

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/66/96

27 November 1996

Further information (2) on UA 431/94 (AMR 23/91/94, 6 December 1994) and follow-up AMR 23/95/1994, 15 December 1994 - Fear for Safety / Possible "Disappearance"

COLOMBIAGerardo Estrada Yaspuesan, indigenous leader  
Marco Antonio Nasner, member of indigenous community  
Alfredo Basante, member of indigenous community

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Amnesty International has learned with concern of the killing of Gerardo Estrada, Marco Antonio Nasner and Alfredo Basante in Tuquerres municipality, Nariño department, on 8 November 1996. Gerardo Estrada was a member of the *Junta Directiva* (Governing Committee) of the *Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia* (AICO), Colombian Indigenous Authorities.

The three men were killed in Tuquerres by unidentified persons at 7pm on 8 November, following a reported campaign of death threats and intimidation against the community by army-backed paramilitary groups and the armed opposition group, the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army. On 14 October 1996, the ELN issued a public statement, referring to the land conflict, in which it sentenced Gerardo Estrada and other community members to death.

In the past four weeks, 10 members of indigenous communities have been killed in Nariño department, as the communities increasingly find themselves caught in the battle between local landowners - working in close cooperation with military and paramilitary groups - and the ELN. Amnesty International fears that other members of indigenous communities could be killed as a result of the continuing struggle.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The indigenous population of Pasto, in the Nariño region, are working to repossess lands which they claim are traditionally theirs. As a result they have come into conflict with local landowners and armed opposition groups. The landowners, through their military and paramilitary allies, have been responsible for human rights abuses against indigenous communities in the past.

In the last week of October 1996, a delegation of Pasto indigenous communities representatives travelled to the capital, Bogotá, to inform the authorities of the threats and harassment they are suffering because of their land claims.

Amnesty International is concerned that the Colombian authorities have to date failed to take effective action to protect indigenous leaders and members of their communities who are under threat and calls for urgent steps to be taken to remedy this situation.

Gerardo Estrada was abducted by armed men on 5 December 1994 but was released a few days later (see original Urgent Action and follow-up). It was believed at that time that this was in connection with his work with AICO.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at the killing of Gerardo Estrada, Marco Antonio Nasner and Alfredo Basante on 8 November 1996, and calling for a full and impartial

investigation into the killings, asking for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the lives of indigenous community members in the Nariño region, in the light of recent killings;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into death threats against indigenous community leaders and members, for the results to be made public and for those responsible brought to justice;

- urging the authorities to dismantle all paramilitary groups, in line with stated governmental commitments.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

carrera 8 No. 7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

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

**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 289 3377 / 286 7434 / 287 7939**

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

2) Procurator General

Dr.Luis Eduardo Montoya Medina

Procurador General de la Nación

Procuraduría General

Edificio Banco Ganadero

Carrera 5, No. 15-80

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Medina, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax:+ 57 1 342 9723/281 7531**

**Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez**

3) Advocate for the People

Dr.José Fernando Castro Caycedo

Defensor del Pueblo

Defensoría del Pueblo

Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Caycedo, Defensoria del Pueblo, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:+ 57 1 285 6908**

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

4) Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe

Ministro del Interior

Ministerio del Interior

Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2

Santafé de Bogotá

COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Ministro del Interior Serpa, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes:45406 MINGO CO**

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

**Fax:+ 57 1 281 5884/286 0053**

**COPIES TO:**

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)

AA 32395

Santafé 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 1 January 1997.