UA 190/13 24 July 2013 **URGENT ACTION** AMR 23/032/2013

# **PARAMILITARIES INTIMIDATE WITH DEATH THREATS**

# COLOMBIA

**Rocio Campos (f), Elizardo Badillo (m), Ana Teresa Rueda (f), William Mendoza (m), Ana Briseida (f), Edwin Cardona (m), Oviedo Nieto (m), members of ETTDH including MOVICE Magalena Medio, CREDHOS, ASORVIM, ASODESAMUBA, Quinto Mandamiento and People in Action (m/f)**

In two separate instances on 16 and 17 July, paramilitaries delivered warnings and death threats to human rights defenders. A threat was made at the home of Rocio Campos a day after paramilitaries left a death threat at the home of Elizardo Badillo against him and other members of the human rights movement of Barrancabermeja, northern Colombia.

On 17 July, two men on a motorcycle without a licence plate arrived at the home of Rocio Campos in the city of Barrancabermeja, in the northern region of Magalena Medio. She is a member of the Magdalena Medio branch of the National Movement of Victims of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE). She was not at home and they, one of them possibly armed, told her daughter “tell her that those who have forbidden her to do human rights work are looking for her” (dile que la estábamos buscando los mismos que la prohibieron hacer el trabajo de derechos humanos). She has been fighting for truth and justice, especially in the case of the paramilitary massacre of 16 May 1998, in which also 25 people, including her sister, were forcibly disappeared. The remains of some of those disappeared where given to their families in a ceremony on 5 and 6 July. At the event Rocio Campos spoke to local media demanding justice.

On 16 July a death threat was left at the home of the community leader Elizardo Badillo. The threat used the same paramilitary logo as featured on a previous threat against Juan Carlos Galvis, LGBTI activists and others on 11 July (see UA 178/13 AMR 23/030/2013). The 16 July death threat named several human rights organizations and individuals including the coalition Space of Human Rights Workers in Barrancabermeja (Espacio de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de Derechos Humanos, ETTDH) of which MOVICE Magdalena Medio is a member organization. It gave an ultimatum until 4 August to leave the city and warned “Do not waste your time reporting and playing police, because this sentence is definitive and of death.” (No gasten tiempo en denuncias y a jugar la policía, porque esta sentencia es definitiva y de muerte.). Members of social and human rights movements in Barrancabermeja had been discussing the possibility of a public meeting on 3 August.

**Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

\* Expressing concern for Rocio Campos and other members of MOVICE, as well as Elizardo Badillo and others named in the death threat (see names overleaf), and calling on the authorities to provide them with effective protection, in line with their wishes;

\* Demanding that the authorities order full and impartial investigations into the threat; publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;

\* Urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 04 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO: (Time difference = GMT - 5 hrs / BST - 6 hrs)**

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| President Presidente Juan Manuel Santos Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26 Bogotá, Colombia **Fax: 0057 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 **Fax: 0057 1 381 4742 (keep trying)** Salutation: *Dear Minister/Estimada Ministra* | **And copies to:** MOVICE Magdalena Medio Carrera 18 No 48-18 Barrio Colombia Barrancabermeja Colombia |

**PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEAL TO**

His Excellency Mauricio Rodríguez-Munera, Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0LN

**Fax:** 020 7581 1829 **Tel:** 020 7589 9177 **Email:** [mail@colombianembassy.co.uk](mailto:mail@colombianembassy.co.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.colombianembassy.co.uk/>

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

During Colombia’s long-running armed conflict that has pitted the security forces, acting alone or in collusion with paramilitaries, against a range of guerrilla groups, civilians have been the main victims. Members of trade unions, human rights organizations and other social organizations have often been labelled as 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.

Colombia's paramilitary groups supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process that began in 2003, but it is clear from the threats against human rights organizations and trade unions, in the Magdalena Medio area and elsewhere, that they are still operating. Colombian human rights organizations have expressed concerns that paramilitaries who are detained in prison continue to organize crimes from inside prison.

Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for numerous killings and threats in Colombia in recent years.

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 cases of killings and enforced disappearance carried out by the security forces and paramilitary groups.

ETTDH is a coalition of different sectors of civil society including human rights organizations, trade unions and LGBTI activists in Barrancabermeja.

On 16 May 1998 a large heavily armed paramilitary force drove unhindered through a number of poorer districts of the city of Barrancabermeja. On route the gunmen rounded up residents, killing several on the spot and forcing many others on to trucks. Paramilitaries forcibly abducted 25 people.

The death threat read “credhos, asorvim, asodesamuba, quinto mandamiento, people in action, ettdh lead by Mrs. Ana, the Juanas, William Mendoza are the worst troublemakers, they were already warned. Elizardo Badillo, Ana Briseida, Edwin Cadona, leader of the Camilo Torres school, Mr. Nieto you have until 04 August to leave the city” (credhos, asorvim, asodesamuba, quinto mandamiento, gente en acción, ettdh, dirigida por la señora Ana, las juanas, William Mendoza son los más revoltoso [sic] ya se les había al vertido [sic]. Elizardo Badillo, Ana Briseida, Edwin Cadona, líder del Colegio Camilo Torres, el señor Nieto tienen hasta el 04 de agosto para abandonar la ciudad.).

**PLEASE CHECK WITH THE INDIVIDUALS AT RISK PROGRAMME AT AIUK BEFORE SENDING APPEALS AFTER 04 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Individuals at Risk Programme, Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA, 0207 033 1572, iar@amnesty.org.uk.