

**Public**

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## **At risk: human rights activist in South Western Colombia**

Human rights defender Astrid Manrique Carvajal, her family and members of the organization she works for are being threatened and harassed.

On 3 June two men reportedly smashed all the windows at Astrid Manrique Carvajal's house. She and her family have been threatened repeatedly in the last few weeks. On 25 May she and her 14-year-old daughter, Tatiana, were followed by approximately six unidentified men on their way to a nearby dentist. At the end of April, unknown men came to the home of Astrid Manrique's sister, Sandra, and asked for her sister "the pretty girl who works with kidnap victims or the "disappeared" or something to do with human rights". Sandra told them that she was an only child and moved house. Despite this, on 1 May Sandra saw various unidentified men keeping her new home under surveillance. Astrid was previously threatened in May 2000, when a man with a police identity card said he would kill her and her daughter.

The ongoing threats appear to be directly connected with Astrid Manrique's work for the Popayán branch of the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (ASFADDES), Association of Relatives of the Detained Disappeared, a non-governmental organization working to bring to justice those responsible for "disappearances" during the ongoing conflict in Colombia. ASFADDES has received numerous threats and is supposed to receive emergency protection from the police. However, ASFADDES received no immediate help on 1 June when they called the police to report that an unknown man was acting suspiciously at an ASFADDES event organized to raise awareness of the "disappeared". The police officer responsible for the security of ASFADDES had apparently turned off the emergency phone and was therefore unable to send a police car to the scene until the unknown man had gone.

ASFADDES is a non-governmental organization made up of relatives of people who have "disappeared" during the ongoing conflict in Colombia. It aims to discover what has happened to the "disappeared" and bring those responsible to justice. ASFADDES members, together with other human rights defenders and witnesses of human rights violations, have endured death threats, killings and disappearances at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies. In October 2000, Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve of the Medellín branch of ASFADDES "disappeared". Their whereabouts remain unknown.

Astrid Manrique has been an active member of the ASFADDES branch in Popayán, Cauca department, since the "disappearance" of her partner. She is now on the organization's executive council (*Consejo Directivo*).

**Please write calling for immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of Astrid Manrique Carvajal, her family and ASFADDES members in Popayán.**

**Send your letters to:**

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

**Fax: + 57 1 341 9583 / 334 3960**

**Send letters of support to:**

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

ASFADDES - Seccional Popayán, AA 0403, Popayán, Cauca, Colombia