

URGENT ACTION

ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF PEASANT FARMER

An attempt was made on the life of a leader of the La Europa peasant farmer community in northern Colombia, as concern rises about a wave of killings of human rights defenders, including land activists.

In the morning of 17 November, an unknown assailant on a motorbike pointed a gun at **Argemiro Lara**, a leader of La Europa farm in Ovejas Municipality, Sucre Department, as he made his way to a meeting in the city of Sincelejo in Sucre accompanied by his state-provided bodyguard. Before he had a chance to fire his weapon, the assailant was shot by the bodyguard. He later died of his injuries. Both Argemiro Lara and his bodyguard were unharmed.

Argemiro Lara is also a member of the NGOs National Movement of Victims of State Crimes (Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de Crímenes de Estado, MOVICE), and the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, CPDH).

Argemiro Lara has been repeatedly threatened over the years because of his work in support of the community's claim of ownership over La Europa farm. Since the 1990s, many of its residents have either been killed or forcibly displaced. Since 2013, the community has sought to obtain legal ownership of La Europa through the state's Land Restitution Unit, but are still awaiting adjudication of their claim.

There has been increasing concern about the recent wave of killings of human rights defenders, especially social and community leaders and land activists. According to local human rights organizations, around 70 have been killed so far this year in various parts of the country.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of Argemiro Lara, peasant farmers of La Europa and other human rights defenders, including social and community leaders at risk, in strict accordance with their needs and demands;
- Urging them to order full and impartial investigations into the attack and threats against Argemiro Lara and other social and community leaders, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding them to fulfil their obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 JANUARY 2017 TO:

President

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**

Director de la Unidad Nacional de Protección (UNP)

Diego Fernando Mora Arango
 Avenida Calle 26 No. 59-41/65
 Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 426 9800

**Salutation: Dear UNP President /
 Estimado Presidente de la UNP**

And copies to:

Movimiento Nacional de Víctimas de
 Crímenes de Estado - MOVICE
 Calle 45a #20-21
 Bogotá, Colombia

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR NESTOR OSORIO, Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent SW1X 0LN, 020 7589 9177 / 020 7589 5037, Fax 020 7581 1829, egranbretana@cancilleria.gov.co, www.colombianembassy.co.uk, Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PEASANT LEADER SHOT AT, COMMUNITY AT RISK

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 1994, 12 peasant farmers were killed and 80 displaced from La Europa farm in Ovejas Municipality, Sucre Department, by paramilitaries. Some peasant farmers returned in 2010 and have since then faced threats and harassment. Their homes have also been repeatedly burnt down.

The community made a land restitution claim, made possible by the 2011 Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448) in 2013, and their case was finally taken on by the Land Restitution Unit in 2015. However, they are still awaiting the legal adjudication of their claim. In the meantime, the claimants and their leaders continue to face threats.

MOVICE, a broad coalition of civil society organizations campaigning for victims' rights, and CPDH, have been accompanying the residents of the La Europa farm in their efforts to claim ownership over it and to denounce human rights violations committed against them. Other members of MOVICE and CPDH have also been threatened because of their human rights work.

Although combat-related violence against civilians has fallen sharply since the start of the peace process, attacks against human rights defenders, especially Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant farmer leaders, continue in alarming numbers.

Many such attacks are linked to armed groups seeking to take control of resource-rich lands belonging to rural communities in order to exploit these for economic gain.

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