

URGENT ACTION

FAMILY AT RISK AFTER KILLING

The lives of Oscar Barrios' family are in danger. He and his family have been subjected to a campaign of intimidation from police officers in northern Venezuela, since 2003. Oscar Barrios was killed on October 28, 2009 and follows the killing of three other male members of the Barrios family.

Oscar Barrios was shot dead, by two armed men who were wearing similar clothes to those worn by police officers in the town of Guanayén, in Aragua State, northern Venezuela. No investigation has been opened into this killing.

The Barrios family has been subjected to a six-year campaign of harassment and intimidation after they reported the killing of **Narciso Barrios** by police officers, on 30 November 2003. On the request of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, members of the Barrios Family have been receiving police protection from the Venezuelan state since June 2004. The protection given to the family has at times been sporadic and ineffective as two other members of the Barrios family have been killed in this time. Prior to the killing of Oscar Barrios, **Luis Barrios** was killed in September 2004 and **Rigoberto Barrios** was killed in January 2005.

On 4 December 2009, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called upon the Venezuelan State to take the necessary measures to guarantee the right to life and security of the Barrios Family and to investigate the events and sanction those responsible.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- √ Demanding that the authorities take decisive action to guarantee the protection of the Barrios family, in accordance with their wishes;
- √ Urging the authorities to order a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Oscar Barrios;
- √ Calling on the authorities to reveal what progress has been made in the investigations into the killings of Narciso, Luis and Rigoberto Barrios and into all incidents of intimidation and threats reported by the family.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JANUARY 2010 TO:

Minister of Interior and Justice
 Ministro de Interior y Justicia
 Tareck El Aissami
 Ministerio del Interior y Justicia
 Avenida Urdaneta Esquina de Platanal
 Edificio Interior y Justicia Despacho del
 Ministro, Piso 3
 Caracas, VENEZUELA
Fax: + 58 212 506 1685
Salutation: Señor Ministro/Dear Minister

Governor of Aragua State
 Sr. Gobernador del Estado de Aragua
 Sr. Rafael Isea
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Avenida de Miranda
 Maracay
 Estado de Aragua, VENEZUELA
Fax: + 58 243 237 8843
Salutation: Señor Gobernador/Dear Governor

And copies to:
 Comisión de Derechos Humanos de
 Justicia y Paz del Estado Aragua
 Calle Negro Primero, Oeste
 N 98, frente al Liceo 'Valentin Espinal',
 Cruce con Av. Ayacucho
 Maracay
 Estado Aragua, VENEZUELA
Fax: + 58 243 233 6363 (if voice answers, say 'tono de fax, por favor')

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A campaign of intimidation has been waged against the Barrios family since 12 December 2003, when Narciso Barrios was killed allegedly, by police officers, days after an argument between Narciso and Aragua State police officers. Members of the Barrios family have been arbitrarily arrested, threatened, harassed and subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Two other members of the family Luis Barrios and 15-year old Ribogerto Barrios were also killed allegedly by police officers. Luis Barrios (brother of Narciso Barrios) was shot dead at his home by two hooded men on 20 September 2004. Two days prior to his killing the family had been told by police officers not to be surprised if hooded men paid them a visit. On 9 January 2005, Rigoberto Barrios was shot eight times by two men who were allegedly wearing Aragua state police uniform hats and trousers. Rigoberto Barrios died in hospital ten days later from his wounds.

A previous attempt on the life of Oscar Barrios (nephew of Luis Barrios) was made on 18 June 2005, when five unidentified armed men, wearing civilian clothes, reportedly pursued Oscar Barrios and attempted to shoot him as he was leaving the home of Luis Barrios' widow. Oscar Barrios was able to escape by sheltering behind some brushwood as the attackers left in a car. When Oscar Barrios' mother, called the police agency responsible for their protection, no-one was sent to their home to take their statements. This incident took place just a few days before the Venezuelan State and representatives of the family were due to take part in a hearing before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. At the hearing on 29 June 2005, the Inter-American Court called upon the Venezuelan State to ensure the safety of the Barrios Family and to provide them with effective protection, as well as fully investigate all the complaints filed by the family.

Between March and September 2005, members of the Barrios family, including Rigoberto Barrios and Oscar Barrios were detained and ill-treated by police officers before being released with no charge.

Amnesty International is unaware of any progress in the investigations into the murders of Narciso Barrios, Luis Barrios and Rigoberto Barrios, nor of investigations into complaints made by the family regarding death threats and intimidation from state police officers.

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