

URGENT ACTION

POLICE RETURN DEFENDER'S SEIZED VEHICLES

On 10 December Nicaraguan police returned two vehicles that they had taken possession of from human rights defender Francisca Ramírez 10 days before. The vehicles showed signs of damage and no reason was given for their seizure. Francisca Ramírez mentioned that international pressure helped her gain justice.

On International Human Rights Days on 10 December, **Francisca Ramírez**, coordinator of the Council for the Defence of Our Land, Lake and Sovereignty stated that “thanks to international pressure, the police realized that *people save people* and that this [seizure of vehicles] doesn't silence us, this gives us more strength to keep denouncing [injustice]...”.

Nicaraguan police had taken possession of two of Francisca Ramírez's vehicles on 1 December, which she relies on to be able to work and ensure the security of her and her family's livelihood. The seizure occurred the same day that Francisca Ramírez travelled to Managua, the capital, to speak out publicly against a series of acts of repression suffered by protestors during the demonstrations organized by her organization against the possible negative impacts of the upcoming construction of the Nicaraguan Grand Interoceanic Canal. The doors and several other parts of the vehicles were damaged when they were returned to her. The police did not explain why the vehicles were seized.

Francisca Ramírez told Amnesty International that the police were positive when they delivered the vehicles and said “today, there was a drastic change, they [the police] showed another face, they didn't appear to be the terrorists of 29 November [when police repressed protestors during demonstrations against the Canal], they appeared to be the police of the people. I think it is shameful that the police have two faces, one that intimidates and represses the people and another that shows a different face...like the one that responded today”. Francisca Ramírez added that she and her colleagues in the Council for the Defence of Our Land, Lake and Sovereignty will continue to organize and be united in their work.

No further action is requested of the UA Network at this time. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 276/16. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr43/5277/2016/en/

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