

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 28/009/2006

03 November 2006

Further Information on UA 134/06 (AMR 28/004/2006, 16 May 2006) and follow-up (AMR 28/005/2006, 8 June 2006) - Fear for safety

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| ECUADOR | Guadalupe de Heredia (f) | |
| | Her family | |
| | Dr Alejandro Ponce Villacís (m) |] |
| | Dr Pablo Fajardo Mendoza (m) |] Members of the legal team |
| | Ermel Chávez Parra (m) |] representing |
| | Cármen Allauca (f) |] indigenous communities in legal action |
| | Luis Yanza (m) |] against ChevronTexaco |
| | Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez (m) |] |

A group of people apparently tried to break into Guadalupe de Heredia's house during the night of 23 October, but fled after a security guard from a nearby building fired warning shots. The government are not thought to have complied with a December 2005 request from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to give protection to four of the lawyers named above, and Amnesty International believes that all those named above are in grave danger.

Guadalupe de Heredia was unaware of the attempted break-in, though she was asleep in her house at the time. According to reports, the following morning a security guard came to her house and told her that he had seen four men and a woman arrive at her house in a pick-up truck, and use a ladder to try to climb the wall. When he asked what they were doing, they told him it was their house. He fired several shots in the air to scare them off; the intruders fired several shots at him, and fled. Guadalupe de Heredia later tried to contact the security guard again, asking neighbours where he was, but he could not be found.

Guadalupe de Heredia reported the attempted break-in to the Pichincha District Attorney on 25 October. Amnesty International is not aware that any investigations ordered by the government into previous attacks and intimidation have made any progress.

Guadalupe de Heredia is the press officer of the legal team representing indigenous communities taking legal action against the multinational oil company ChevronTexaco for failing to clean up the pollution caused by decades of drilling in the oil-rich Sucumbios region. Amnesty International is concerned that the attempted break-in may have been an attempt to stop her from carrying out her work.

On 23 October, Guadalupe de Heredia had returned home after taking part in a conference of international NGOs working to address the pollution and human rights abuses associated with oil extraction, the *Foro Internacional de Petroleo, Derechos Humanos y Remediación Integral*. In the weeks leading up to the conference, in Coca, Orellana Province, Guadalupe de Heredia had given a number of radio interviews about the conference and the human rights violations allegedly committed by ChevronTexaco in Ecuador.

On 22 December 2005, the IACHR ordered the Ecuadorean government to provide protection to four of the lawyers named above, Alejandro Ponce Villacís, Pablo Fajardo Mendoza, Ermel Chávez Parra and Luis Yanza. On 28 April 2006, human rights NGOs petitioned the IACHR to extend these "precautionary measures" to Guadalupe de Heredia and Julio Marcelo Prieto Méndez. To Amnesty International's knowledge the Ecuadorean government has not yet given protection to any of the six.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Guadalupe de Heredia and her family;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation into the attempt to break into her house on the night of 23 October, with the findings made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to comply with the IACHR's request for precautionary measures, and to take steps to guarantee the safety all the legal team, in accordance with their own wishes.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Dr. Antonio Andretta Arizaga
Ministro de Gobierno, Policía, Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Benalcázar y Espejo, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: +593 2 2282770 – 295 5666 – 295 8677 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Minister of Energy and Mines

Ing. Iván Rodríguez Ramos
Ministro de Energía y Minas, Ministerio de Energía y Minas
Juan León Mera N° 26-220 y Orellana, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: +593 2 2906 350 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Acting Attorney General

Dra. Cecilia Armas Tobar
Ministra Fiscal Subrogante, Fiscalía General del Estado
Av. Eloy Alfaro N°32-240 y República, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: +593 2 255 9959 – 255 9957 – 255 9958 (ask for "Extension uno-zero-cuatro" and then "tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Acting Attorney General/Sra. Ministra Fiscal Subrogante

State Prosecutor

José María Borja Gallegos
Procurador General del Estado, Procuraduría General del Estado
Robles 731 y Av. Amazonas,
Quito-Ecuador

Fax: +593 2 2237 572

Salutation: Dear Procurator/Señor Procurador

COPIES TO:

Human rights organisation

Frente de la Defensa de la Amazonía
José Abscal E 1279
y Portete esquina, Quito, Ecuador

Email: casotexaco@uio.satnet.net

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 December 2006.