

UA 53/02

Fea.

COLOMBIA Viviana Maria Villamil (f) - wife of Julio Galeano

And their three children

Members of *Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Empresas Municipales de Cali* (SINTRAEMCALI), Cali Trade Union of Municipal Service Workers**Killed: Julio Galeano (m)**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Viviana Maria Villamil, her three children and members of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Empresas Municipales de Cali* (SINTRAEMCALI), Cali Trade Union of Municipal Service Workers, following the murder of Julio Galeano in Cali, Valle del Cauca Department.

On the morning of 11 February, as Julio Galeano took his wife Viviana Maria Villamil, to work by motorcycle they were reportedly stopped by men on another motorcycle. Julio Galeano was first shot in the jaw, before three more shots were fired at him as he lay on the ground. He died instantly and his wife fled the scene in fear for her life.

Julio Galeano had been a community leader and former member of SINTRAEMCALI.

Both he and Viviana Maria Villamil, had actively participated in the SINTRAEMCALI 36 day occupation of the Municipal Administration Centre (CAM) Building in Cali from 25 December 2001 to 31 January 2002 as part of the union's campaign against the privatisation of Cali's electricity, water, sewage and telecommunications utilities.

During the occupation, SINTRAEMCALI members and their supporters were accused in the press, by members of the armed forces of having links with armed opposition groups in a "terrorist plot" to destabilize the city. The Army-backed paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self Defence Forces of Colombia, also declared members of SINTRAEMCALI to be "paramilitary targets" following the occupation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The security and armed forces and their paramilitary allies have often accused trade unionists, human rights workers, members of legal opposition groups and popular activists of being guerrilla sympathizers or auxiliaries. The people they have accused have frequently been harassed, tortured and killed, often by paramilitaries. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) recorded that in 2001 alone, over 160 trade unionists were murdered, and that harassment and violence is widespread. According to reports from the Colombian Trade Union Confederation (CUT), so far this year 20 trade unionists have been killed.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Viviana Maria Villamil, her three children, SINTRAEMCALI members and their families in Valle del Cauca;
- asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk, and calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the killing of Julio Galeano, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation in the threats against Viviana Maria Villamil, her three children, SINTRAEMCALI members and their families, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Valle del Cauca Department, and asking that the results of the investigation are made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with stated government commitments and recommendations made by the UN and other intergovernmental organizations.

APPEALS TO:Minister of the Interior

Dr. Armando Estrada Villa,
 Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior,
 Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.,
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 562 5298/ 562 9890 / 286 0053 / 566 2477 / 566 3214

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Governor of Valle del Cauca Department

Sr. Germán Villegas Villegas,
 Gobernador del Departamento de Valle del Cauca, Gobernación de Valle del Cauca,
 Palacio de San Francisco, A.A. 8759, Carrera 6ª, Calles 9ª y 10ª, Santiago
 de Cali, Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Telegram: Gobernador Valle del Cauca, Cali, Colombia

Fax: + 57 2 885 8813

Salutation: Dear Governor /Sr. Gobernador

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

Telegram: National Advocate, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 640 0491

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

President of Colombia

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia
 Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 44281 PALP CO

Fax: + 57 1 566 2071

Salutation: Dear President Pastrana / Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente Pastrana

COPIES TO:Human Rights Organization

Nomadesc
 AA 18621, 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 April 2002.