

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/65/92

Distr: UA/SC

**UA 360/92 Unacknowledged detention/
Fear of "disappearance"**

18 November 1992

COLOMBIA: Bertha del Pilar HERNANDEZ ALDANA, (female), aged 21, teacher

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Bertha del Pilar Hernández Aldana, who has not been seen since her reported detention by members of the armed forces on 12 November 1992 close to the town of San Vicente de Chucurí, Santander department.

According to eye-witnesses, Bertha del Pilar Hernández was detained at approximately 5 pm on 12 November at "Alta Grande" rural school where she works, in the Llana Fría community close to San Vicente de Chucurí. She was detained by a patrol of the army's Mobile Brigade, Brigada Móvil, which has been involved in counter-insurgency operations in the area. She was reportedly forced to board a helicopter belonging to the Brigada Móvil and taken to an unknown destination. Friends went to the Brigada Móvil base to ask for her, but her detention has not been acknowledged and there is serious concern for her safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The largely rural area of the Magdalena Medio in central Colombia has been a focus of political violence for several years following the emergence of guerilla groups in the 1960s and the subsequent militarization of the region during the 1980s. Peace talks between the remaining active guerrilla groups and the government broke down earlier this year and there has been a resultant increase in guerrilla activity and in the armed forces' counter-guerrilla operations. The government declared a national state of emergency in November 1992. 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 by army personnel and paramilitary forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Bertha del Pilar Hernández Aldana, who has not been seen since 12 November 1992 when eye-witnesses reported her detention by the army's Mobile Brigade and requesting an immediate and thorough investigation into her whereabouts;

- urging that if she is in detention, that she be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought before a competent court or released;

- urging that if she is in detention, that she be humanely treated and allowed full access to family and lawyers.

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APPEALS TO

1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo **Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr.
Presidente/
Dear President Gaviria**
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066, + 57 1 286 7324, + 57 1 287 7937

2) Commander of the Armed Forces:

General Manuel Murillo González **Salutation: Sr. Comandante/
Dear Commander**
Comandante del Ejército
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fe de Bogotá
Colombia
Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes:43401 COEJC

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño **Salutation: Estimado Dr Triviño/
Dear Dr. 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
Telexes:41213 PGNDP CO
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472

4) Attorney General:

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff **Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Greiff/
Dear Dr. de Greiff**
Fiscal General
Fiscalia General
Hotel Orqidea Real
Carrera 7, No 32-16
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Fiscalia General, Bogota, Colombia

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared":
Señores
ASFADDES

AA 011446
Santa Fe de Bogotá
Colombia

Andean Commission of Jurists:
Comisión Andina de Juristas
AA 58533
Santa Fe de Bogotá

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 30 December 1992.