

URGENT ACTION

PEASANT LEADER THREATENED, COMMUNITY AT RISK

Miguel Briceño, a leader of the peasant farmer community El Porvenir in central Colombia has been threatened yet again. There are fears that the community of El Porvenir might be forcibly displaced in a climate of general insecurity.

On 18 June **Miguel Briceño**, a community leader of **El Porvenir**, Puerto Gaitán Municipality, Meta Department, received a threatening phone call from a man who identified himself as a commander of the paramilitary Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia). The commander warned Miguel Briceño that the paramilitary group had been following him and his family. The man demanded a meeting with Miguel Briceño and 14 other people, saying that they would become a military target if they did not comply. In recent weeks three men, who are not community members, have been killed on the El Porvenir lands, which has caused fear among the peasant farmer community of El Porvenir and could lead to the forced displacement of the community.

The peasant farmers of El Porvenir have been working on the vast savannah grazing their cattle for about half a century. In the 1990s the state institution charged with allocating state-owned land to landless peasant farmers illegally adjudicated the land to Víctor Carranza, who until his death in 2013 was one of the country's most powerful emerald entrepreneurs, and who was long suspected of having strong links to paramilitary groups. In July 2014, following requests from Colombian human rights organizations, the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural, INCODER) issued a resolution revoking the illegal land titles. President Juan Manuel Santos stated on 18 April that Víctor Carranza's heirs had returned the land to the State, but the heirs' representatives remain on the land and are fencing it off to deny access to the peasant farmers of El Porvenir.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Miguel Briceño and other members of the peasant farmer community of El Porvenir, which may lead to the forced displacement of the community, and urging the authorities to provide effective protection for them in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into threats against Miguel Briceño, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to take immediate action to effectively implement the INCODER resolution from July 2014;
- Urging them to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups and break the links between them and the security forces.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 AUGUST 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**

Minister of Agriculture and Rural
Development
Aurelio Iragorri Valencia
Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo
Rural
Avenida Jiménez No 7-1765, Piso 3
Bogotá, Colombia
Email:
despachoministro@minagricultura.gov.co
**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado
Sr. Ministro**

And copies to:
NGO
Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez
Bello
Carrera 15 No 14-41
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. This is the first update of UA 82/15. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/1417/2015/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the long-running armed conflict in Colombia, human rights defenders, as well as Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant farmer communities, have endured the brunt of the conflict. All the warring parties – the security forces, either alone or in collusion with paramilitary groups, and guerrilla forces – are responsible for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including killings, enforced disappearances or abductions, torture, crimes of sexual violence and forced displacement. Over the course of the conflict about eight million hectares of land have been abandoned or dispossessed.

Leaders of displaced communities and those seeking the return of stolen lands have been killed or threatened, especially since the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448) was approved in June 2011 and came into force at the beginning of 2012. This law acknowledges the existence of an armed conflict in the country, and the rights of its victims. It provides for reparations, including land restitution, for many survivors of human rights abuses, including those perpetrated by state agents. However, many other victims of the conflict will be excluded from making claims for reparation, while significant areas of stolen land might still not be returned to their rightful owners. For more information about the land restitution process and its obstacles, see the report: *A land title is not enough: Ensuring sustainable land restitution in Colombia* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR23/031/2014/en/>).

The peasant farmers of El Porvenir are trying to get legal ownership over the land they have been living on for half a century through INCODER, which adjudicates state-owned land under Law 160. Action from INCODER is necessary so that the people from El Porvenir, and in many other cases related to state-owned lands, can obtain a land title. Although INCODER recognized that the land had been illegally adjudicated, Víctor Carranza's heirs remain on the peasant farmers' land in El Porvenir. State authorities have failed to take material possession of El Porvenir, almost a year after acknowledging the illegal adjudication. For more information about the El Porvenir case, see *Powerless: the fight for land in Porvenir* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/02/powerless-the-fight-for-land-in-porvenir/>).

Name: Miguel Briceño (m), members of the peasant farmer community of El Porvenir
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 82/15 Index: AMR 23/1930/2015 Issue Date: 23 June 2015