

URGENT ACTION

COLOMBIAN ACTIVISTS RECEIVE DEATH THREATS

On 20 June, human rights defenders received death threats targeting other human rights defenders in Colombia. Members of these organizations are at risk.

On 20 June at 4.44 pm an SMS text message was received by the communications team of the Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace (Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz), a human rights organization that supports civilian communities in conflict regions in Colombia. Many of their members have been killed, tortured or forced to flee from their homes by the security forces and paramilitary groups. On the same day, Ayda Quilcué a former leader of the Cauca Department Indigenous Regional Council (Concejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, CRIC) received a death threat via SMS text to her mobile telephone. The messages mentioned other human rights organizations and trade unions, accusing them of being members of guerrilla groups and threatening them with death. Please see overleaf for details of organizations.

The Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace has been receiving protection from the government due to the risks faced as a result of their human rights work. The telephone which received the message is used in the context of their work and has been provided by (and formally belongs to) the National Protection Unit of the Ministry of Interior. The Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace has formally expressed concern on several occasions and requested meetings with the relevant authorities regarding the lack of proper implementation and inadequacy of the protection measures granted.

This death threat against the Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace follows a series of incidents in which members of the organisation have been intimidated, harassed, followed and subject to surveillance by unknown individuals.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the members of the organizations mentioned in the death threats and urge the authorities to take appropriate measures to protect them, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into these death threats and all the previous incidents. This is especially important considering that the mobile phone on which the Inter-Church Commission of Justice and Peace received the death threat formally belongs to the National Protection Unit. Publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding the Colombian authorities to fulfil their obligations regarding the protections of human rights defenders as specified in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 AUGUST 2012 TO:

President

Señor 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/
 Estimado.Sr. Presidente Santos**

Minister of Interior

Señor Federico Renjifo Vélez
 Ministerio Del Interior
 Carrera 8 No. 7-83, Bogotá, Colombia

**Salutation: Dear Minister Renjifo /
 Estimado Sr. Ministro Renjifo**

And copies to:

Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz
 Calle 61A, No. 17-26 (Chapinero),
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 346 3613

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

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission campaigns on behalf of civilian communities in conflict regions in Colombia, whose members have been killed, tortured or forced to flee from their homes by the security forces and paramilitary groups. Many of these communities have also been targeted by guerrilla groups.

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission has been supporting the cause of the Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities living in and around the Curvaradó, Jiguamiandó and Cacarica River Basins in the department of Chocó. These populations have faced repeated threats carried out by paramilitary forces advancing powerful economic interests. Over the last year the other organizations named above including Ayda Quilcué have received repeated death threats from paramilitary forces as a result of their work in support of the human rights of trade unions, Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities in the departments of Valle de Cauca and Cauca Departments.

Their human rights work with these communities and on important cases of impunity against senior members of the security forces has made them the target of threats and attacks. Over the years they have faced numerous attacks, including an illegal break-in to their office, death threats to its members, attempts of forced disappearance, kidnappings, attempted killings, as well as judicial persecution and defamation campaigns.

During Colombia's 45-year-old 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.

Organizations threatened via SMS text message:

The Social Research and Action Association (Asociación de Investigación y la Acción Social, NOMADESC), Association for the Integral Social Development (Asociación para el desarrollo social integral, ECATE), Permanent Human Rights Committee (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH), National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE), Trade Union Congress (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, CUT), Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos, CSPP).

Name: Ayda Quilcué (f) and other members of various organizations

Gender m/f: f and both

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