

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

10 April 2006

ECUADOR **Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez, President of the *Servicio de Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ)*, Peace and Justice Service
Staff at the Peace and Justice Service
Members of his family**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez, President of the *Servicio de Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ)*, Peace and Justice Service, his colleagues and family. This follows recent attempts to intimidate them, which may be linked to the organization's human rights work.

Unknown individuals broke into Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez's home on the afternoon of 31 March. The intruders searched through drawers and wardrobes before throwing the contents on the floor. Nothing was actually taken, although there were valuables in the house. The incident was reported to the Attorney General on 4 April however, Amnesty International, does not know whether an investigation has been opened.

This is not the first time that SERPAJ staff has been intimidated. On 9 December 2005, SERPAJ's offices were broken into by unknown individuals, who stole a laptop used by Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez which contained valuable information.

Amnesty International believes that these acts of intimidation are linked to the monitoring work done by SERPAJ on the impact in Ecuador of the US-backed military aid package known as *Plan Colombia*. SERPAJ has also been critical of the human rights situation in Colombia and the increasing militarization of the Colombia-Ecuador border following the implementation of the *Plan Colombia*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has often expressed its deep concern about the continued threatening and harassment of those who are critical of the authorities, including human rights defenders, journalists and indigenous community leaders. The organization has urged Ecuadorian authorities on several occasions to send a clear message that such threats will not be tolerated, to ensure that human rights defenders, community leaders and journalists are able to work without fear of intimidation. It has also called upon the authorities to investigate these threats and bring perpetrators to justice. However, nobody has been charged in connection with these acts of intimidation.

In June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), of which Ecuador is a member, adopted a resolution stating their intention to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, passed on 9 December 1998. The UN agreed to "recognize and support the work carried out by Human Rights Defenders and their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas". The resolution called on state members to provide "Human Rights Defenders with the necessary guarantees and facilities to continue freely carrying out their work of promoting and protecting human rights", as well as to adopt "the necessary steps to guarantee their life, liberty, and integrity".

In June 2005, the OAS General Assembly adopted another resolution reiterating its support for the work of human rights defenders and recognizing their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and

protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas, and to the representation and defense of individuals, minorities, and other groups whose rights are threatened or violated.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez, his colleagues and relatives;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation into the acts of intimidation against them, for the findings to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of Jhonny Jiménez Jiménez, his colleagues and his relatives according to their wishes;
- calling on the authorities to develop a national plan of action to implement the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders as an important first step to ensure that human rights defenders are able to safely carry out their legitimate work.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Felipe Vega de la Cuadra
Ministro de Gobierno, Policía,
Justicia, Cultos y Municipalidades
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Benalcázar y Espejo
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 258 1030 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Acting Attorney General

Dra. Cecilia Armas Tobar
Ministra Fiscal Subrogante
Fiscalía General del Estado
Av. Eloy Alfaro N°32-240 y República
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 255 8561 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Acting Attorney General/Sra. Ministra Fiscal Subrogante

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

SEPAJ
Sede Nacional
Carlos Ibarra 176 y Av. 10 de Agosto
Edificio Yuraj Pirka, Of. 8 04
Quito, Ecuador
Email: presidencia@serpaj.org.ec

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 May 2006.