

# URGENT ACTION

## PARAMILITARIES THREATEN RIGHTS ORGANISATION

**Human rights defenders working with forcibly displaced people in Barrancabermeja, Northern Colombia, received three death threats from paramilitaries on 13 and 14 May. Their families are also at risk.**

On 13 May, a death threat was written on the wall of the office of the non-governmental human rights organization, **National Association of Solidarity Help (Asociación Nacional de Ayudas Solidarias, ANDAS)** in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, which is situated in an area known as the Magdalena Medio. On 14 May, **María Ravelo Grimaldo**, a member of ANDAS, found two additional death threats in the office, written as pamphlets. The first pamphlet was signed by the "Anti Restitution Army Magdalena Medio" and read: "Death to the snitches disguised as guerrillas, shielding themselves as human rights defenders" (Muerte a los sapos camuflaje de guerrilla escudos [sic] como defensores de derechos humanos). The text referred to the death threat written on the office wall and gave them 24 hours to leave the city. It named María Ravelo Grimaldo, **Alexander Trejos** and **Elías Ardilla** and warned there would be no compassion with them or their children. All three are members of ANDAS and the Magdalena Medio branch of the **National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE)**.

The second pamphlet, also found on 14 May, again named all three members of ANDAS and was signed by a paramilitary group calling itself "Botalones" (the name comes from the alias "Botalón", a former regional paramilitary commander). It congratulated them on the process of Villa Dignidad and told them that they should buy a coffin. The Villa Dignidad process refers to 130 forcibly displaced families who occupied a piece of land four years ago. The government evicted them and assigned a new piece of land which the displaced families did not consider adequate. ANDAS and MOVICE Magdalena Medio are supporting the families and have managed to initiate a dialogue with the local administration.

### Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to guarantee the safety of María Ravelo Grimaldo, Alexander Trejos, Elías Ardilla, their families and other members of ANDAS and MOVICE Magdalena Medio, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Urge them to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats received by members of ANDAS and MOVICE Magdalena Medio, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Remind them to fulfil their obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Call for them to take action to dismantle paramilitary groups in line with repeated United Nations human rights recommendations.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JULY 2013 TO:

#### President

Presidente Juan Manuel Santos  
 Presidente de la República, Palacio de  
 Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 596 0631  
**Salutation: Dear President Santos/  
 Excmo Sr. Presidente Santos**

#### Minister of Interior

Fernando Carrillo Flórez  
 Ministerio del Interior  
 Calle 12 B No 8-46, Piso 1  
 Bogotá  
 Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 283 9876  
**Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Sr.  
 Ministro**

#### And copies to:

ANDAS  
 Carrera 18 No 48-18  
 Barrio Colombia  
 Barrancabermeja  
 Colombia

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

In recent months Amnesty International has received information about a number of death threats against human rights defenders in the Magdalena Medio region, for example against members of the Popular Women's Organization (Organización Femenina Popular, OFP), the Space of Human Rights Workers in Barrancabermeja (Espacio de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de Derechos Humanos, ETTDH) (see UA 42/13 Index: AMR 23/008/2013 Colombia; <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/008/2013/en>). Several of the threats in late February were aimed at Lilia Peña Silva, president of the Magdalena Medio Victims of State Crime Association (Asociación Regional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado en el Magdalena Medio, ASORVIMM).

ANDAS is a human rights NGO supporting forcibly displaced people. In Barrancabermeja they have been working with forcibly displaced people in the community of Villa Dignidad. Human rights defenders working with forcibly displaced populations have repeatedly faced death threats and serious human rights violations carried out by the security forces and paramilitaries operating with their support.

MOVICE is a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. Its members have documented and exposed many cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups.

During the armed conflict in Colombia, which has lasted over four decades, the security forces and paramilitary groups have frequently labelled human rights organizations and trade unions as guerrilla collaborators or supporters, and have gone on to threaten, abduct or kill them. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders and trade unionists they consider to be siding with their enemies.

Name: María Ravelo Grimaldo (f), Alexander Trejos (m), Elías Ardilla (m) and other members of ANDAS and MOVICE Magdalena Medio  
Gender m/f: both

UA: 133/13 Index: AMR 23/022/2013 Issue Date: 20 May 2013