

URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNION LEADER AND FAMILY THREATENED

Colombian trade union leader Héctor Sánchez received a death threat on 16 July. In a separate incident information was stolen from an NGO in the capital, Bogotá. Both had taken part in a meeting to prepare a mock trial related to the oil industry.

A death threat, made up of letters cut from a newspaper, was left on 16 July at the home of trade union leader **Héctor Sánchez** from the Oil Workers' Trade Union (*Union Sindical Obrera de la Industria del Petróleo, USO*) in the city of Puerto Gaitan, in the central department region of Meta. It named his wife and son and read "our condolences for the loss of your wife and son, do not leave [your son] without a father and widow or do not become a widower" (*nuestro sentido pesame por la perdida de tu esposa y hijo no dejes [a tu hijo] sin padre y viuda o no te quedes viudo*). Héctor Sánchez had been organizing meetings for and participated as a witness in an "Oil Hearing" (*Audiencia Petrolera*), a meeting held on 13 and 14 July, in which trade unionists, Indigenous people and peasant farmers spoke about human rights abuses arising from the extractive industry. This meeting is to be followed by an mock trial of oil companies, to be held in August.

Laptop and desktop computers, and audio and video recordings, were stolen on 20 July from the office of the NGO Network of Brotherhood and Solidarity with Colombia (*Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia, REDHER*) in Bogotá, while money was not taken from a drawer that was searched. REDHER had been documenting the hearing and the situation in Puerto Gaitan and is supporting, along with other organizations, the preparation of the mock trial. At the same time the websites of REDHER and other organizations supporting the process such as the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (*Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos, CSPP*) had been hacked.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Héctor Sánchez and his family, and other members of USO and those taking part in the mock trial;
- Demanding that the authorities provide protection for those threatened, as agreed with those in danger;
- Calling on them to order a full and impartial investigation into the death threat against Héctor Sánchez and his family and the theft at the office of REDHER, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 SEPTEMBER 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**

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**

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

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

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNION LEADER AND FAMILY THREATENED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Trade unions, human rights organizations and other social organizations have often been labelled as guerrilla collaborators or supporters by government officials, as well as by the security forces and paramilitaries. Such accusations have often been followed by threats or attacks against human rights activists. Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for killing and threatening those they accuse of collaborating with their enemies.

Colombia is one of the countries with the highest rate of killings of trade unionists. Trade unionists face repeated death threats and killings in the context of labour disputes and calling for improvements of socio-economic rights.

USO trade unionists have been repeatedly threatened and have been the victims of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, committed by paramilitary forces, at times acting in collusion with the security forces. Some USO trade unionists have also been killed, such as Milton Parra, who was killed on 11 December 2012 in Puerto Gaitan, Meta Department. He had received a death threat which referred to his leadership in the union on the day he was killed.

Name: Héctor Sánchez (m) and his family
Gender m/f: both

UA: 191/13 Index: AMR 23/033/2013 Issue Date: 25 July 2013