

# URGENT ACTION

## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE ACTIVIST THREATENED

**Javier Barrera Santa, a leader of ASFADDES, an association campaigning for justice in cases of enforced disappearances, has been threatened in Medellín, Colombia.**

On 12 March **Javier Barrera Santa**, the coordinator of the Medellín branch of Association for Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared (Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos, ASFADDES) received a threatening phone call. He was told "Snitch son-of-a-bitch you are the one who is going to disappear" (*Sapo hijo de puta usted es el que va a desaparecer*).

ASFADDES campaigns for justice in cases of enforced disappearances and killings. ASFADDES has previously been under surveillance for their work seeking justice. On 1 March, for example, a man was found hiding behind a door during a meeting of relatives of victims of enforced disappearances at the ASFADDES Medellín Office. When he was challenged by those present he ran off.

Javier Barrera Santa is a spokesperson for the Departmental Round Table on Enforced Disappearances (Mesa Departamental sobre Desaparición Forzada), a coalition of victims and human rights organizations, which has been organizing public events to commemorate those forcibly disappeared and informing the public about ongoing impunity. Javier Barrera Santa has also been an active spokesperson for ASFADDES, publicly welcoming the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice in October 2013 to investigate retired general Mauricio Santoyo for his alleged role in the case of the enforced disappearances of Ángel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve in 2000. During his public comments on the case, Javier Barrera Santa also said that other members of the security forces may have been involved in the disappearances. Javier Barrera Santa has previously been threatened for his human rights work, and was forced to leave his home after threats to his life in 2011.

### Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Javier Barrera Santa and other members of ASFADDES, and calling on the authorities to provide them with effective protection, in line with their wishes;
- Demanding that the authorities order full and impartial investigations into the threats; that they publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligations to protect human rights defenders, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 APRIL 2014 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**

#### Director of the National Protection Unit

Dr. Andrés Villamizar Pachón  
 Director de la Unidad Nacional de Protección (UNP)  
 Carrera 58 No. 10-51  
 Bogotá, Colombia  
 Fax: +57 1 261 6287

**Salutation: Dear Mr. Villamizar/  
 Estimado Sr. Villamizar**

#### **And copies to:**

NGO  
 ASFADDES Medellín  
 Calle 53 49-44 Oficina 303  
 Medellín, Colombia

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

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY  
 INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict, members of human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often suffered threats, enforced disappearance or killings. Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2005, but it is clear from the threats against human rights organizations and trade unions, in Barrancabermeja and elsewhere, that they are still operating.

ASFADDES is a national non-governmental human rights organization made up of relatives of victims of enforced disappearance, who work to find out what has happened to their relatives and bring those responsible to justice.

On 6 October 2000 two members of the Medellín branch of ASFADDES, Ángel José Quintero Mesa and Claudia Patricia Monsalve Pulgarín, were abducted by armed men. Their whereabouts are still unknown. Retired General Mauricio Santoyo was allegedly involved in the illegal telephone-tapping of the ASFADDES offices in Medellín prior to their enforced disappearance. He has been extradited to the United States on drugs-trafficking charges.

The brother of Javier Barrera Santa, Oscar Leonel Barrera, was forcibly disappeared in a massacre on 16 May 1998, when a large heavily armed paramilitary force drove unhindered through a number of poor districts of the city of Barrancabermeja. On route the gunmen rounded up residents, killing several on the spot and forcing many others on to trucks. Paramilitaries forcibly abducted 25 people. When the body of Oscar Leonel Barrera was found and given to the family in 2009 they received death threats by the paramilitary group Black Eagles (Águilas Negras).

In Barrancabermeja, ASFADDES has an office which in the past has had to close temporarily for security concerns. In 2009 Luz Elsia Almanza Suárez, also a relative of those disappeared in the 16 May 1998 massacre, received a death threat from paramilitaries, declaring her a military target. Together with other members of ASFADDES in Barrancabermeja she has been seeking information about the whereabouts of her relatives and campaigning to bring to justice those suspected of criminal responsibility for human rights violations.

Name: Javier Barrera Santa (m), other members of ASFADDES (both)  
Gender m/f: both

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