

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 363/91 Fear of Extrajudicial Execution/Death Threats

30 October 1991

COLOMBIA	Juan Alberto GARAY	teacher - killed
	David FLOREZ GONZALEZ	teacher - death threats
	José Angel LASSO SIERRA	teacher "
	Urbano BARRETO ARENAS	teacher "
	Enrique PERTUZ	teacher "

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Amnesty International has learned with concern of the possible extrajudicial execution of teacher Juan Alberto Garay and of death threats against four other teachers in Colombia.

According to reports, the body of teacher Juan Alberto Garay was found early in the morning of 24 October 1991 in the municipality of Belén de Umbria, Risaralda department. His hands were bound and his body showed signs of torture and gunshot wounds. He was last seen alive on 20 October when, according to eye-witnesses, he was taken, bound, from the community of Alegrías, Quinchía municipality by five unidentified individuals. Juan Alberto Garay was a Chilean who had taken Colombian nationality and had worked in Risaralda department since 1977. He was working as a teacher at the school "Colegio de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores" in Quichía. Before he was killed he had reportedly received death threats.

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of the four above-named teachers, who have all recently received threats to their lives. According to sources, on 17 October, at approximately 8 am, an envelope was pushed under the door of the headquarters of the teachers' union of Santander department, Sindicato de Educadores de Santander (SES), in Bucaramanga, containing death threats against the union's General Secretary, David Flórez González and other members of the SES.

In the department of Arauca death threats in the form of *sufragios*, invitations to their own funeral mass, have reportedly been received by several teachers, including José Angel Lasso Sierra, President of the Arauca Teachers Association, Asociación de Educadores del Arauca, ASEDAR, union official Urbano Barreto Arenas and treasurer Enrique Pertuz. A *sufragio* was also reportedly received by the rector of the Rafael Pombo secondary school, Colegio de Bachillerato Rafael Pombo in the town of Saravena, Arauca.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The government of president César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged to protect human rights. In his inaugural address in August 1990 President Gaviria said that "the public opinion's trust and credibility in the armed forces depend on the armed forces' acting according to the constitution. The armed forces must respect human rights because the country's defence also means upholding the law". However, despite the government's commitment to uphold respect for human rights, members of the Colombian armed and security forces and paramilitary forces working under their control, or with their acquiescence,

have continued to commit serious abuses, including torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance". Members of the teaching profession have increasingly been among the victims of such abuses. According to the national teachers' union Federación Colombiana de Educadores, (FECODE), 47 teachers have been killed since the beginning of 1991 and more than 400 have received threats to their lives.

Page 2 of UA 363/91

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Juan Alberto Garay;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough investigation into his death, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of David Flórez González, José Angel Lasso Sierra, Urbano Barreto Arenas and Enrique Pertuz, following the receipt of threats to their lives;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation into the death threats made against them in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- urging that the Colombian authorities take all possible measures to protect the lives of teachers and those working for teaching unions to ensure that they can carry out their legal activities without threat to their physical integrity.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo      **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 or + 57 1 287 7937**

2) Minister of Defence:

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda      **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 or 44561 CFAC CO**  
**Faxes: +57 1 222 1874**

3) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla      **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 or 41213 PGNDP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

4) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño

**Sr. Defensor del Pueblo**

Defensor del Pueblo

Procuraduría General

Edificio Banco Ganadero

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**COPIES TO:**

FECODE

AA 14373

Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

CUT (Trades Union Confederation)

Calle 35, N° 725 - Piso 9°

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 11 December 1991.