

UA 21/99

Fear for safety /possible "disappearance"/ extrajudicialCOLOMBIA Indigenous *Embera Katio* communities in Córdoba and Antioquia
Departments

"Disappeared" - Gabriel Domicó, Solangel Arias Domicó, Eugenio Domicó, Lubertín Cabrera, Luz Marina Domicó (f), Antonio Domicó, William Domicó, Libardo Domicó, Micaela Domicó (f), Ana Luz Guasaruca (f).

Killed: Alejandro Domicó, Argemiro Domicó, Euclides Domicó, Abelardo Bailarín.
Deliberate and arbitrary killing by guerrilla: Pedro Luis Bailarín and Guillermo Bailarín

Paramilitary groups have reportedly killed several members of the indigenous *Embera Katio* community, and abducted 10 others. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the community.

On 29 January 1999 a paramilitary force reportedly operating with the support or acquiescence of the security forces entered the *Embera Katio* community of Kipardo in the *Resguardo Karagabi*, Karagabi indigenous reserve, forcing families to leave their homes and warning that the region could no longer escape the counter-insurgency war. On 31 January the paramilitary group set up a checkpoint on the river Sinú, which runs through the reserve, in Córdoba department, and apparently abducted 10 members of the community, whose whereabouts are now unknown. On 2 February community leaders in the Karagabi indigenous reserve denounced the reported extrajudicial execution by paramilitaries of Alejandro Domicó, who the paramilitary forces accused of having collaborated with guerrillas operating in the area.

These abductions and killings have occurred in the context of opposition to a hydro-electric project being developed in the reserve. This has resulted in opponents of the project being subjected to serious human rights violations by paramilitary forces (see UA 236/98, AMR 23/68/98, 4 September 1998).

Also on 29 January, a paramilitary force reportedly entered the locality of Chigorodocito, outside the Karagabi reserve in neighbouring Antioquia Department, killing *Embera Katio* community leader, Argemiro Domicó and his son, Euclides Domicó, and wounding three others. On 24 December 1998 a paramilitary group reportedly killed Abelardo Bailarín, community leader of Jiguamandó, Chocó Department.

On 3 January, members of the largest armed opposition group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, are reported to have entered the hamlet of Guapí on the river Sinú, Córdoba Department, and deliberately and arbitrarily killed community leader, Pedro Luis Bailarín, and his brother Guillermo Bailarín.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Peasant communities in disputed zones in Colombia's long running armed conflict, including black and indigenous communities, have frequently come under attack. The civilian population's neutrality is not recognized by the parties in the conflict. Those who campaign for the socio-economic rights of communities are frequently labelled guerrilla sympathizers and thus presented as legitimate targets in the counter-insurgency war. Armed opposition groups have also been responsible for arbitrary killings of members of the civilian population.

Colombia's President, Andrés Pastrana, has made repeated commitments to combat paramilitary organizations since he took office in August 1998. Since 1989, the government has issued repeated directives to the armed forces to combat and disband paramilitary groups, yet they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many parts of the country. The Attorney General recently said that the security forces have not acted on over 200 outstanding warrants for the arrest of alleged paramilitary group members responsible for widespread human rights violations.

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

- condemning the killings of members of the *Embera Katio* community in Antioquia and Córdoba Departments by paramilitary forces and armed opposition groups;
- expressing concern for the safety of the 10 members of the community who reportedly "disappeared" after they were abducted by paramilitary forces on 31 January 1999, and calling on the authorities to take steps to secure their release;
- expressing concern for the safety for all the *Embera Katio* community in Antioquia and Córdoba and calling on the authorities to take all appropriate steps, agreed by the community, to guarantee their safety;
- calling for full, prompt and impartial investigations into the abduction of the 10 and the killing of Alejandro Domicó, Argemiro Domicó, Euclides Domicó, Abelardo Bailarín, Pedro Luis Bailarín and Guillermo Bailarín, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the area, and urging that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with government commitments.

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

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

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 284 2186/289 3377/286 7434/

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Nestor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Fax:+ 57 1 281 5884 / 286 6524 / 286 0405 / 286 0053 / 341 9739

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

Governor of the Department of Córdoba

Sr. Angel Villadiego Hernández, Gobernador del Departamento de Córdoba

Gobernación de Córdoba, Palacio de Nain, Calle 27, No. 3-28, P-3,
Montería, Córdoba, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador de Córdoba, Montería, Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO: National Non-governmental Indigenous Organization

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)

Apartado Aéreo 32395, Santafé de Bogotá, 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 18 March 1999.