

COLOMBIA

Threats continue against leaders of OFP, women's rights organization

RRN members have faxed at least eleven letters to Colombian officials on behalf of staff and members of the Popular Women's Organization, or OFP (Organizacion Femenina Popular) in Barrancabermeja, Santander. Yolanda Becerra, President of the OFP, has been the target of an AUC, the largest paramilitary group in Colombia. The OFP denounces human rights abuses committed by the AUC, as they attempt to control the region. Despite responses from such government agencies as the Presidential Human Rights Program, these threats continue.

TIMELINE

- May 2002: oil union workers and local police discover **AUC plot to kill OFP President Yolanda Becerra**
- May 2003: Becerra receives a message that paramilitaries might shoot 20 of her colleagues; **2 OFP members received death threats**
- August 2003: OFP member **Julia Sierra is threatened** at gunpoint by AUC while they force her husband from their home
- September 2003: AUC declares the OFP to be a "military target" and threatens to kill Becerra
- October 2003: OFP member **Esperanza Amaris Miranda** is abducted from her house in Barrancabermeja by 3 AUC members, **killed** in front of a neighborhood school, and her body thrown into the middle of the street.
- January 2004: OFP staff person **Ines Peña is forced into a van and tortured**; a humanitarian delegation to a housing project for the poor, including OFP members, was fired upon by the army
- December 2004: a former **paramilitary youth threatened to bomb the OFP office**; empty box left outside the kitchen the following day
- January 2005: **Becerra**, accompanied by Peace Brigades International volunteers, **was followed by gunmen**
- May 2006: a group calling itself Colombia Free of Communists sent death threats to 20 organizations, including the OFP
- June 2006: **death threats against OFP leader Gloria Amparo Suarez**
- February 2007: **Katherine Gonzalez Torres**, the sister of OFP leader Sandra Gutierrez Torres, was **disappeared**
- July 2007: OFP received a written death threat from the Aguilas Negras (Black Eagles) paramilitary group.
- November 4, 2007: Yolanda **Becerra**, OFP President, was **assaulted** in her home in Barrancabermeja.
- June 18, 2008: A written death threat signed by the United Black Eagles was delivered to the offices of CREDHOS (Regional Human Rights Committee), accusing six organizations, including the OFP, of being guerrilla sympathizers and of promoting and financing guerrilla groups.