

URGENT ACTION

OMBUDSMAN'S LIFE AT RISK AFTER DEATH THREATS

The life and personal integrity of Ombudsman Freddy Carrión and his family are at risk. He recently received repeated death threats, including a bomb threat at his family's home on 13 February. Even though he publicly denounced this situation, the Ecuadorian government has failed to protect him and his family. The Ombudsman stated that this is a retaliation for his human rights work during the crisis in October 2019. We call on the Attorney General to grant immediate protection to him and his family and to investigate these threats in an immediate, impartial and independent manner.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Diana Salazar, Attorney General
Juan León Mera N19-36 y Av. Patria,
Edificio Fiscalía General del Estado, Quito, Ecuador
Email: salazarmd@fiscalia.gob.ec;
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Dear Attorney General,

I am writing you in relation to the risk to the life and personal integrity of Ombudsman Freddy Carrión and his family. He and his family have received repeated death threats, in retaliation to his human rights work. Despite the fact that he filed a criminal complaint on 6 February, he and his family have not yet received adequate protection.

This situation has undermined the work of the Ombudsman's Office. Under international law, Ecuadorian authorities are obligated to guarantee a free and safe environment for human rights defenders.

I urge you to grant immediate protection to Ombudsman Freddy Carrión and his family; in consultation with them, to investigate these threats in an immediate, impartial and independent manner and to bring those suspected of criminal activity to justice. This also means identifying the intellectual perpetrators.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 6 February, the Ombudsman filed a criminal complaint before the Attorney General's Office, for a series of threats he had recently received and requested protection for himself and his family.

On 11 February, the Ombudsman's Office issued a public statement denouncing the threats, unfounded accusations and politically motivated attacks received by the Ombudsman through the media and social networks. The institution asserted that these incidents were retaliation for their work documenting the human rights violations during the crisis in October 2019.

At around noon on 13 February, while the Ombudsman was in the city of Guayaquil, the security guard of the residential complex the Ombudsman lives in with his family, in Quito, received a call indicating that there was a bomb in the Ombudsman's home.

On 14 February, the Ombudsman stated that in addition to the personal attacks he has received, the Ombudsman's office has suffered a series of attacks in an attempt to affect the credibility of the institution, along with administrative obstacles attempting to undermine the effective implementation of its work.

The Ombudsman told a media outlet today that the threats were "essentially due to [the fact that] the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) report was published establishing that the Ecuadorian State is responsible for excessive use of force", in context with the national strike in October 2019.

On 14 January, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights presented its observations from its visit to Ecuador, in which it urged the authorities to promptly and comprehensively investigate all reports of violence and establish the appropriate penalties, both in terms of reports of excessive use of force by police officers and security forces, and of incidents of attacks and looting by a portion of the population.

Reference materials:

Press release, *Ecuador: Government must protect life and integrity of Ombudsman*, 14 February 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/ecuador-gobierno-debe-protoger-defensor-del-pueblo/>

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [31 March 2020]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Freddy Carrión (he)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [N/A]

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: Ambassador Jaime Marchan-Romero, Embassy of Ecuador, 3b, 3 Hans Cres, Knightsbridge, London SW1X 0LS