

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety

18 September 1998

COLOMBIA killed:

Miguel Antonio Arboleda, aged 64, shopkeeper
Alberto Arcadio Londoño Bravo, aged 24, farmer
Francisco Javier Villa, President of the Council of the
village of Arenas Blancas
Oscar Isaza, shopkeeper

**Fear for safety of the civilian population in the
municipality of Amalfi.**

Amnesty International has learned of a recent attack by paramilitaries in the community of Portachuelo, municipality of Amalfi, department of Antioquia, in which four people have been killed and is concerned, as a result, for the safety of the civilian population of the municipality.

According to reports, approximately 30 heavily armed men, reported to belong to the *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* (ACCU), Córdoba and Urabá Peasant Farmer Self-Defence Groups, arrived in Portachuelo in the early morning of 30 August 1998. They then rounded the inhabitants up into an area known as "La Y", and forced them to lie down in the mud. For the ensuing two hours they were threatened with being killed, unless they revealed the identity of "guerrilla collaborators" in the village.

The armed men then shot dead Miguel Antonio Arboleda and Alberto Arcadio Londoño Bravo in front of the other members of the community and, later that day, reportedly killed Francisco Javier Villa, president of the *Junta de Acción Comunal de la Vereda Arenas Blancas*, Council of the village of Arenas Blancas, and Oscar Isaza.

As they departed the armed men threatened they would return and carry out further killings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of the Colombian army and security forces, together with their paramilitary allies, continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity.

Over the past five years several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups throughout the country. Despite the Colombian Government's suspension, in 1989, of the legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations, and directives issued to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups, they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country.

According to a recent statement from the Attorney General, more than 200 arrest warrants issued against alleged paramilitary members responsible for widespread human rights violations, have still not been acted upon by the security forces. Colombia's new President, Andrés Pastrana, who took office on 8 August 1998 has additionally failed to carry out any effective measures to tackle the country's long running human rights crisis.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Miguel Antonio Arboleda, Alberto Arcadio Londoño Bravo, Francisco Javier Villa and Oscar Isaza on 30 August 1998, reportedly by members of the paramilitary organization ACCU;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the killings, that the results be made public, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern for the inhabitants of Amalfi and urging that appropriate measures be taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the area and urging that those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments;
- reminding Colombia's new government of the country's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO:President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andres Pastrana, Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño, carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 2186 / 286 7434

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Pastrana

Minister of Defence

Dr. Rodrigo Lloreda, Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO / 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Governor of the Department of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega, Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia
Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, #52-106, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia

Faxes: + 574 381 1342

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association, SEMBRAR, AA 34692, 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 30 October 1998.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"
Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>