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## **Colombia: Attack on character of Hugo Albeiro George Pérez following his murder and intimidation of his family**

On 4 May 2018, police officers attended the burial of Hugo Albeiro George Pérez in order to question his widow, Luciriam Hernández, on the human rights defender's involvement in Movimiento Ríos Vivos Antioquia (MRVA) and to ask for further details regarding his murder. Officials from the Antioquia Police Department said publicly that Hugo Albeiro George was not a human right defender or an MRVA member and that his murder was related to unresolved property issues regarding his land in Puerto Valdivia.

Hugo Albeiro George Pérez was a leader of MRVA from the beginning of the human rights movement, when Public Enterprises of Medellín (Empresas Públicas de Medellín – EPM) started to threaten the livelihoods of the campesino communities in Puerto Valdivia and attempted to expropriate their lands, in order to carry out the Hidroituango hydroelectric project. The human rights defender's family have lived in Puerto Valdivia for fifty-two years, working at the Manzanares estate near the Cauca River.

On 2 May 2018, Hugo Albeiro George Pérez was shot and killed while participating in a peaceful protest to oppose the impact of Hidroituango Hydroelectric Project. During his burial on 4 May, police officials insisted on questioning his widow over his human rights activities with MRVA. The MRVA say that police officials took advantage of the family's vulnerability to pressure and threaten Hugo Albeiro George Pérez's widow into accompanying them for further questioning.

EMP representatives said the company granted reparation measures to those affected by the Hidroituango Hydroelectric Project and said there was no merit to the claims that the George family had suffered as a result of the project's construction. The George family says that they did receive a payment from EMP after the damage of some of their crops, but they deny having received compensation for the loss of other economic activities, such as artisanal fishing and barequeo (artisanal mining).

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern at the smear campaign being conducted against the late human rights defender, Hugo Albeiro George Pérez, and expresses further concern over the constant harassment, attacks, and criminalization suffered by members of Rios Vivos Antioquia over the past number of months.