

URGENT ACTION

ABDUCTED COMMUNITY ACTIVIST MAY BE DEAD

Information passed to relatives of missing community activist Juan Almonte Herrera in the Dominican Republic suggests that he may be dead. His family has been threatened and intimidated.

Juan Almonte Herrera, a member of Dominican community organization Mundo, was abducted by four armed men on 28 September after he was named as a suspect in a kidnapping case. Eyewitnesses identified the armed men as police officers. According to information passed to his relatives, it is likely that his is one of two burned bodies recently recovered in the capital, Santo Domingo. The bodies are currently being identified through DNA tests.

Since Juan Almonte's abduction, his relatives have been under surveillance by individuals identified by eyewitnesses as police officers. His relatives are followed by car and watched from the street in front of their house constantly. His sister has received anonymous telephone calls asking her to stop publicizing her brother's abduction.

Hours after Juan Almonte was abducted, police announced that they were searching for him in relation to a kidnapping. Two other men named as suspects in the same case, Cecilio Díaz and William de Jesús Checo Batista, died in police custody on 10 October. According to police reports, they died in an "exchange of fire" (*intercambios de disparos*) with police officers. However, the authorities who detained the two men have declared publicly that they handed them to the police alive. The public prosecutor heading an inquiry into these two deaths has ordered the arrest of two police officers pending the outcome of the inquiry. Another man named as a suspect in the kidnapping, Ramon Polanco, is missing. At least eight people are in custody in relation to the same kidnapping case. Amnesty International has received reports that some detainees have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- If one of the recovered bodies is identified as Juan Almonte, calling on the authorities urgently to establish the cause of his death;
- Urging them to protect his family, in accordance with their wishes, and to investigate reports that they have been harassed and intimidated, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to fully investigate the killings of Cecilio Díaz and William de Jesús Checo Batista, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that those detained in connection with the kidnapping are not subjected to enforced disappearance, and are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 DECEMBER 2009 TO:

Chief of Police

Mayor General Ingeniero Rafael
Guillermo Guzmán Fermín
Jefe de la Policía Nacional
Oficina del Jefe de la Policía Nacional
Palacio de la Policía Nacional
Santo Domingo, República Dominicana
Fax: +1 809 685 4510
**Salutation: Estimado Jefe de la Policía
Nacional/ Dear Chief of Police**

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Franklin Almeyda Rancier
Secretario de Estado del Interior y la
Policía
Ave. México, Esq.
Leopoldo Navarro, Edif. Oficinas
Gubernamentales,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Fax: +1 809 685 6599
**Salutation: Estimado Señor Secretario/
Dear Sir**

And copies to:

Attorney General

Sr. Radhamés Jiménez Peña
Procurador General de la República
Palacio de Justicia, Ave. Jiménez Moya
esq. Juan Ventura Simón,
Centro de los Heroes, Constanza,
Maimón y Estero Hondo.
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Fax: +1 809 533 4098

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 264/09 (AMR 27/006/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR27/006/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further Information on UA: 264/09 Index: AMR 27/007/2009 Issue Date: 21 October 2009

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