

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/"Disappearance"

21 May 1992

COLOMBIA: Arcadio RIOS, peasant farmer
Aldemar BERMUDEZ, "
Gustavo CHAVARRIAGA, "
William BLANCO, "

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the above four men, who have not been seen since they were reportedly detained by members of the armed forces in the region of La Uribe, Meta department, in the first three weeks of May.

Relatives of Arcadio Rios reported his detention on 2 May in the community of El Paraiso, La Uribe. They believe he was detained by an army patrol from a nearby base. He has not been seen since.

On 7 May, William Blanco was reportedly detained in his home in the La Libertad community by members of the Army's First Mobile Brigade, Brigada Móvil No. 1. His family report that he was tied up and ill-treated by the soldiers before he was taken away. When they asked the Mobile Brigade commander for news of William Blanco, his detention was denied and his whereabouts remain unknown.

Aldemar Bermúdez and Gustavo Chavarriaga were reportedly detained on 18 May by members of the army's First Mobile Brigade, again in the community of El Paraiso. They have not been seen since and there is serious concern for their safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In September 1991 the Procurator General's office produced an official report which stating that more than 2,300 complaints had been lodged against the army and police in the last two years for human rights violations. President César Gaviria Trujillo, on presenting the report, stated:

"No puede el Gobierno desconocer la gravedad de las acusaciones que se hacen en forma reiterada y masiva contra sus agentes, ni ignorar hasta que punto reina la impunidad por violación de derechos humanos."

"The government cannot fail to recognise the seriousness of the accusations made constantly and on a massive scale against its agents, nor ignore the extent of impunity in cases of human rights violations".

However, despite the government's declared commitment to uphold respect for human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses, including torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance" with virtual impunity.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of Arcadio Rios, William Blanco, Aldemar Bermúdez and Gustavo Chavarriaga, who were reportedly detained by members of the armed forces during the first three weeks of May 1992 and whose whereabouts remain unknown;
- urging an immediate and thorough investigation into their whereabouts;

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- urging that if they are in detention they be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released;
- urging that if they are in detention they be humanely treated and provided with full access to lawyers and to their families.

APPEALS TO

1) President of Colombia:
Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
**Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá,
Colombia**
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 286 3066
+ 57 1 286 7324
+ 57 1 287 7937

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

2) Procurator General:
Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta,
Bogotá, Colombia**
**Telexes:41224 PRGEN CO or
41213 PGNDP CO**
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472

**Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/
Dear Dr. Arrieta**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Committee:
Comité Cívico por los Derechos Humanos
AA 3335

3) Minister of Defence:
Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
**Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Pardo
Rueda, Santa Fe de Bogota,
Colombia**
**Telexes:42411 INPRE CO;
44561 CFAC CO**
Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4) Advocate for the People:
Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
Defensor del Pueblo
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
**Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino,
c/o Procuraduria General,
Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia**
**Telexes:41224 PRGEN CO or
41213 PGNDP CO**
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472

**Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/
Dear Dr. Triviño**

Villavicencio
Meta
Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 July 1992.