

PUBLIC

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13 June 2008

UA 167/08 Fear for safety/ Death threats

COLOMBIA Isnelo González (m)]
Élida Parra Alfonso (f)]
Emiro Goyeneche Goyeneche (m)] Staff at Sarare FM Stereo community radio
Ismael Antonio Rodríguez (m)] station (*Emisora Comunitaria Sarare FM*
Alexis Iván Rojas (m)] *Stéreo*)
Deibys Pantoja Cerrerrño (m)]

Other staff at *Emisora Comunitaria Sarare FM Stéreo*

Employees of community radio station Sarare FM Stereo (*Emisora Comunitaria Sarare FM Stéreo*) have received death threats in the last few weeks, and the office of the radio station has been daubed with pro-paramilitary graffiti. The lives of the employees are in grave danger.

Emisora Comunitaria Sarare FM Stéreo is a community radio station based in the town of Saravena in the north-eastern department of Arauca. On 8 May 2008, radio station employees Isnelo González (a member of human rights group, the *Fundación de Derechos Humanos "Joel Sierra"*), Élida Parra Alfonso, Emiro Goyeneche Goyeneche, Ismael Antonio Rodríguez, Alexis Iván Rojas and Deibys Pantoja Cerrerrño, all received an identical text message, apparently from the paramilitary organization, the United Self-Defence groups of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC). The text message said: "For the wellbeing of you and your loved ones, do not meddle in subjects that do not concern the radio station. AUC Arauca" (*x su bienestar de ust y los suyos primer llamado n se metean en temas q n les import x esa emisorucha [sic]. AUC del Arauca*).

On 28 May, fears for the employees of the radio station increased when the letters "AUC" were painted on the front entrance of their building.

On 27 September 2007, employees of the radio station participated in a public meeting attended by members of a Congressional Human Rights Commission, at which members of the public denounced human rights abuses and violations committed by different parties to the armed conflict in the department of Arauca.

In the past, journalists and human rights defenders who have denounced or campaigned for justice in cases of human rights violations and abuses committed by the security forces, their paramilitary allies or guerrilla groups have often been subject to serious human rights violations themselves.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Colombia's internal armed conflict, journalists are frequently threatened or killed by armed groups, who accuse them of collaborating with their enemies.

Colombia's army-backed paramilitary groups have supposedly demobilized in a government-sponsored process. The threats against employees of Sarare FM community radio station is yet another illustration that paramilitaries continue to operate in Arauca despite this supposed demobilization.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Isnelo González, Élica Parra Alfonso, Emiro Goyeneche Goyeneche, Ismael Antonio Rodríguez, Alexis Iván Rojas, Deibys Pantoja Cerrerño and other employees of Sarare FM community radio station, following death threats against them;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all measures deemed appropriate by these individuals are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the reported death threats against Isnelo González, Élica Parra Alfonso, Emiro Goyeneche Goyeneche, Ismael Antonio Rodríguez, Alexis Iván Rojas, Deibys Pantoja Cerrerño and other employees of Sarare FM community radio station, with the results of the investigation made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups operating in the region and to break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 337 5890 / 342 0592

Salutation: Dear President Uribe/ Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

Governor of Arauca Department

Sr. Fredy Forero Requiniva

Gobernación de Arauca

Palacio de Gobierno Departamental, Carrera 20, 21-82, Arauca, COLOMBIA

Fax: + 57 7 885 3233

Salutation: Dear Governor Forero / Sr. Gobernador Forero

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Germán Iguarán Arana

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación

Diagonal 22B (Av. Luis Carlos Galán No. 52-01) Bloque C, Piso 4

Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (a message in Spanish will ask you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Estimado Sr. Fiscal/Dear Mr Iguarán

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental Human Rights Organization

Fundación de Derechos Humanos "Joel Sierra"

Carrera 16ª #28-49

Saravena

Arauca, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 July 2008.