

9 February 1999

Further information on EXTRA 12/99 (AMR 23/04/99, 29 January 1999) and follow-up (AMR 23/11/99, 4 February 1999) - Fear for safety/"disappearance"

COLOMBIA Jairo Bedoya] Human rights workers with
Jorge Salazar] the Instituto Popular de
Capacitación (IPC),
Olga Rodas (f) - released] Popular Training
Claudia Tamayo (f) - released] Institute

On 8 February 1999 Olga Rodas and Claudia Tamayo, two human rights defenders abducted by paramilitaries on 28 January, were released. Amnesty International remains gravely concerned, however, for the safety of Jairo Bedoya and Jorge Salazar, who remain hostages.

Olga Rodas and Claudia Tamayo, both reported to be in good health, were released into the care the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Córdoba Department.

On 1 February, Carlos Castaño, the head of the paramilitary organization Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia claimed responsibility for the abductions and said they were holding the four as "prisoners of war". He threatened human rights defenders in Colombia and said "La retención de los miembros de IPC ...marca el inicio de una lamentable, pero inevitable etapa del conflicto..." (their abduction marked the beginning of a regrettable but inevitable stage in the conflict).

Following the release of Olga Rodas and Claudia Tamayo, relatives of all those abducted said in a press statement: "*Si bien hoy nos regocijamos, seguimos aquí a la espera, con la exigencia de la libertad inmediata de Jorge y Jairo, que al igual que ellas no tienen por qué ser secuestrados bajo el pretexto de una guerra que no comparten y ante la cual se han declarado neutrales activos*". (Even though we are happy today, we still demand the immediate release of Jorge and Jairo who have been taken hostage for no reason on the pretext of a war in which they are not involved and which they have declared themselves to be actively neutral)

The *Instituto Popular de Capacitación* (IPC), Popular Training Institute recently wrote to thank Amnesty International for its support: "*Todo el apoyo y solidaridad que nos han brindado ha sido y seguirá siendo de vital importancia para garantizar la vida e integridad de nuestros compañeros y compañeras de trabajo secuestrados.....su trabajo y vos de aliento nos han hecho sentir que no estamos solos, que hacemos parte de un gran colectivo de hombres y mujeres que laboran día a día por hacer de Colombia un territorio de paz*" (All the support and solidarity which you have shown us will continue to be of vital importance to guarantee the life and physical integrity of our kidnapped workmates... Your work and voice encourage us to feel that we are not alone, and that we are part of a great collective of men and women that work day by day to make Colombia a land of peace); "*Todos esas llamadas, esos faxes, correos electronicos, todos los recursos y tiempo dispuestos hacia nosotros, refuerza aún más nuestro compromiso por coayudar en la construcción de una Colombia mejor, justa y pacífica.*" (All those calls, faxes, e-mails, all those resources and time spent on us, strengthen even more our commitment to help construct a better, just and peaceful Colombia); and "*La vida e intergridad de nuestros compañeros y compañeras de trabajo, así como otros Colombianos y Colombianas*

anónimos ante los medios, depende en granparte de toda esa solidaridad y compañía que nos hand brindado" (The life and physical integrity of our workmates, as with other Colombians who receive no attention in the media, depend in large part on this solidarity and accompaniment which you have shown us).

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

- acknowledging the release of Olga Rodas and Claudia Tamayo on 8 February 1999 by the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia but, nevertheless, condemning the abduction of the four human rights defenders;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate action to ensure the release of Jairo Bedoya and Jorge Salazar;
- expressing grave concern for the safety of all human rights defenders after recent threats made by the AUC and asking for improved protection in line with United Nations recommendations and as agreed by the government;
- expressing concern that the recent abduction and killing of Colombian human rights defenders demonstrate that government steps to protect them are insufficient and ineffective;
- saying that human rights defenders will continue to be the targets of attacks by paramilitaries unless effective action is taken to dismantle paramilitary groups.

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

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

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

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Minister of Defence, Dr. Rodrigo Lloreda, Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

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

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

COPIES TO:

Instituto Popular de Capacitación (IPC), Apartado Aéreo 9690, Medellín, Antioquía, 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 4 March 1999.