

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/024/2003

07 March 2003

Further Information on UA 180/02 (AMR 23/064/2002, 14 June 2002) and follow-ups (AMR 23/137/2002, 2 December 2002 and AMR 23/018/2003, 18 February 2003) - Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA **Soraya Gutiérrez Arguello (f) human rights defender**
Members of the Arguello family
Diana Milena Murcia (f)
Javier Alejandro Acevedo (m)
Other members of the non-governmental human rights organization
Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo', 'José Alvear
Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective

There are renewed concerns for the safety of Soraya Gutiérrez Arguello, her family and other members of the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'* 'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective following recent events, including further anonymous phone calls and intimidation.

On 3 March, an unidentified man reportedly called Soraya Gutiérrez's home and asked her domestic worker when Soraya's daughter arrived home from school. When asked who was calling, the person hung up the phone.

A few minutes later, as the domestic worker went to pick the child up from the bus stop, she reportedly noticed a taxi following her. She then hid at the offices of a phone company, whilst the taxi driver parked the vehicle and waited for 10 minutes until the school bus arrived. When Soraya's daughter got off the bus, he reportedly drove away.

On the same day, the doormen of the housing complex where Soraya lives reported that a man claiming to be from the cable company, *Cablecentro*, had asked for her house number. When the doorman refused to answer, the man got angry and left. Soraya has never used the services of *Cablecentro* at her home and the company has informed her that they did not send anyone to her house.

On 14 February, the armoured car in which Soraya was travelling was fired upon as she drove in capital Bogotá (see AMR 23/018/2003, 18 February 2003). The attack was reported to the *policía nacional*, national police and the car reportedly taken to the *Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad*, (DAS), Colombian civilian intelligence service. The DAS is reportedly carrying out ballistics tests on the car, but the results are as yet unknown. Six days later after the attack, three phone calls were reportedly made to Soraya's home in which the caller wanted to know where she was before hanging up when asked for his name.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Soraya Gutiérrez Arguello, her family and other members of the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'* 'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the threats against and Soraya her daughter, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the Colombian authorities to take effective action to protect members of the organization in line with measures requested by those at risk, thus allowing them to safely continue their legitimate and important work on the defence of human rights;
- calling for the government to investigate all cases of threats against human rights defenders and to bring to justice those responsible;

- urging the government to fully implement the principles of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998;
- calling on the government to initiate a meaningful dialogue with human rights defenders to address issues of their protection and the prevention of attacks against them.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Presidente de la Republica, Bogota, Colombia**
Fax: **+ 57 1 342 0592**
Salutation: **Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe / Dear President Uribe**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Fiscal General de la Nación, Bogota, Colombia**
Fax: **+ 57 1 414 9102**
Salutation: **Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio**

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia
Ministerio del Interior
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: **Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**
Fax: **+ 57 1 566 4573**
Salutation: **Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

COPIES TO:

'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective
Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo',
AA 33035
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 April 2003.