

29 September 2016

Peru: Assault of environmental rights defender and journalist César Estrada Chuquillín

On 27 September 2016, César Estrada Chuquillín was physically assaulted by an unknown man on the streets of Cajamarca, as he headed home. The human rights defender immediately called the police. When they arrived, however, they refused to register his complaint.

[Cesar Estrada Chuquillín](#) is an environmental rights defender and journalist, member of the **Red de Comunicadores Indígenas del Perú – REDCIP** (Network of Indigenous Communicators in Peru) and a reporter for the radios **Coremarca**, **Marañón** and **Servindin** as well as the newspaper **Diario Perú**. He has reported on several human rights violations concerning land disputes in the region of Cajamarca, including the case of the [Chaupe family](#), as well as environmental issues related to the Conga Mining Project and the use of violence and judicial harassment against those opposing its construction. Conga is an open-pit gold and copper mining project, led by the Yanacocha mining company. Despite been a beneficiary of precautionary measures ([452-11](#)) from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) since 2014, César Estrada Chuquillín has not been assigned any specific protective measure. The defender is the 2016 winner of the Martine Anstett Human Rights Prize.

On 27 September 2016, César Estrada Chuquillín was walking down the street in Cajamarca when a man approached him and yelled at him "here you are again!" and used other vulgar and offensive expletives. The assailant punched him in the face. The defender took shelter in a nearby restaurant and called the police. Upon arrival, the officers refused to register his complaint and left him on his own, despite the fact that he is a beneficiary of precautionary measures issued by the IACHR. The human rights defender then made his way to the police station, where again he had to insist to have officers register his complaint. He also met resistance from the forensic doctor to tend to his wounds and write the corresponding report to lodge with his complaint.

César Estrada Chuquillín has faced persecution and intimidation in the past as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights work. On 23 March 2016, he saw two unidentified armed men outside his house and overheard them identifying his home, stating: "that's where he lives" ("*aquí vive*"). This followed death threats and intimidating messages received on his mobile phone the previous day, 22 March. The extremely aggressive messages included direct reference to his human rights work: "stupid you are going to die, if you think you are free, you are wrong, every time you open your mouth against Conga, is one less day for you" ("*perro vas a morir, si crees que ya estas libre, te equivocas, cada vez que habres la boca en contra de conga, es un día menos para ti*"). Support received by the human rights defender from the international community was also mentioned, with one of the messages reading: "your human rights, the UN, your Irish gringos, they are not going to save you" ("*tus derechos humanos, tu ONU, tus gringos irlandeses, no te van a salvar*"). After receiving the text

messages, Cesar Estrada Chuquilín went to the *II Comisaria de Cajamarca* (II Police Station of Cajamarca) to file a complaint, however the officer refused to accept it, alleging that the facts did not constitute a crime, and advised the human rights defender to change his phone number.

In [September](#) and [October](#) 2015, he suffered what appeared to be assassination attempts, followed by many violent and graphic threats directed at members of his family. The human rights defender has also been subjected to continuous judicial harassment, including fabricated charges of theft and kidnapping. The charges remain pending, with a hearing scheduled for 15 October 2016.

Front Line Defenders condemns the attack against César Estrada Chuquilín, as well as the lack of reaction by the authorities in charge of protecting his safety and personal integrity. Front Line Defenders considers that this attack as well as all other attempts against the life and safety of the human rights defenders, are a retaliation against his legitimate human rights work. Front Line Defenders urges the State of Peru to comprehensively implement, in consultation with him,

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Peru to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into assault against César Estrada Chuquilín, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Immediately implement, in consultation with the defender, the precautionary measures no. [452-11](#) issued on behalf of César Estrada Chuquilín on 5 May 2014 by the IACHR and take all necessary measures to guarantee his physical and psychological integrity and security as well as that of the members of his family;
3. Cease the targeting of human rights defenders working to guarantee the rights of farmers and indigenous people in Cajamarca, and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Peru are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.