

PUBLIC

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2 July 2003

UA 193/03 Fear for safety

COLOMBIA **Street traders in the municipality of Pereira, department of Risaralda**
Killed: **Jhon Jairo (m)**
 Yony Torres Henao (f)
 Jorge (m)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of street-sellers in the municipality of Pereira, department of Risaralda, after receiving reports of a number of threats, killings and beatings of street traders in recent weeks.

On 17 June, municipal officials and police officers in Pereira reportedly confiscated the merchandise of street trader Jhon Alirio Carmona Bonilla and beat him. This was allegedly the fourth time he had had his goods confiscated this year. On 20 June, Jhon Jairo was reportedly beaten by municipal officials. He was taken to hospital and died of his injuries on 24 June. These incidents are the latest in a series of beatings and killings of street traders. On 8 May, municipal officials and police officers reportedly assaulted female street traders Argenis Ramírez and Yolanda Restrepo. On 10 May, two men, Jhovarry Ferney Cataño González and Helmer Morales, were also allegedly beaten by municipal officials and police.

On 5 May, street trader Yony Torres Henao was stabbed to death by unknown assailants in an area of Pereira known as La Carrilera. On the same day a street trader known as Jorge was found dead in the La Balastera area. He had been shot in the head.

These beatings and threats follow a ruling by the Mayor's Office of the municipality of Pereira, issued in November 2002, to remove street traders from the centre of Pereira, apparently as part of a municipal "urban renewal plan".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of street traders of the municipality of Pereira, department of Risaralda, after at least three street traders were killed and a number of other street traders were reportedly beaten by municipal officials and police officers;
- asking the authorities what measures, deemed appropriate by those under threat themselves, they are going to take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into these threats, killings and beatings and for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Mayor of Pereira Municipality

Marta Elena Bedoya Redón

Alcaldía de Pereira

Carrera 7 18-55, Piso 4

Pereira, Risaralda,

Colombia

Telegram: **Alcaldesa de Pereira, Pereira, Colombia**

Fax: **+ 57 6 333 98 55**

Salutation : **Dear Madam / Estimada Sra. Alcaldesa**

Director of the National Police

Mayor General Teodoro Campo Gómez
Transversal 45 # 40 -11 Piso 5, CAN
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Director de la Policía Nacional, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 428 76 34

Salutation: Dear Sir/ Estimado Director de la Policía Nacional

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: Dear President Uribe/ Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe

COPIES TO:

Procurator General

Dr. Edgardo Maya Villazón
Procuraduría General de la Nación
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 342 9723

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 13 August 2003.