

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible "Disappearance"/ Fear for Safety

1 March 1994

COLOMBIANury Isabel VARGAS ANDRADES, (f) aged 32, widow

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Nury Isabel Vargas Andrades, who has not been seen since 11 February 1994 when she was reportedly detained by uniformed men in the community of Umbito, San José, Turbo municipality in the Urabá region of Antioquia.

According to the testimony of eye-witnesses, at 11 pm on 11 February approximately 10 armed men in military dress entered Nury Vargas' home, tied her hands behind her back, and took her away. Her children were reportedly threatened when they pleaded with the men not to take her. Her whereabouts remain unknown and there is serious concern for her safety.

Her "disappearance" has been denounced to the local human rights ombudsman (*personero*) and to the Regional Office of the Attorney General in Turbo (*Fiscalía General de la Nación, Seccional Turbo*).

Sources state that six months ago Nury Isabel Vargas' husband, whose name is not at present known, was detained by soldiers. His body was later identified in a local hospital. Nury Isabel Vargas has been looking after their four children.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "disappearance", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence, the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombian security forces or civilians working under their command or with their support. 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.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Nury Isabel Vargas Andrades, who has not been seen since 11 February 1994 when she was taken from her home in Umbito, San José, Turbo municipality in the Urabá region of Antioquia department, by armed men dressed in military uniform;
- urging that there be a immediate and thorough inquiry into her "disappearance" and that the authorities take all possible measures to locate her;
- urging that, if she is in detention, she be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives and that, if she is in detention, she be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released immediately and returned to her family.

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 7324/7434; 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
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472
Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

3) Advocate for the People:
 Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia
Faxes:+ 57 1 288 6683
Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

4) Attorney General's Office:
 Dr. Gustavo de Greiff Restrepo
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Apartado Aéreo 29855
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams:Fiscal General,Fiscalia General,Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939
Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff/Dear Dr. de Greiff

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"
 Señores
 ASFADDES
 AA 011446
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

2) Human Rights and Popular Education Organization
 Señores
 CINEP
 AA 25916
 Santa Fe 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 1994.