

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 295/94 (AMR 23/62/94, 10 August 1994) - Possible Extrajudicial Execution / Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA Manuel CEPEDA VARGAS, parliamentarian  
Aída ABELLA

New names: Hernán MOTTA, opposition politician  
Alvaro VÁSQUEZ DEL REAL, opposition politician  
Jaime CAICEDO, opposition politician  
Cesar CARRILLO, trade unionist  
Hernando HERNÁNDEZ, trade unionist  
Orlando OBREGÓN, trade unionist  
Nelsón BERRIO, popular leader

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Two recently formed paramilitary groups have claimed responsibility for the killing of the Senator Manuel Cepeda Vargas on 9 August 1994. At the same time, the groups issued death against opposition party leaders, parliamentarians, trade unionists and demobilised guerrillas.

In a communiqué dated 10 August and made public seven days later, a paramilitary group calling itself *Muerte a Comunistas y Guerrilleros (MACOGUE)*, Death to Communists and Guerrillas, claimed responsibility for the killing of Manuel Cepeda and also threatened a number of opposition leaders and popular activists. These include the Patriotic Union, *Unión Patriótica (UP)* and Communist Party, *Partido Comunista de Colombia (PCC)* leaders Aída Abella, Hernán Motta, Alvaro Vásquez del Real, Jaime Caicedo together with Nelsón Berrio, a popular leader and Orlando Obregón, president of the Confederation of Trade Unions, *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT)*.

According to the communiqué these people "*aprovechan de las bondades del sistema, se infiltran en los estamentos que simbolizan la libertad y la democracia para crear la sozobra y caos ... solamente amenazados y destruidos cesarán en su empeño.*" ("they take advantage of the system's good nature, they infiltrate the institutions which represent liberty and democracy in order to create terror and chaos ... only when they are threatened and destroyed will they cease in their efforts.")

On 10 August, several leaders of the trade union *Unión Sindical de Obreros (USO)*, Worker's Trade Union, were reportedly threatened in a telephone call received by USO's office in the Barrancabermeja Oil Refinery. The telephone call, from a paramilitary group calling itself *Colombia sin Guerrilla (COLSINGUE)* - Colombia without Guerrillas, also claimed responsibility for the killing of Manuel Cepeda. Amongst USO activists threatened were César Carrillo, President of USO and Hernando Hernández, Vicepresident of USO.

Manuel Cepeda had reportedly taken an active part in denouncing the involvement of the military high command in the systematic violation of human rights and in its alleged involvement in the campaign to eliminate opposition politicians and popular activists. His name appeared on an alleged death list and he had denounced to the authorities death threats received.

Articles have appeared in recent days in the press indicating possible military involvement in the killing of Manuel Cepeda. Several sectors of Colombian

society, including politicians such as Aída Abella, have added their voices to these allegations. Aída Abella stated that "those responsible for the crime are not "dark forces". Those responsible for the genocide carried out against the UP in Meta, in Urabá and in the Magdalena Medio region hide in the barracks. Now they are simply shooting our leaders", *"los autores materiales del crimen no figuran entre "fuerzas oscuras". Los autores del genocidio contra la UP en el Meta, en Urabá y el Magdalena Medio se esconden en los cuarteles. Ahora sencillamente están fusilando a nuestros dirigentes"*. Political parties and non-governmental organizations amongst others have have been calling on President Samper to replace the military high command.

Meanwhile, in a letter to Amnesty International dated 10 August, Manuel Cepeda's son, Iván Cepeda, condemned his father's killing, stating: *"La vida de mi padre estuvo consagrada a la lucha por la justicia social, la defensa de los derechos humanos y la paz"* - My father's life was devoted to the fight for social justice, the defense of human rights and peace" and expressed his hope that the condemnation of his father's killing will help to stop the killing of political opposition leaders in Colombia.

(see also UA 299/94 (AMR 23/63/94, 12 August 1994) and UA 315/94 (AMR 23/65/94, 26 August 1994).)

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters**

- expressing concern for the safety of opposition party politicians, trade unionists and demobilised guerrillas, including those individuals named above;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the killing of Manuel Cepeda, that the results of these be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into the death threats issued by paramilitary groups in recent weeks, the results of these be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that the government of President Ernesto Samper take immediate steps to dismantle paramilitary forces in keeping with stated policy objectives and investigate possible collusion between such forces and the Colombian armed forces.
- urging President Samper to suspend immediately any member of the security forces suspected of human rights violations for the duration of any investigations undertaken.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia:

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

**Telegrams: President Samper, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939**

**Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper**

Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero Zea, Bogota, Colombia**

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

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister**

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento

Fiscal General de la Nación

Fiscalia General de la Nación

Apartado Aéreo 29855

Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Fiscal General, Fiscalia General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939/288 2828**

**Salutation: Estimado Dr. Sarmiento/Dear Dr. Sarmiento**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Andean Commission of Jurists

Comisión Andina de Juristas

AA 58533

Santa Fé 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 7 October 1994.