

EXTERNAL

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UA 60/96

Death Threats / Fear for Safety

1 March 1996

COLOMBIA José Villamil

There are serious fears for the safety of José Villamil, following death threats made against him in the district of Solidaridad, Popayán City, Cauca Department.

On 7 February 1996, a written death threat addressed to José Villamil, was handed to him by a child as he returned home. The threat was in the form of an invitation to a funeral service to be held in his memory every day during the month of February.

José Villamil is a member of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Salud* (ANTHOC), Health Workers Union. He has been threatened in the past, along with others members of ANTHOC.

José Villamil has denounced the threats on his life to the *Fiscalía General de la Nación*, Attorney General's Office, and to other regional authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture and arbitrary arrests. President Ernesto Samper Pizano has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protecting human rights and to tackling impunity. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity.

Trade unionists, popular leaders, civic activists and human rights workers are among those frequently the target of human rights violations by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service.

Armed opposition groups active in Colombia have also been responsible for serious abuses including kidnapping, holding hostages and arbitrary and deliberate killings.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of José Villamil who received a death threat on 7 February 1996;
- urging that all possible steps be taken to adequately ensure the safety of José Villamil, following the threats on his life;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the threats;
- asking that the results be made public and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377 / 286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Procurator General

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Vasquez, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723/ 281 7531

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

3) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 286 0053 / 286 0485

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa , Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores
ASFADDES
AA 011446
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 12 April 1996.