

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 28/016/2005

12 July 2005

Further Information on UA 147/05 (AMR 28/013/2005, 1 June 2005) Fear for safety/Death threat

ECUADOR **Staff at the non-governmental organization *Acción Ecológica***

A death threat was sent to *Acción Ecológica* on 5 July, in a text message to one of the mobile phones used by the organization. All the people who work for the organization are believed to be in danger.

The message arrived early in the morning, and said simply: *mueres hoy* (Today you die). The same day, *Acción Ecológica* reported the incident to the Minister of the Interior and the Acting Attorney General.

This threat is amongst a number of apparent attempts to intimidate members of *Acción Ecológica*. On 22 May, three computer hard disks were reportedly stolen from their offices. In addition, the filing cabinets were searched but the burglars ignored valuable equipment. Amnesty International is not aware that an investigation has been initiated into the burglary.

Acción Ecológica has been an outspoken critic of the Ecuadorian authorities' policy of allowing international oil companies to drill in the Amazon region, and of the fumigation of coca plantations near the Colombian border, because of the impact this might have on the lives and culture of indigenous groups and the environment. This appears to have led to the recent death threat, as well as the 22 May burglary, in which the organisation's offices were ransacked by people who ignored valuables but took computer disks containing information on indigenous communities campaigning against oil-drilling.

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

- expressing concern at the death threat sent to *Acción Ecológica* on 5 July, and asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- asking whether an investigation into the 22 May burglary of the *Acción Ecológica* offices has yet begun, and, if so, what progress it has made;
- urging the government to adhere to its obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and the Organisation of American States resolution on human rights defenders of June 2004.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Mauricio Gándara Gallegos
Ministro de Gobierno, Policía,
Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Benalcázar y Espejo
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: **+ 593 2 258 1030 (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 8561 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

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

COPIES TO:

Non Governmental Organization

Acción Ecológica
Alejandro de Valdez N 24-33 y La Gasca
Quito, Ecuador

Email: verde@accionecologica.org

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 23 August 2005.