

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/48/95

14 August 1995

Further information on UA 182/95 (AMR 23/42/95, 27 July 1995) - Threats / Fear for Safety and new concerns: Fear of Torture / Possible "Disappearances" / Possible Extrajudicial Execution

COLOMBIA Pedro LEÓN, peasant farmer leader

Carlos RAMÍREZ, peasant farmer

Moisés GARCÍA, aged 68, peasant farmer

Alba Luz BALDERRAMA (f)

Rafael JIMÉNEZ MORENO

Fears for the safety of peasant farmers and their leaders participating in a strike action in Ibagué, department of Tolima, have been heightened by reports of the "disappearance" of three men and the possible extrajudicial execution of a woman involved in the protests.

Carlos Ramírez, from the village of El Líbano, department of Tolima, was reportedly last seen, in Ibagué, on 7 August 1995, surrounded by members of the security forces.

On 8 August, some 800 peasant farmers were travelling from Planadas, department of Tolima, to Ibagué to participate in the demonstrations, when their convoy was stopped by army and police personnel at about 11am near the community of Castilla, department of Tolima. The farmers were told that they could not proceed because "*en El Espinal y Saldaña la guerrilla está matando campesinos*" ("in El Espinal and Saldaña the guerrillas are killing peasant farmers"). The farmers protested by sitting in the road and demanding to speak to the department's governor.

The army responded by firing tear-gas and beating people, including minors. Witnesses saw Pedro León, president of the *Junta de Acción Comunal*, Communal Action Council, of the municipality of Planadas, being beaten. He has not been seen since. 68-year-old Moisés García was also reportedly beaten, since which time his whereabouts have also remained unknown. Rafael Jiménez Moreno was beaten with a rifle until he was unconscious, and he was subsequently detained. He is reportedly in detention in the municipality of Purificación, department of Tolima.

Alba Luz Balderrama, who reportedly fainted as a result of the tear-gas, was on the Castilla bridge when a peasant farmer came to her aid. According to witnesses, the farmer was attacked by members of the police and Alba Luz Balderrama was thrown off the bridge. Her whereabouts are unknown and there is serious concern for her safety.

Fears for peasant leaders and those involved in the strike action have been still further increased by the publication of leaflets, reportedly distributed by members of the security forces in recent days, which accuse the strike leaders of being subversives. The leaflets reportedly give the telephone numbers for the police and the army. It has also been reported that members of the security forces have labelled the peasant farmers involved in the strike action as subversives in radio broadcasts and in newspapers. In the past people labelled as being guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers have faced death threats and other human rights violations.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carlos Ramírez, Pedro León and Moisés García, all of whom were reportedly beaten and harassed by members of the security forces before their "disappearance";
- expressing concern for the safety of Alba Luz Balderrama, reportedly the victim of an attempted extrajudicial execution;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the whereabouts of those "disappeared" and the attempt to kill Alba Luz Balderrama, the results of which should be made public and those found responsible for any abuses against them be brought to justice;
- urging that, if they are in detention, they be humanely treated, allowed access to lawyers and to their families and that they be released unless charged with a recognized criminal offence;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the physical integrity of the peasant leaders and other strikers and seeking guarantees of the safety of all those detained in relation with the strike action, including Rafael Jiménez Moreno.

APPEALS TO

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 289 3377/286 7434

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño
 Defensor del Pueblo
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 346 1225/285 6908

Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/Dear Dr. Triviño

3) Mayor of Ibagué

Dr. Alvaro Ramírez
 Ibagué, Tolima
 Colombia

Faxes: + 57 82 619199 (if voice, ask for fax)

4)Governor of Tolima

Dr. Jaime Pardo
 (address unknown)

Faxes: + 57 82 610882

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association

MINGA, AA 40303, 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 2 October 1995.