

# URGENT ACTION

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER KILLED, OTHERS AT RISK

**A member of the Ríos Vivos (Living Rivers) Movement was killed on 2 May, the same day that the group carried out an all-day march against the Hidroituango hydroelectric project in Antioquia, Colombia. Members of the movement fear further reprisals.**

On 2 May, unknown assailants killed **Hugo Albeiro George Pérez**, 47, a member of the Association for Victims and Individuals affected by Megaprojects (Asociación de Víctimas y Afectados por Megaproyectos, ASVAM), part of the Antioquia Ríos Vivos Movement (Movimiento Ríos Vivos Antioquia, MRVA). Two armed men on motorcycles shot him twice while he was in a café in Puerto Valdivia in northern Antioquia, resulting in his death. Hugo George's nephew, **Domar Egidio Zapata George**, 23, was also killed during the course of the attack.

These events took place the same day as Ríos Vivos organized an all-day demonstration. Around 160 people gathered to express their concerns over flooding and the risk of avalanches in their communities. According to media reports, heavy rain blocked a tunnel built by the Hidroituango hydroelectric project. This blockage caused an increase in water levels that, according to the Ríos Vivos movement, has affected at least 45 families and could affect many more in upcoming days if the blockage is not swiftly removed.

Hugo George has publicly opposed the construction of the Hidroituango hydroelectric project. He began demanding compensation for affected families in 2013 after the construction of a road connecting the dam with Puerto Valdivia impacted their land and their farming activities.

People from the Ríos Vivos movement told Amnesty International that despite police presence after Hugo George was killed, authorities did not restrict access to the crime scene, and the body was moved without forensic protocol being followed. They also denounced that the governor of Antioquia and the Antioquia police denied that Hugo George was a leader from their movement in public declarations. In previous occasions, regional authorities have publicly delegitimized the Ríos Vivos movement. The Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for the collective Prevention and Protection plan for Ríos Vivos members, have reportedly been in contact with organizers, but have not taken any specific steps with respect to the implementation of a comprehensive collective protection plan.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Requesting that authorities conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Hugo Albeiro George Pérez taking into account his role defending the rights of communities affected by the Hidroituango hydroelectric project, and that all those found responsible be brought to justice;
- Calling for full and immediate implementation of the collective Prevention and Protection Plan for members of the Ríos Vivos Movement;
- Demanding that they take immediate steps to overcome the structural causes behind the threats, killings and attacks faced by human rights defenders in the context of the Hidroituango hydroelectric project.

**Contact these two officials by 18 June, 2018:**

Attorney General

Nestor Humberto Martínez  
Fiscal General de Colombia  
Diagonal 22B No. 52-01  
Bogotá, D.C., Colombia

Email: [contacto@fiscalia.gov.co](mailto:contacto@fiscalia.gov.co), [denuncie@fiscalia.gov.co](mailto:denuncie@fiscalia.gov.co)

Salutation: **Dear Attorney General/ Estimado Señor Fiscal**

Ambassador Camilo Reyes, Embassy of Colombia

1724 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20036  
Phone: 202 387 8338 | Fax: 202-232-8643

Email: [embassyofcolombia@colombiaemb.org](mailto:embassyofcolombia@colombiaemb.org)

Salutation: **Dear Ambassador**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 88.18*

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Construction of the Hidroituango hydroelectric project began in 2010. The dam is located on the Cauca river in Antioquia, Colombia. One of the stated activities of the project includes the “temporary diversion of the Cauca river”, amongst other activities. According to Ríos Vivos, more than 500 families have been displaced as a consequence of the project to date. Hidroituango’s own social and environmental impact study states that the communities of Orobajo and Barbacoas in the area “will be completely flooded” as a result of the project.

In the context of protests against the Hidroituango hydroelectric project, Ríos Vivos reports that 151 attacks have been carried out against its members, and three members have been killed. A further two attempts have reportedly been made against the lives of its members, and more than 60 threats have been recorded.

On 20 April 2018, 25 members of the European parliament sent a letter to the Colombian authorities expressing their concern about the situation of the inhabitants of this area before the imminent filling of the dam. They expressed great concern regarding the fact that the dam is located in an area with the presence of mass graves and scattered bodies, to date 159 bodies have been exhumed, but there is a high probability that many more bodies will be found there.

A collective Prevention and Protection plan was granted to members of the Ríos Vivos movement in 2013, however, to date, authorities have reportedly not initiated implementation of this plan. To this regard, a group of deputies from Sweden sent a letter requesting the implementation of the MRVA Prevention and Protection Plan.

According to the NGO Somos Defensores, more than 40 human rights defenders have been killed in Colombia since the beginning of the year.

Name: Hugo Albeiro George Pérez (m), Domar Egidio Zapata George (m) and other members of the Antioquia Ríos Vivos Movement  
Gender m/f: all

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