

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"

23 April 1993

COLOMBIA: Julio SERRANO PATIÑO, municipal treasurer

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Julio Serrano Patiño, who has not been seen since he was violently abducted on 16 April 1993 in Mesetas, Meta department.

According to reports, Julio Serrano was being driven through Mesetas when his car was fired on by a number of armed men in another vehicle. Following the attack he was forced into his assailants' vehicle and driven to an unknown destination. Julio Serrano's driver managed to escape although he was injured in the attack.

Julio Serrano is the municipal treasurer of Mesetas and a member of the legal opposition party Unión Partiôtica (UP), Patriotic Union. The UP claims that since its creation in 1985 more than 1,500 of its members have been the victims of politically motivated killings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports in recent months of human rights violations against members of the civilian population of Meta by Colombian armed forces and paramilitary groups working under their control or with their acquiescence; violations including arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. This coincides with an escalating offensive by the Colombian armed forces against the armed opposition group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, in the region. In areas where guerrilla forces are active, the local population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. Particular victims have been community leaders, members of legal opposition parties and human rights workers.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Julio Serrano Patiño, who has not been seen since 16 April 1993 when he was violently abducted by armed men in Mesetas, Meta department:

- urging an immediate and thorough inquiry into his whereabouts;

- urging that if he is in detention, that he be humanely treated and allowed access to lawyers and relatives;

- urging that if in detention, that he be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released immediately.

APPEALS TO

1) Governor of Meta department:

Señor Omar Armando Baquero
Gobernador del Departamento del Meta
Gobernación del Meta
Carrera 33 No. 38-45
Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia
Telegrams: Gobernador Baquero, Villavicencio, Meta, Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Sir

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 34, Carrera 5
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia
Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño / Dear Dr. Triviño

4) Attorney General:

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff
Fiscal General
Fiscalía General
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia
Faxes: + 57 1 287 0939

Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff / Dear Dr. de Greiff

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

2) Human Rights and Educational 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 4 June 1993.