

# URGENT ACTION

## NEW DEATH THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

**A journalist and two staff members working at Radio Victoria in Cabañas, El Salvador, have received new death threats and are at risk.**

For the third time this year on 24 May, at 6.30pm and 7.00pm, **Pablo Ayala**, a human rights journalist at Radio Victoria in El Salvador, received two text messages on his mobile phone containing threats. One of the messages read "Leave the radio immediately because we are not joking afterwards it will cost you your life to work for a rubbish media outlet" (*Salite de la radio de inmediato por que no estamos bromeando despues te costara tu vida estar en un medio como esa basura*). The messages were signed by "death squad" (*grupo de exterminio*) and were sent via the internet to his mobile phone.

On the same day, **Oscar Beltrán**, a staff member at Radio Victoria, received two threatening text messages. One read "Look oscar we are not joking, shut this radio up or you will die too dog just think about pablo, maricela manuel [sic]" (*mira oscar no estamos bromeando ases callar esa radio o que te mueres tu tambien perro solo piensa en Pablo maricela manuel*). The message was signed by "death squad". The threat referred to **Pablo Ayala, Manuel Navarrete** and **Marixela Ramos**, three journalists at Radio Victoria who had received death threats by text message several times between 30 April and 4 May 2011.

**Cristina Starr**, a founding member of Radio Victoria, also received a threatening text message on the same day. The message read "*griga* [sic] today it's time to act against people from your radio enough manuel pablo oscar and maricela are going to get killed [sic]" (*griga hoy si nos toca actuar con la gente de tu radio ya es demasiado manuel pablo oscar y maricela estan por ser asesinados*).

Radio Victoria is a community radio station committed to social and human rights reporting and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights deemed the threat to Radio Victoria staff to be so great that it issued Precautionary Measures which required that the authorities ensure their safety. Those responsible for sending the threats have not been identified, and no one has been brought to account for the persistent threats made against the journalists at Radio Victoria.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection to staff at Radio Victoria in accordance with their wishes and in compliance with the Precautionary Measures ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- Call for an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against staff at Radio Victoria, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JULY 2011 TO:

#### Attorney General

Romeo Benjamín Barahona Meléndez  
Fiscalía General de la República  
Final 4ª Calle Oriente y 19ª Av. Sur,  
Residencial Primavera, Santa Tecla,  
La Libertad, San Salvador, El  
Salvador

Fax: +503 2523 7421 **Salutation:**

**Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Attorney  
General**

#### Head of National Police

Carlos Antonio Ascencio Giron  
6ta. Calle Oriente entre 8va y 10ma  
Ave. Sur # 42 Barrio La Vega, San  
Salvador, El Salvador  
Fax: +503 2527 1145

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Comisionado/  
Dear Commissioner**

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

Radio Victoria

Av. José Matias Delgado #47  
Victoria, Cabañas, El Salvador

E-mail: radiovictoriapopular@yahoo.es

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the first update of UA131/11. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR29/002/2011/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR29/002/2011/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has issued several urgent actions on the situation of human rights defenders and media workers in the Cabañas department of El Salvador between 2009 and 2011.

Gustavo Marcelo Rivera, an environmental activist, was killed on 30 June 2009. Later on that year, his brother Ramiro Rivera, a community leader who campaigned against mining in the area and against impunity in his brother's case, survived an armed attack in August and was eventually killed in December. Also in August 2009, Héctor Antonio García Berríos was warned by a man he knew that if he and Gustavo Marcelo Rivera's brother, Miguel Rivera continued campaigning for justice for the murder, their lives would be at risk.. See UA: 223/09 (Index: AMR 29/001/2009 Issue Date: 27 August 2009).

In December 2009, staff at Radio Victoria received a number of threats by phone and e-mail. On 26 December 2009, another member of the Cabañas Environment Committee was killed. Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto, who was eight months pregnant, was shot dead, and her two-year-old child was wounded. See Further information on UA: 223/09 (Index: AMR 29/001/2010 Issue Date: 4 January 2010).

On 23 January 2011, Hector Berríos, a community activist and human rights lawyer in Cabañas, a department of El Salvador, received death threats by phone.

Further information on UA: 131/11 Index: AMR 29/003/2011 Issue Date: 27 May 2011

