

URGENT ACTION

MAN ABDUCTED DURING FORCED EVICTION

On 20 November a mentally disabled man was brutally abducted in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, during an illegal forced eviction carried out by the police. Since then his family have had no information about his whereabouts and the authorities are not investigating his disappearance.

On 20 November at 7.30 am, police officers and dozens of men who were believed to be thugs contracted by the police forced their way into **Luis Polo's** house in the neighborhood of Villa Duarte in the eastern area of Santo Domingo, in order to forcibly evict the residents of the building. According to his family, Luis Polo, who is mentally disabled, was violently removed from his house by the thugs under the order of the police, and forced into a car. He has not been seen since.

Later the same day, the family went to report the disappearance to the police, who denied having arrested him. According to the family, both the police and the local public prosecutor are not investigating his disappearance.

On 23 November, police officers along with thugs again went to the house to evict Luis Polo's son and another family who were living in separate apartments in the same building. According to the residents, the delinquents beat them in front of the police. The officers did not present any court order permitting them to carry out either eviction.

Since then, all the residents are homeless and the building is guarded by police officers to prevent them from returning.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to take immediate steps to establish the whereabouts of Luis Polo;
- If he is in custody, calling for his immediate release, or otherwise that he be charged with a recognizably criminal offence; and calling for him to be given immediate access to his family, a lawyer and any medical treatment he may require;
- Calling on the authorities to fully investigate the forced evictions which occurred on 20 and 23 November in Villa Duarte, and the abduction of Luis Polo and to bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 JANUARY 2013 TO:

Chief of the Police

Jose Armando Polanco Gómez
 Jefe de la Policía Nacional
 Palacio de la Policía Nacional
 Av. Leopoldo Navarro #402
 Santo Domingo
 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Fax: 011 1809 685 4510
Email: ayudantedeljefe@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Chief of the Police

Attorney General

Francisco Domínguez Brito
 Procurador General de la República,
 Palacio de Justicia
 Av. Jiménez Moya esq. Juan Ventura
 Simón
 Santo Domingo,
 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Fax: 011 1809 532 2584
Email: info@pgr.gob.do
Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

Interior Minister

José Ramón Fadul
 Ministro de Interior y Policía
 Secretaría de Estado de Interior y Policía
 Av. México esq. Leopoldo Navarro. Edificio
 de Oficinas Gubernamentales Juan Pablo
 Duarte
 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Fax: 011 1809 686 6599
Email: jdelarocha@mip.gob.do
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Roberto B. Saladin
 Embassy of the Dominican Republic, 1715 22nd St. NW, Washington DC 20008
Phone: 1 202 332 6280 | Fax: 202 265 8057 | E-mail: embassy@us.serex.gov.do -OR- consular@us.serex.gov.do

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to Luis Polo's family, a lawyer has been claiming ownership of the building since 2005, despite the fact that the family has been living there for 30 years.

Luis Polo had previously disappeared, when in 2005 he was forced into a car by unknown persons. It was only four years later that he was found in the city of Azua, about a 100 kilometers west of Santo Domingo. He said that he had been severely beaten and when the men freed him he had been unable to find his way home due to his mental disability. The family believes that both disappearances are intimidation acts to force them to stop claiming ownership of the building.

A high number of forced evictions are carried out all over the country and especially in the National District and in Santo Domingo Province. Most evictions are carried out without due process or consultation with the communities affected. The lack of deeds and security of tenure, which is estimated to affect more than 50 per cent of the population (75 per cent in Santo Domingo Province), are among the main arguments used by the authorities to justify forced evictions. On several occasions, unlawful use of force by the security forces has been reported during forced evictions, including resulting in fatalities and injuries from gun shots.

The National Police in the Dominican Republic is responsible for a number of human rights violations, including unlawful killings, torture and other ill treatment, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, which Amnesty International documented in the report *Shut up if you don't want to be killed. Human rights violations by the police in the Dominican Republic* (AMR 27/002/2011, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR27/002/2011/en>), published in October 2011.

Name: Luis Polo (m)

Issues: Forced eviction, Enforced disappearance

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