

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

20 September 1991

COLOMBIA: Carlos Julián VELEZ RODRIGUEZ, aged 33  
María Norma GARZON, his wife, aged 28  
Luis Carlos VELEZ GARZON, aged 8  
Dumas Elkin VELEZ RODRIGUEZ, aged 38

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Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Carlos Julián Vélez Rodríguez, his wife María Norma Garzón, his eight-year-old son Luis Carlos Vélez Garzón and his brother Dumas Elkin Vélez Rodríguez on 14 September 1991 in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution.

According to reports, Carlos Julián Vélez and members of his family were returning to their home in Mesetas, Meta department, late on 14 September 1991, from a *finca*, a small farm where they had been working during the day, when their vehicle was intercepted by a group of heavily armed men. Carlos Vélez was first attacked with a hand grenade and then shot in the head as he lay wounded. The bodies of the other three members of his family were found some 100 metres from the vehicle, apparently shot while they tried to escape. Neighbours reported hearing the cries for help of eight-year-old Luis Vélez who had been wounded in the stomach. However, when they finally approached the scene of the attack some three hours later, he was dead.

Carlos Julián Vélez was a deputy in the departmental assembly for the opposition coalition party *Unión Patriótica (UP)*, Patriotic Union. On 18 March this year he was the victim of an attempt on his life. He was leaving a meeting at the headquarters of the *Unión Patriótica* in Mesetas with colleagues when the offices were reportedly attacked by machine-gun fire and hand grenades. Carlos Julián Vélez and two other men were seriously injured in the attack. An army patrol which arrived on the scene immediately following the attack, arrested two of the injured survivors who were held for several hours in the military base before being transferred to hospital. The assailant escaped. Amnesty International has no information about any investigation into the attack. However, the *Unión Patriótica* believe that members of a paramilitary group were responsible and expressed concern that they should be able to act with apparent ease in an area which for several years has been heavily militarized by the Colombian armed forces.

Since its creation in 1985, the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members have been victims of politically motivated killings, including grassroots activists, local councillors, congress members and national leaders. In an official report produced by the Procurator General's office in September 1991, the public ministry stated that more than 2,300 complaints had been lodged against the army and police in the past two years for human rights violations including murder, "disappearances" and torture. The report said that a significant number of the victims were members of the *Unión Patriótica* or trade unionists.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION** (Notes to translators: please refer to UA 240/91 for very similar background information)

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia including extrajudicial

executions. Principal targets have been people associated with legal left-wing parties, civic community movements and trade unions. The majority of abuses have been attributed by Colombian authorities to civilian "death squads" which it claims it is unable to control. However, independent investigations, including judicial inquiries, have concluded that many such groups operate under the command or with the support of the Colombian security forces.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the killing of Carlos Julián Vélez Rodríguez, Maria Norma Garzón, Luís Vélez Garzón and Dumas Elkin Vélez in circumstances suggesting they may have been victims of extrajudicial execution;

- urging that there should be an immediate and thorough inquiry into their deaths, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- urging that the authorities take all possible measures to ensure that members of opposition parties are able to conduct their legitimate activities without fear of reprisal.

**APPEALS TO:****1.**President of the Republic:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
**[Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente]**  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066; + 57 1 286 7324;**

**+ 57 1 287 7937**

**2.**Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla  
**[Salutation: Sr. Procurador General de la Nación]**  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO; 41213 PGNDP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

**3.**Minister of Defence:

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda  
**[Salutation: Sr. Ministro]**  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

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**COPIES TO:**

(Human Rights group):

Señores           **[Salutation: Señores]**

CINEP            (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular)

AA 25916

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 November 1991.