

URGENT ACTION

PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER AT RISK

On July 5th, Yuli Velásquez, President of the Federation of Santander Fishers for Tourism and Environment (FEDEPESAN), an environmental organization operating in Barrancabermeja, Colombia, was the victim of an armed attack. Two unknown assailants shot at her, harming her bodyguard. Members of FEDEPESAN have previously suffered other armed attacks and threats. We urge Colombia's National Protection Unit (UNP) to grant protective measures to Yuli that adequately respond to the level of risk Yuli and FEDEPESAN members are facing.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr. Alfonso Campo Martínez
Director of the National Protection Unit
Cra. 63 ##14-97 Bogotá
Colombia
director@unp.gov.co

Dear Mr. Campo Martínez,

I am writing to express concern for the safety of the members of FEDEPESAN, an organization committed to the defence, promotion, and protection of human rights and the environment in the Magdalena medio region in Colombia. Due to their brave work, various members of the organization had been victims of attempt of murder. The last one happened on July 5, 2022, at approximately 4:32 PM when Yuli Velásquez, president of FEDEPESAN, was approached by two unknown persons who shot from a motorcycle. Yuli managed to take cover, but her bodyguard was shot.

We call on the National Protection Unit to immediately reassess the security situation of Yuli Velásquez and, in consultation with the defender, grant proper protective measures according to the risk she faces.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International considers that the Colombian state is not fully committed to protect Territory, Land and Environmental Defenders. In 2020, Amnesty International [denounced](#) that regardless of the extensive legislation on HRDs in the country, the State has done very little to offer comprehensive protection for TLERDs in the country, which is considered the deadliest for [Global Witness](#) and [Frontline Defenders](#).

In April 2021, Amnesty International launched an [urgent action](#) for CREDHOS, an environmental organization working in the Magdalena Medio region and faced similar risks than FEDEPESAN. The State took the measures we requested in the UA.

On 7 June, Amnesty International launched an [urgent action](#) calling on the Colombian government to live up to its 2009 commitment on implementing the Roundtable on Guarantee of Human Rights and effectively provide protection to Territory, Land, and environmental defenders in the region.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 9 September 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: FEDEPESAN (They/Them) / Yuli Velásquez (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr23/5677/2022/en/>