

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS RECEIVE DEATH THREAT

Paramilitaries sent a death threat to several human rights organizations and a trade union in Barranquilla, Northern Colombia. Among those threatened are families from El Tamarindo, who are also under threat of eviction from their farm.

On 30 October the Rastrojos Urban Commands Barranquilla (Rastrojos – Comandos Urbanos Baranquilla) paramilitary group declared several human rights defenders to be “military targets” (*objetivos militares*) in an email. The death threat was sent to members of the Atlántico Department branch of the Colombian Trade Union Congress (Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, CUT), Happy Childhood Foundation (Fundación Infancia Feliz, FIF), the Association of Relatives United by a Single Sorrow (Asociación de Familiares por un Solo Dolor, AFUSODO), the Atlántico branch of Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH) and the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee (Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos, CSPP). It was also sent to members of the Association of Land Workers (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo, ASOTRACAMPO). These organizations are part of the **National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas e Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE)**.

ASOTRACAMPO represents the families living in El Tamarindo and the majority of those named in the death threat are linked to **El Tamarindo**, Galapa Municipality, Atlántico Department. The El Tamarindo farm has been peacefully occupied by 130 families since 2001 and there have been repeated attempts to force them off the land, resulting in the forced eviction of some families in May and June 2013. Attempts to evict the peasant farmers have been accompanied by repeated paramilitary death threats. On 17 October peasant farmers from several departments in the region met in El Tamarindo to demand guarantees for right to land and marched towards the office of the governor of Atlántico Department. On 31 October members of MOVICE were informed of an eviction order for El Tamarindo, planned for 1 November. The eviction order has been postponed and further meetings with government authorities are planned for 8 November.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- ✓ Urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of those named in the death threat including the families of El Tamarindo, in strict accordance with their wishes and to order full and impartial investigations into the death threats, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- ✓ Calling on the authorities to ensure that the El Tamarindo community and its supporters can continue to campaign in safety for the recognition of their rights to the El Tamarindo land;
- ✓ Reminding them to take action against paramilitary forces and break any links between them and the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 DECEMBER 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**

Governor of Atlántico

José Antonio Segebre Berardinelli
Gobernación del Atlántico
Calle 40 Cra. 45 y 46
Barranquilla, Colombia
Fax +57 5 340 45 24

**Salutation: Dear Governor/ Estimado
Sr. Gobernador**

And copies to:

MOVICE
Carrera 5 No. 16–14
Oficina 807,
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. This is the first update of UA 103/13. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR23/017/2013/en

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some 130 families who had been forcibly displaced from their homes in Córdoba, Magdalena and Cesar departments occupied 120 hectares of the El Tamarindo farm, in Atlántico Department, in 2001. The farm had been abandoned. In 2007, the state authorities announced that a Free Trade Zone would be established in an area including the El Tamarindo farm. In 2008 a local business began legal proceedings claiming ownership of the land.

A paramilitary group operating in the area has repeatedly threatened to kill peasant farmers living in El Tamarindo. The local civilian authorities used the security forces in an unsuccessful attempt to enforce orders to evict the peasant farmers on 28 January 2012; these orders reportedly had been obtained by powerful economic interests who are claiming ownership of the land. Local paramilitaries threatened the peasant farmers during this attempted eviction. Narciso Enrique Tehrán Mejía, the son of the vice-president of ASOTRACAMPO was shot dead as he slept on 12 April 2013 in El Tamarindo.

Millions of hectares of land have been seized during Colombia's long-running armed conflict, often through violence against the rightful owners, especially Indigenous People, Afro-descendant and peasant farmer communities. The various parties to the conflict – paramilitaries and the security forces, acting either separately or in collusion, and guerrilla groups – have driven over five million people from their homes during the course of Colombia's long-running armed conflict.

MOVICE is a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. Its members have documented and exposed many killings and enforced disappearances carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups.

Amongst those threatened in the most recent death threat is Martha Elena Díaz Ospina who is the founder and president of AFUSODO and a member of the Atlántico branch of MOVICE. She has been supporting the El Tamarindo process and was also named in a death threat by the paramilitary group Rastrojos Urban Commands Barranquilla on 24 September. (For more information see: UA: 22/13 Index: AMR 23/004/2013).

Name: families of El Tamarindo, members of MOVICE
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 103/13 Index: AMR 23/051/2013 Issue Date: 6 November 2013