

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/Abduction 2 April 2002

COLOMBIA Ofidia Sánchez (f)
Eulises Trejo (m)

Killed: Gilma Rosa Graciano (f)

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Ofidia Sánchez and Eulises Trejo who were abducted on 30 March. They were abducted in separate incidents by gunmen thought to be army-backed paramilitaries operating in the region. Their whereabouts are unknown and concern for their safety is heightened by the discovery of the body of Gilma Rosa Graciano, who was abducted at the same time as Ofidia Sánchez.

Eulises Trejo was reportedly abducted from his delivery truck by armed gunmen at 10:45am on 30 March. He was last seen being driven towards the nearby municipality of Turbo, Antioquia Department.

At 11:45am on the same day, a bus travelling towards the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, was reportedly forced to stop by two armed gunmen in civilian clothes. The gunmen boarded the bus and instructed the passengers to show their identity papers. Ofidia Sánchez and Gilma Rosa Graciano, two members of *Comunidad de Paz de San José de Apartadó*, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, failed to show their papers. They were forced off the bus, which was then allowed to move on.

The women were abducted five minutes away from a Colombian Army check-point. Gilma Rosa Graciano's dead body was found at 11:45 am the next day in Turbo municipality. Ofidia Sánchez whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó is situated in the municipality of Apartadó, department of Antioquia. In March 1997, the inhabitants of 17 communities of San José de Apartadó declared themselves to be a Peace Community. As such, they called upon the security forces, their paramilitary allies and armed opposition groups, to respect their rights as civilians not to be drawn into the conflict and to respect their right to life. Since March 1997, more than 60 members of the community have been killed. The majority were killed by army-backed paramilitaries, who have been able to set up check-points and operate unchallenged in the area despite the heavy presence of the armed forces in the region.

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

- Expressing concern for the safety of Eulises Trejo and Ofidia Sánchez whose whereabouts remain unknown since their abduction by armed gunmen on the morning of 30 March 2002;
- Urging the authorities to immediately take action to establish their whereabouts and secure their safe release. This action should include the immediate organization of a Search Bloc, *Bloque de Búsqueda*, in line with new legislation against forced "disappearances";
- Calling for full and impartial investigations into these abductions, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Urging that full and impartial investigations into the killing of Gilma Rosa Graciano are undertaken, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

- Calling for full and impartial investigations into the links between the security forces and paramilitary forces in the department of Antioquia to be undertaken, that the results be made public and those members of the security forces responsible for supporting and operating in unison with paramilitaries are brought to justice;
- Urging immediate and decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups in the municipality of Apartadó and the department of Antioquia as a whole, in line with governmental commitments and repeated recommendations made by the United Nations.

APPEALS TO: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

Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia

Vicepresidente de la República de Colombia

Dr. Gustavo Bell Lemus

Vicepresidencia

Carrera 8A No 5-57

Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Vice-Presidente Bell, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 334 1138

Salutation: Dear Vice-President/Excelentísimo Sr. Vicepresidente

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 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Commander of the XVII Brigade of the Colombian Army

Comandante XVII Brigada del Ejército Nacional

General Pablo Rodríguez Laverde

Carepa, Urabá, COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Comandante, XVII Brigada Ejército, Carepa, Antioquia, COLOMBIA

Fax: +57 4 823 6844 (Say "Me da el tono de fax, por favor"

Salutation: Dear Commander Rodríguez / Sr. Comandante Rodríguez

COPIES TO:Non-governmental human rights organization

Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz

AA 31861, 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 14 May 2002.