

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 53/020/2004

29 October 2004

Further Information on UA 226/04 (AMR 53/011/2004, 16 July 2004) Fear for safety/Death Threats

VENEZUELA Caudy Barrios (m), aged 16
 Jorge Barrios (m), aged 15
 Rigo Barrios (m), aged 16, his brother
 Oneida Barrios (f), mother of Jorge and Rigo]
 Eloisa Barrios (f)] brothers and sisters of
 Inés Barrios (f)] Narciso and Luis Barrios
 Elvira Barrios (f)]
 Justina Barrios (f), grandmother of Caudy, Rigo and Jorge

Killed: Luis Barrios (m), brother of Narciso Barrios

New names: Carolina García (f) wife of Luis Barrios
 Pablo Sólorzano (m)] brothers and sister of
 Beatriz Barrios (f)] Narciso and Luis Barrios
 Juan Barrios (m)]
 Oscar Barrios (m), nephew of Luis Barrios

Luis Barrios, brother of Narciso Barrios, is now known to have been murdered on 20 September, allegedly by Aragua State police. Narciso Barrios was murdered in December 2003 after an argument with a drunk police officer in the bar that the brothers managed. The entire family are believed to be in grave danger.

Luis Barrios was reportedly shot dead by two hooded men, when he went outside to investigate a noise he had heard on the roof of his house, in the La Casita area of the town of Guanayen. He was apparently shot once in the back of the head, and twice more as he lay on the ground. Two days earlier, a police car had stopped outside the house of Luis's nephew, Oscar Barrios, at 8.30am. Oscar and Luis were both standing outside the house at the time. The police told them they "should not be surprised when hooded men paid them a visit" ("*no se sorprendieran cuando los visitaran unos encapuchados*").

The national police investigative branch, the *Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas, Penales y Criminalísticas*, the Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigations Unit, took Luis's body to the city of Maracay for an autopsy. However, they have apparently not returned to continue their investigation, and none of the witnesses to the killing has been called to make a statement.

The Aragua-based human rights NGO *Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Justicia y Paz del Estado de Aragua* had petitioned the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHCR) to order the Venezuelan government to protect the Barrios family. The court did so on 23 September, and also called for all police officers in Guanayen implicated in the threats and killings to be dismissed, in order "to prevent another member of the Barrios family being executed" ("*evitar que otro miembro de la familia Barrios sea ajusticiado*"). The authorities do not appear to have acted on any of the court's requests.

The investigation into the killing of Narciso Barrios is not known to have made any progress.

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

- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of Luis Barrios, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- reiterating your concern for the safety of members of the Barrios family who have been threatened and harassed by Aragua state police;
- urging the authorities to act immediately on the request by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, to provide adequate protection to the Barrios family to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into all the death threats and harassment the family have suffered, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- asking what progress has been made in the investigation into the murder of Narciso Barrios.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Fiscal General de la República, Dr. Isaías Rodríguez
Avenida Universidad, Esquina Pele el ojo a Misericordia,
frente a Parque Carabobo, Caracas, VENEZUELA

Fax: + 58 212 576 44 19

Salutation: Estimado Señor Fiscal General/Dear Attorney General

Human Rights Ombudsman

Defensoría del Pueblo, Dr. Germán Mundaraín
Bellas Artes comienzo Avenida México frente al Ateneo de Caracas
Plaza Morelos, Caracas, VENEZUELA

Fax: + 58 212 575 4467 (if a voice answers, say "tono de fax por favor")

Email: gmundarain@defensoria.gov.ve

Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

Governor of Aragua State

Sr. Gobernador del estado de Aragua
Sr. Didalco Bolívar, Palacio de Gobierno
Avenida de Miranda, Maracay
Estado de Aragua, VENEZUELA

Fax: +58 243 237 8843

Salutation: Estimado Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

Local Police

Comandante de la policía de Aragua, Comisario Angel Mercado (no address available)

Fax: +58 243 235 1220

Salutation: Estimado Señor Comisario/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization.

Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Justicia y Paz del Estado de Aragua
Calle Negro Primero, Oeste
N 98, frente al Liceo 'Valentin Espinal'
Cruce con Av. Ayacucho, Maracay, Estado Aragua, Venezuela

Phone/fax: + 58 243 233 6363 (if a voice answers, say "tono de fax por favor")

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 December 2004.