

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/073/2003

UA 351/03

Fear for safety/ Death threats

28 November 2003

COLOMBIA

Adriana Cuéllar (f), journalist in the non-governmental human rights organization *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'*, 'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Adriana Cuéllar following death threats against her. Adriana Cuéllar has been a journalist with the non-governmental human rights organization *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'*, 'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective since June.

Between 2:13 and 2:22 pm on 24 November, three messages were left on Adriana Cuéllar's answer phone at home. The messages contained threatening sentences such as: "big mouth son of a bitch..." "you are going to die", "we're going to sort you and your family out", ("*hijueputa bocona...*", "*te vas a morir*", "*nos las arreglaremos junto con su familia*")

The following day on 25 November, between 8:15 and 10:00 am, Adriana's home was robbed. Some valuables were stolen, and her personal documents searched. Earlier on 24 October, Adriana Cuéllar, and a lawyer from the *Colectivo*, were filmed and photographed by unknown men who were near their office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lawyers from the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'* are involved in bringing cases to trial which implicate army officials, who have taken part by action or omission in serious human rights violations.

Members of the organization have also received death threats on several occasions in the past (See UA 88/01, AMR 23/043/2001, 6 April 2001; UA 80/02, AMR 23/031/2002, 15 March 2002; UA 180/02 AMR 23/064/2002, 14 June 2002, and AMR 23/018/2003, 18 February 2003).

Many human rights lawyers have been killed in Colombia, and others have been forced into exile in fear for their lives. Human rights defenders who have sought to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations, and sought to expose the links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, have frequently suffered human rights violations themselves.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Adriana Cuéllar and the members of the *Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo'* 'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the threats against her life, the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the Colombian authorities to take effective action to protect members of the organization in line with measures requested by those at risk, thus allowing them to safely continue their legitimate and important work on the defence of human rights;
- calling for the government to investigate all cases of threats against human rights defenders and to bring to justice those responsible;
- urging the government to fully implement the principles of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998;
- calling on the government to initiate a meaningful dialogue with human rights defenders to address issues of their protection and the prevention of attacks against them.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

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

Fax: + 57 1 337 58 90 /342 0592

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

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega,
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia
Ministerio del Interior
Av. Jiménez No 8-89
Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: +57 1 560 4630

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

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

COPIES TO:

'José Alvear Restrepo' Lawyers' Collective

Corporación Colectivo de Abogados 'José Alvear Restrepo',
AA 33035
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 10 January 2004.