

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/141/2002

13 December 2002

UA 358/02

Fear for Safety

COLOMBIA **María del Socorro Mosquera (f) President and Legal Representative of *La Asociación de Mujeres de las Independencias*, (AMI), the Women's Association of the Las Independencias neighbourhood**
Mery del Socorro Naranjo (f) President of the Community Action Board of Las Independencias III
Teresa Yarce (f) Treasurer of the Community Action Board of the Independencias III
Human rights defenders in Comuna 13 district, Medellín

Three social activists and community leaders in the Comuna 13 district of Medellín, Antioquia department have been threatened and detained without charge after denouncing human rights violations in the area. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, and that of other human rights defenders in Comuna 13.

María del Socorro Mosquera, Mery del Socorro Naranjo and Teresa Yarce, members and associates of the *Asociación de Mujeres de las Independencias*, (AMI), the Women's Association of the Las Independencias neighbourhood, a non-profit-making women's organization, were detained without charge for nine days. On 12 November, local sources state that members of the police and armed forces, accompanied by several hooded informers, including a young boy wearing a ski-mask and dressed in military uniform, entered the homes of the three women. They were reportedly taken in a police van to the temporary command post near the Colonia Belencito area of the Comuna 13 district. They were initially told that they were not being detained and that after answering a few questions they would be allowed to go. At the temporary command post they were reportedly identified a second time through a tinted window by other unidentified men in ski-masks and military uniforms. Local sources state that they were then told they had been detained by order of the *Servicio de Investigaciones Judiciales e Inteligencia*, (SIJIN), Judicial Investigation and Intelligence Service. Although they were subsequently released on 21 November, criminal investigations against them for guerrilla-related activities reportedly continue.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for their safety after reports that members of the Colombian army visited the house of María del Socorro Mosquera on 24 November. They threatened her 14-year-old son, telling him that they did not want to see his mother in the area any more. Fears for the women's safety are further heightened as during their detention they were paraded in front of unidentified men. In the past, security forces have handed over individuals they accuse of being guerrilla collaborators to their paramilitary allies, or have allowed paramilitaries to identify these individuals so that at a later stage they can threaten, disappear or kill them.

Their detention without charge reportedly followed a meeting the three women had with the Municipal Government Secretary on 8 November. At the meeting, the women denounced several cases of human rights violations in the Comuna 13 during *Operación Orión*, a security force offensive against armed opposition groups based in Comuna 13.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During *Operación Orión*, which was initiated on 16 October 2002, some 350 people were reportedly detained in the first few days. Dozens of civilians were killed during the gun battles between the security forces and armed opposition groups. There are also reports of several "disappearances". By 4 December at least 170 people were reportedly under investigation and at least 90 are still in detention on the basis of information, often provided by paid informants.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of María del Socorro Mosquera, Mery del Socorro Naranjo and Teresa Yarce, who have been threatened and were detained without charge after denouncing human rights violations;
- urging that all measures, deemed appropriate by the women themselves, are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the detention without charge of María del Socorro Mosquera, Mery del Socorro Naranjo and Teresa Yarce, for the results to be made public and for those responsible brought to justice;
- asking the authorities to take immediate and effective action to ensure that members of all social organizations in Comuna 13 in Medellín can carry out their legitimate and important work for the defence of human rights in safety;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Organization of American States Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution and in repeated recommendations made to them by the UN.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Carrera 8 No.7-26
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Presidente de la República,
Bogotá, Colombia**

Fax: + 57 1 342 0592

**Salutation: Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe /
Dear President Uribe**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,
Fiscal General de la Nación
Fiscalía General de la Nación
Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite)
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Fiscal General, Bogota,
Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 570 2022 / 2017 (if
someone answers say “me da tono de fax por
favor”)**

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

Procurator General

Dr. Edgardo Maya Villazón
Procuraduría General de la Nación
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA
**Telegram: Procuraduría General de la Nación,
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA**

Fax: + 57 1 342 9723 /

**Salutation: Dear Sir / Estimado Sr.
Procurador General de la Nación**

COPIES TO:

National Advocate for the people

Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz,
Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,
Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 office 301,
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 640 0491

**Salutation: Estimado Sr. Cifuentes Muñoz /
Dear Mr. Cifuentes Muñoz**

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 24 January
2003.