

31 October 2019

### **Chile: Environmental defender Patricia Dedos Verdes threatened**

On 29 October 2019, environmental rights defender Patricia Dedos Verdes was threatened by an unidentified man at the University of Chile subway station in Santiago.

**Patricia Dedos Verdes (Patricia Nuñez)** is a teacher and human rights defender who works on environmental rights through advocating for the communal ownership of intellectual property rights on plants, advocating against the privatization of seeds in Chile. In the past, she has denounced the harmful effects of the Monsanto Act. Since 2016, she has been the director of the Voluntary Agro-ecological School in Resistance (Escuela Voluntaria Agro-ecológica en Resistencia), an initiative that seeks to promote work on land and food self-management.

On 29 October 2019, an unidentified man approached Patricia at the University of Chile subway station, threatening to kill her and her family. Later, he showed her a picture of her house, to show her that that he knows where she lives.

This is not the first time Patricia Dedos Verdes has received threats as a result of her environmental rights work in Chile. In the past, she has been harassed through the telephone and there has been a constant presence of state security agents around her home, with the apparent aim of intimidating her and violating her privacy.

Front Line Defenders has previously denounced attacks against those who defend human rights, and in particular environmental rights, in Chile, as in the case of [Lonko Alberto Curamil](#) and members of [MODATIMA](#). Environmental defenders in Chile are constantly attacked and threatened physically and verbally for their work. Front Line Defenders reiterates its call to the Chilean authorities to sign, ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement, with the objective of creating a propitious environment for the defence of environmental rights in the country.

Finally, Front Line Defenders expresses its concern about the hostile environment that has intensified for human rights defenders in the country since the start of protests on 18 October. It reiterates its support to Chilean civil society's right to association and its call for the Chilean State to recognize that the work of human rights defenders is essential to democracy, even during tense political times.

## **Front Line Defenders urges the Chilean authorities to:**

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Patricia Dedos Verdes, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice and apply the sanctions provided by law;
2. Publicly recognize, from the highest levels of local and national authorities, the legitimate and important work carried out by all human rights defenders, including those defending rights related to land, territory and the environment.
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Chile are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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