

URGENT ACTION

DEATH THREATS TO WOMEN LAND CLAIMANTS

Several members of the rural women's association ASOMUPROCA have received death threats since trying to reclaim their land in Magdalena Department, northern Colombia.

On 8 August **Sol Carranza** was participating in a meeting at the Unit for the Attention and Reparation of Victims (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, UARIV) in Ciénaga Municipality, Magdalena Department, as a representative of the Women's Association of Rural Producers (Asociación de Mujeres Productoras del Campo, **ASOMUPROCA**) when her phone rang repeatedly. After ignoring the first calls she answered and was told: "If you show up on those lands, we will kill you, because you will not receive those lands" (*Como te aparezcas por las tierras, te matamos porque ustedes no van a recibir esas tierras*). Sol Carranza and other members of ASOMUPROCA have previously received death threats and have been intimidated. In the last few months, **Mauris Herazo López**, also a member of ASOMUPROCA, has been receiving up to 16 intimidating phone calls a day, from the same number as the call made to Sol Carranza.

The women of ASOMUPROCA are claiming restitution of the Playones de Pivijay area of land in Pivijay Municipality, Magdalena Department, under the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448). On 27 June 2014, 66 women of ASOMUPROCA were added to the Register of Forcibly Dispossessed and Abandoned Lands (Registro de Tierras Despojadas y Abandonadas Forzosamente, RTDAF), a crucial step in the process of claiming land restitution. A further five members of the organization are still waiting to be included. Since being included in the RTDAF, there has been an increase in the level of intimidation of and threats against members of ASOMUPROCA.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Sol Carranza, Mauris Herazo López and other women of ASOMUPROCA and their families, and urging the authorities to provide effective protection for them in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the death threats and intimidation against the women of ASOMUPROCA, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligation to protect human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 OCTOBER 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 Protection Unit

Sr. Andres Villamizar
 Director de la Unidad Nacional de
 Protección del Ministerio del Interior
 Carrera 58 No. 10-51
 Bogotá, Colombia
 Fax: +57 1 261 6287 (keep trying)

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

And copies to:

NGO

Colectivo Mujeres al Derecho
 Calle 57 No. 41 -23,
 Barrio Recreo
 Barranquilla
 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

In the course of Colombia's long-running armed conflict millions of hectares of land have been illegally acquired, often through violence, from their rightful occupants, especially Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendent and peasant farmer communities. The various parties to the conflict – paramilitaries and the security forces, either acting alone or in collusion with each other, and guerrilla groups – have driven almost six million people from their homes since 1985.

Leaders of displaced communities and those seeking the return of illegally acquired lands have been killed or threatened, especially since the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448) was approved in June 2011 and came into force at the beginning of 2012. This law acknowledges the existence of an armed conflict in the country and the rights of its victims. It provides for reparations, including land restitution, for many survivors of human rights abuses, including those perpetrated by state agents. However, many other victims of the conflict will be excluded from making claims for reparation, while significant areas of illegally acquired land might still not be returned to their rightful owners. There are not enough safeguards to ensure that people whose land is returned to them are not again forced to hand over control of their land, even to those who had driven them off it in the first place. Some of those campaigning for land restitution, or seeking to return to their lands, have been threatened or killed, and this may undermine the implementation of the law.

The Playones de Pivijay were given to 75 women of ASOMUPROCA in 1996 as part of a pilot project to boost female income under Law 160 of 1994, which allowed landless peasant farmers to buy land through subsidies and credits. When the women arrived on the land there was a guerrilla presence in the area and shortly after the paramilitaries also began operating in the area. The armed actors controlled the territory and the lives of the ASOMUPROCA members and never allowed them to take full possession of the land. Following the killing of one of their leaders, Luisa Borrero Celedon, in January 1999, and further killings later that year, the women were forcibly displaced towards the end of 1999. In spite of their displacement the threats continued and on 20 August 2000 Dora Camacho, the then legal representative of ASOMUPROCA, was killed in Ciénaga, Magdalena Department. Despite repeated threats and intimidation, the women of ASOMUPROCA presented a land restitution claim through Law 1448 in June 2013.

The women's rights organization Colectivo Mujeres al Derecho has been accompanying the women of ASOMUPROCA throughout the land restitution process.

Name: Sol Carranza, Mauris Herazo López and other members of ASOMUPROCA

Gender m/f: f

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