

UA 59/00

Fea.

**COLOMBIA**Jairo BEDOYA HOYOS, indigenous rights activist

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There is serious concern for Jairo Bedoya Hoyos, who has not been seen since 2 March 2000, when he left his son at the "Urbanización Señorial" housing estate in Envigadó, municipality of Envigadó, department of Antioquia.

Jairo Bedoya is a member of the *Organización Indígena de Antioquia*, OIA, Indigenous Organization of Antioquia, which represents indigenous communities in Antioquia department. As a member of OIA, Jairo Bedoya is involved in the "Para que Embera Viva", "For the Life of the Embera Indigenous People", campaign for the respect of the cultural rights and security of the Embera indigenous community. It is believed that this work may have exposed him to attack from either the security forces and their paramilitary allies or guerrilla forces. In the past, those who have denounced violations of international humanitarian law or human rights violations have frequently themselves been the target of abuses.

In recent years, several Embera indigenous communities that campaigned against the construction of the Urrá Dam, which will destroy much of their ancestral lands, have been victims of serious human rights violations carried out by paramilitary forces working in alliance with the security forces. Guerrilla forces have also been responsible for arbitrary killings of indigenous leaders in the same region, accusing them of siding with the paramilitary or security forces.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Members of indigenous communities and people working with them have frequently been targeted for human rights violations by paramilitary groups operating with the support and under the coordination of members of the security forces in Antioquia department. Guerrilla groups have also been responsible for frequent abuses of international humanitarian law against members of the indigenous population, including arbitrary killings. On 25 February 1999, three United States indigenous activists, Terence Freitas, Laheenae Gay and Ingrid Washinawatok were forcibly abducted and later shot dead by guerrillas of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia as they travelled to Saravena airport, Arauca Department. Their bodies were found in Venezuela on 4 March. In response to the lack of security faced by the indigenous population in Antioquia, the OIA has declared the "neutrality" of the indigenous communities in the conflict as a means to ensure that both sides in the conflict respect the physical integrity of the indigenous civilian population. Despite such declarations, indigenous community members continue to be the victims of human rights violations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Jairo Bedoya Hoyos who has not been seen since 2 March 2000 and for the safety of members of the OIA;
- urging that there should be a full and impartial investigation to establish his whereabouts and that, if in detention, efforts should be made to ensure they he is released immediately;
- urging that those responsible for his possible abduction be brought to justice;
- urging that all measures, deemed appropriate by OIA members are taken to guarantee their safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Tx: 44281 PALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 286 7434/ 284 2186/ 337 1351**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana**

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Néstor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2

Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Ministerio del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 45406 MINGO CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 286 8025 / 281 5884 / 342 3201**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

Governor of the Department of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega, Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia  
Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, # 52-106, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia**

**Fax: + 574 381 1342**

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

Indigenous Organization of Antioquia

OIA

Cra 49#63, Medellín, Antioquia, 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 20 April 2000.