre Department and the Tranquilandia farm in Magdalena Department.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Diego Martínez, Hugo Salazar, Erika Gómez, César Murillo, Nathalia Ruano and other members of CPDH, urging the authorities to take measures to guarantee their safety, in strict accordance with their wishes and needs;
- Calling on them to order a full and impartial investigation into the threats and surveillance, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 APRIL 2015 TO:

President

Juan Manuel Santos
 Presidente de la República
 Casa de Nariño
 Calle 7. No 6-54.
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631

**Salutation: Dear President Santos/
 Excmo Sr Presidente Santos**

Attorney General

Eduardo Montealegre
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Diagonal 22B No. 52-01 (Ciudad Salitre)
 Bloque C Piso 4
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax +57 1 570 2000 (when recorded
 voice answers, dial ext 2023)

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
 Estimado Sr. Fiscal General**

And copies to:

CPDH

Carrera 6 No 12-21
 Bogotá, Colombia

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

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict, members of human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been labelled as guerrilla collaborators or supporters by the security forces and paramilitaries. As a result they are often killed, threatened or subjected to enforced disappearance. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders they consider to be siding with the enemy.

The Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH) was founded in 1979 following the first national forum for human rights. Their main office is in the capital, Bogotá, but they also have 15 other offices in different parts of Colombia. According to CPDH, since its formation 54 leading figures of the organization have been killed. CPDH considers these killings are part of an attempt to silence them and stop them from condemning institutional abuses against the civilian population in the context of the armed conflict. Members of CPDH are still being threatened, harassed or intimidated.

In 1994, 12 peasant farmers were killed and 80 displaced from La Europa farm in Ovejas Municipality, Sucre Department, by paramilitaries. Some peasant farmers returned in 2010 and have faced repeated threats and harassment. Their homes have been repeatedly burnt down. On 12 June 2014, Andrés Narváez Reyes, the vice-president of the Peasant Farmer Association La Europa, was threatened and shot at by the foreman of the company claiming the land of La Europa farm. Andrés Narváez Reyes had to be taken to hospital, but survived the attack. For many years CPDH has been supporting the peasant farmers of La Europa to get their land back, and in March 2013 the peasant farmers of La Europa filed a request for land restitution under the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448). In February 2015 CPDH expressed concern that the protection scheme for Andrés Narváez Reyes provided by the government had been removed at a time when the gunman was due to be released from prison.

CPDH is also working with the peasant farmer community of Tranquilandia, Magdalena Department, who are also claiming their land back under Law 1448. In December 2014 paramilitaries issued death threats in a pamphlet. For more information about the Tranquilandia case and the land restitution process and its obstacles, see the report: *A land title is not enough: Ensuring sustainable land restitution in Colombia* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/0031/2014/en/>). Those claiming land restitution, human rights defenders and lawyers supporting them have been the target of numerous serious human rights violations in recent years.

Name: Diego Martínez (m), Hugo Salazar (m), Erika Gómez (f), César Murillo (m), Nathalia Ruano (f) and other members of CPDH
Gender m/f: both

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