

URGENT ACTION

COMMUNITY THREATENED IN "DEATH LIST"

Paramilitaries are looking for members of the communities of the Curvaradó River Basin in north-western Colombia, to kill them. They have also been watching members of a human rights NGO active in the region, the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission.

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission human rights NGO (*Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz*) learned on 28 April that paramilitaries operating in the area of the Curvaradó River Basin, in the north-western department of Chocó, had a list of six community members they had announced they were going to kill: **Gustavo García, Adrián Pérez, Elkín Urango, Emiliano Velásquez, Guillermo Díaz and Enrique Cabezas.**

Paramilitaries threatened Enrique Cabezas's brother at gunpoint on 26 April, saying they would kill him. On 2 May paramilitaries entered the Argenito Díaz Humanitarian Zone (*Zona Humanitaria Argenito Díaz*) in the Llano Rico area of the Curvaradó collective land title, looking for Guillermo Díaz. The paramilitaries went into his home but found he was not there, and left. Paramilitaries have been able to operate freely in the area despite the heavy presence of the security forces, with whom they have been seen.

Members of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission who accompany communities in the Curvaradó River Basin, were kept under surveillance on 2 May in the capital, Bogotá. In the past human rights defenders have been put under surveillance by gunmen before attempts to kill them. **Father Alberto Franco, Danilo Rueda and Abilio Peña** of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission have all been put under surveillance this year.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of the members of the Curvaradó River Basin communities and Father Alberto Franco, Danilo Rueda, Abilio Peña of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission;
- Calling on the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the threat to kill six leaders of the Curvaradó River Basin and the apparent failed attempt to kill Guillermo Díaz, publish the results and bring all those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to provide effective protection to those who request it, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Urging them to dismantle paramilitary groups and break their links with the security forces in line with repeated United Nations human rights recommendations;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligations to ensure human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear, as laid out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 JUNE 2013 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**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

María Ángela Holguín
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Palacio San Carlos
 Calle 10 No. 5-51
 Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Estimada Señora Ministra/

Dear Minister

And copies to:

Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz
 Calle 61A, No. 17-26
 Bogotá, 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

On several occasions when the police have been called in after Father Alberto, Danilo Rueda and Abilio Peña have found themselves under surveillance, they have discovered that at least one of the people involved in the surveillance was linked to the former civilian intelligence service (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad, DAS*). This body was dismantled by the government after it had been found to be behind many death threats against human rights defenders and illegal monitoring of their legitimate work.

Concerns for the safety of the three human rights defenders were heightened when three shots were fired at the window of Father Alberto Franco's car in February. (See UA 40/13, AMR 23/007/2013, 15 February 2013).

The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission has been supporting efforts by Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities living in and around the Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó River Basins to reclaim their lands. In these areas, paramilitaries have occupied the land of some Afro-descendant communities and have attempted to force them to grow African Palm, a cash crop used in products ranging from cooking oil to soap. Powerful mining interests are also trying to develop operations in these areas.

In the past few years, many of those who fled their lands following their violent expulsion by paramilitaries and the security forces in the late 1990s have returned to the Afro-descendant communities of Jiguamiandó and Curvaradó. The communities have sought to defend their land rights and prevent the expansion of illegal African palm plantations and other economic activities within their territory. Many of their members have been threatened and killed as a result. In recent years a number of members of the Jiguamiandó and Curvaradó region who have complained about the occupation of their lands by African palm growers and other economic interests have been killed by paramilitaries, who have maintained a strong presence in the region despite the large army presence.

In April 2006 the first of several “Humanitarian Zones” – enclosed areas in which inhabitants demand that the parties to the conflict respect their decision not to take sides in the hostilities – was set up. This is a means of protection; it also sends a message to the warring parties that their rights as civilians must be respected.

The human rights work of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission with these communities, especially on important cases of impunity enjoyed by senior members of the security forces, has made them the target of threats and attacks.

During Colombia's long-running armed conflict, members of human rights organizations, trade unions and other social organizations have often been labelled guerrilla collaborators or supporters by the security forces and paramilitaries. As a result they are often killed, threatened, or subjected to enforced disappearance. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders they consider to be siding with the enemy.

Name: Gustavo García, Adrián Pérez, Elkín Urango, Emiliano Velásquez, Guillermo Díaz, Enrique Cabezas, Father Alberto Franco, Danilo Rueda, Abilio Peña

Gender m/f: all male

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