

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/027/2007

7 August 2007

Further Information on UA 165/07 (AMR 23/018/2007, 28 June 2007) Fear for safety

COLOMBIA Members of human rights NGO Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro

**New name: Rigoberto Jiménez, member of the National Coordination of Displaced People,
(Coordinadora Nacional de Desplazados, CND)**

In recent weeks, Rigoberto Jiménez, a leader of the National Coordination of Displaced People, (Coordinadora Nacional de Desplazados, CND), has received a series of death threats. Some of the threats also mentioned members of the non-governmental human rights organization (NGO) Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Rigoberto Jiménez, his colleagues at the CND, and members of Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro.

According to the CND, on 30 July they received a death threat by e-mail signed by the recently-created paramilitary group Aguilas Negras de Bosa (Bosa Black Eagles). The e-mail stated:

“Mr. Rigoberto Jiménez, it is the third one and you think this is a game. You and the good for nothing lawyers of the Yira Castro have ignored us. We are watching all your movements. We know you are planning to publicise the threats against you and then it is going to be worse. We will hit you where it is most painful. The idea is to clean Bogotá of all guerrilla groups. For a Bogotá without FARC criminals.”

“Señor Rigoberto Jiménez o y ban (sic) tres usted esta creyendo que la cosas es gugando (sic) no aecho (sic) caso ni usted ni las abogaducha de la yira castro estamos vigilando todos sus pasos y mobimiento (sic) sabemos que piensan denunciar y si lo hacen les ba (sis) peor les bamos adar (sic) donde mas les duela la idea es lipiar (sic) a Bogota de toda clase de gurrilla (sic) por una Bogota sin de lincuentes (sic) de la Rac (sic)”

According to the CND, this was the third threatening e-mail they had received in recent weeks. On 26 July, a threat addressed to the CND stated: “ ... we are going to finish with all of you, one by one, and we will start with Mr. Rigoberto Jiménez guerrilla son of a bitch...”. “... los bamos (sic) acabar (sic) a todos uno a uno y bamos (sic) a enpesar (sic) por el señor Rigoberto Jiménez ijo (sic) de puta guerrillero...”. The text also accused the Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro of protecting guerrilla members. On 22 July, another threatening e-mail was sent to Rigoberto Jiménez. On this occasion he was told to shut up or face the consequences.

According to Rigoberto Jiménez, on 12 July two unknown men approached him on a street in Bogotá. He said they told him that they came to Bogotá to work with the Aguilas Negras to finish with all guerrillas who “talk bullshit” (hablando mierda) about the government.

These threats took place after the International Tribunal of Opinion, an international conference about forced displacement that took place in Bogotá at the end of June. Rigoberto Jiménez and other members of the CND took part in this event. One of the sponsors of this event was the Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro is a human rights NGO that provides legal assistance to people forced to flee their homes by Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict. They also give legal support to the leaders of the CND, as well as provide human rights training to the organization.

In the early hours of 22 June, the office of the Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro was reportedly broken into. Five computer hard drives and a laptop containing information about the organization and its work were stolen, as well as video equipment.

In the context of Colombia's internal armed conflict the work of organizations like the Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro, defending and promoting human rights, puts them at particular risk of attack and intimidation. Human rights organizations campaigning for justice are frequently labelled as guerrilla collaborators or supporters by the security forces and their paramilitary allies, and some have in the past been killed or forcibly disappeared by paramilitary groups or members of the security forces. Guerrilla groups have also threatened or killed human rights defenders they consider to be siding with the "enemy".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Rigoberto Jiménez and the members of the National Coordination of Displaced People and Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro, following recent death threats against them;
- urging the authorities to take effective action, as deemed appropriate by the members of these organizations, to protect them so they may continue their legitimate and important work in the defence of human rights without fear of intimidation;
- calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into the threats, and into the break-in at the offices of the Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro, to make the results public, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to produce policy and plans, in conjunction with human rights defenders, to guarantee their safety according to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and to make these plans public.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890

+57 1 342 0592

Salutation: Dear President Uribe/Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Dr. Carlos Holguín Sardi

Ministro del Interior y Justicia

Ministerio Del Interior Y De Justicia, Carrera 9a. No. 14-10, Bogotá D.C. Colombia

Fax: +57 1 560 46 30

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Sir

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán

COPIES TO:

Non- governmental human rights organisation

Corporación Jurídica Yira Castro

Carrera 10 No 15-39 oficina 507

Bogotá

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 September 2007.