

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/032/2002

27 March 2002

Further information on UA 62/02 (AMR 23/082/02, 27 February 2002) and follow-up (AMR 23/092/02, 6 March 2002) - Fear for Safety/Possible "Disappearance"

**COLOMBIA** Gilberto Torres Martínez (m) - trade union leader  
Other members of the Oil Workers' Union (USO) and Ecopetrol workers, Department of Casanare

**New Names:** José Antonio Pérez (m) ] Ecopetrol employees  
Hernando Silva Cely (m) ]

**Killed:** Rafael Jaimes Torra (m), USO trade union leader

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Oil workers José Antonio Pérez and Hernando Silva Cely were abducted by unidentified gunmen on 25 March, and their whereabouts are now unknown.

Both men work for the state oil company, Ecopetrol. They were reportedly forced out of a car on their way to work at the Araguaney Ecopetrol oil industry installation in Casanare Department at 7am.

Three Ecopetrol workers have now been abducted so far this year in Casanare Department. A leader of the Oil Workers' Union (USO), Gilberto Torres Martínez, was abducted on 25 February by members of the army-backed paramilitary group *Autodefensas Campesinas del Casanare* (ACC), Peasant Self-Defence Forces of Casanare. The ACC is part of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia. The group said on 3 March that they were going to put him "on trial", and announce the results shortly, but there has been no news since.

Another USO leader, Ecopetrol employee Rafael Jaimes Torra, was shot and killed on 20 March as he left his home in Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, despite the fact that he was under the Ministry of the Interior's Protection Program for threatened trade unionists. The USO announced an indefinite work-stoppage in response. José Antonio Pérez and Hernando Silva Cely had been hired under Ecopetrol's contingency plan after the strike was called.

Both paramilitary groups and armed opposition groups such as the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and the *Ejercito de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army, are known to operate in Casanare Department.

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

- urging the authorities to order an independent, impartial and conclusive investigation into the abduction of José Antonio Pérez and Hernando Silva Cely and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging them to take immediate action to ensure that they and Gilberto Torres are released unharmed;
- urging the authorities to order an independent, impartial and conclusive investigation into the killing of Rafael Jaimes Torra, and bring those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of USO trade union activists and Ecopetrol employees in Casanare and throughout the country, and asking what measures the authorities are going to take to guarantee their safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Carrera 8 No.7-26  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams:Presidente de la República, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 2071**

**Salutation: Dear President Pastrana Arango / Excmo. Sr. Presidente Pastrana Arango**

Minister of Interior

Sr. Armando Estrada Villa  
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry  
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 562 5298 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")**

**Salutation:Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro**

Governor of the Department of Casanare

Sr. William Hernín Pérez Espinel  
Gobernador del Departamento de Casanare  
Gobernación de Casanare  
Yopal, Casanare, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams:Gobernador del Departamento de Casanare, Casanare, Colombia**

**Fax:+ 57 8 755 8662**

**Salutation: Dear Governor Pérez Espinel / Estimado Sr. Gobernador Pérez Espinel**

National Advocate for the people

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz,  
Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,  
Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 office 301,  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegram: National Advocate, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax: +57 1 640 0491**

**Salutation: Dear Mr. Cifuentes Muñoz / Estimado Sr. Cifuentes Muñoz**

**COPIES TO:**

Trade Union Confederation

Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia  
Calle 35 N° 7-25, Piso 9 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 7 May 2002.