

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 154/08 (AMR 22/001/2008, 3 June 2008) Intimidation/harassment

CHILE

Elena Varela López (f)

Documentary filmmaker Elena Varela López was released on 13 August, after more than three months in custody. She is now subject to *arresto domiciliario nocturna* (house arrest between 10pm and 8am), and *arraigo nacional* (she cannot leave the country).

Elena Varela sent a message of thanks to all those who have written on her behalf: "I send you a big hug and gratitude for all the support you have given to secure my release...I take you with me in my heart, knowing that thousands of you have been with me." (*Les envío un fuerte abrazo y agradecimientos por todo el apoyo que han brindado a la lucha por mi libertad...Los llevo conmigo, en mi corazón, se que son miles los que han estado conmigo*)

Elena Varela is still facing charges of "theft with homicide" (*robo con homicidio*), "theft with violence" (*robo con violencia*) and "illegal association with intent to commit an offence" (*asociación ilícita para delinquir*) in connection with two bank raids in 2004 and 2005, which she is accused of helping to organize. Four people died during the second raid.

When she was arrested, Elena Varela was working on a documentary on the conflict between lumber companies and Mapuche Indigenous people over land, called *Newen Mapu Che* (Mapuche Life Force). Previously she filmed the documentary *Sueños del Comandante* (Dreams of the Commander) in which she interviewed former members of the Revolutionary Left Movement (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario*, MIR), some of whom are wanted by the police, according to the Chilean press. The materials confiscated by the police when Elena Varela was arrested, which they have retained, could be used to gather intelligence on Mapuche activists. According to Elena Varela, they include videotapes, sound equipment, still cameras, mobile phones and costumes needed for the filming of the documentary.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International is continuing to monitor Elena Varela's situation.