

URGENT ACTION

TWO ACTIVISTS KILLED, OTHERS THREATENED

Local radio station staff have received death threats, days after anti-mining activists were killed.

Radio Victoria staff received death threats in email and mobile phone text messages on 23 and 24 December. The 23 December email threat, sent to 16 Radio Victoria staff, said: "Well, we already sent two to the pit, the question is who will be the third...it's not a bad idea to carry on with one of the big mouths from Radio Victoria...the deaths will continue and nobody can stop the revenge already begun, we prefer that the third of the dead should be a presenter, or a correspondent, or anybody else from that damn radio station, the safest target is a presenter, be careful, we're not playing around this is the new wave of warnings that we're beginning after killing Ramiro."

Another threat was sent by email the next day, to eight of the 16 people who had received the previous threat. It read, "we've already chosen the next one to die, it's one of the best-known presenters at that radio station, this will be a real blow for all of them at the radio station, today we're not going to make mistakes saying any names we're just saying that this presenter is better known and that sooner or later this will hurt you we're going to kill you"

The threats followed the killings of two anti-mining activists in Cabañas department: Gustavo Marcelo Rivera in June and Ramiro Rivera on 20 December. Ramiro Rivera was the legal representative of the NGO Cabañas Environment Committee (*Comité Ambiental de Cabañas*), and had survived an August attack in which he was shot eight times.

On 26 December, another member of the Cabañas Environment Committee was killed. Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto, who was eight months pregnant, was shot dead, and her two-year-old child was wounded. Her husband, José Santos Rodríguez, is the Cabañas Environment Committee spokesperson.

The day after Dora Alicia Recinos was killed, six armed men on motorbikes were seen arriving at the home of the head of Radio Victoria's news team, Isabel Gámez. She was out at the time, but the men went into her garden and shone flashlights through the windows: they left when they saw no one inside.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to order a prompt, full and independent investigation into the threats against Radio Victoria staff, and the recent killing of Ramiro Rivera and Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto environmental activists in Cabañas department in 2009, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to ensure that full protection is provided to all Radio Victoria staff, and to members of the Cabañas Environment Committee and their relatives who have received threats, in accordance with their own wishes.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:

President

Mauricio Funes
Casa Presidencial
Alameda Dr. Manuel Enrique Araujo,
No. 5500
San Salvador
EL SALVADOR

Fax: +503 22 43 99 47

Salutation: Dear President /
Estimado Sr. Presidente

Attorney General

Romeo Barahona; Fiscal General
Fiscalía General de la República
Final 4ª Calle Oriente y 19ª Avenida
Sur, Residencial Primavera,
Santa Tecla, La Libertad, San Salvador,
Salvador

Fax : +503 2523-7402

Salutation: Dear Attorney General /
Estimado Sr. Fiscal General

And copies to:

Human Rights Organization
La Fundación de Estudios para la
Aplicación de Derecho
25 Calle Poniente No. 1332,
Col Layco
San Salvador, El Salvador

Fax: +503 2236 1833

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 223/09. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR29/001/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A number of organizations in the Cabañas department campaigned against fraud they alleged had taken place in local elections in January 2009, and have also been campaigning against preparations for gold-mining in the area. Activists have said they began experiencing threats, attacks and intimidation as early as May 2008, when campaigning against mining exploration in the area began. This has intensified since January 2009, when activists reported irregularities in the elections.

Radio Victoria is a community radio station, committed to social and human rights reporting. Broadcasters at Radio Victoria have reported on corruption issues and anti-mining campaigns, and have called for those responsible for the abduction and killing of Gustavo Marcelo Rivera to be brought to justice.

The Cabañas Environment Committee is a grass-roots organization of approximately 140 members, representing 26 communities in Cabañas Department. It was established in 2005 to campaign on local environmental issues and has spoken out against a proposed mining project in the area.

Further information on UA: 223/09 Index: AMR 29//001/2010 Issue Date: 4 January 2010