

UA 145/02

Fea.

**COLOMBIA** Members of the non-governmental human rights organization, *COMPROMISO*; members of the municipal community action group, *ASOJUNTAS* and the non-governmental human rights organization, *PROMOPAZ* in Bucaramanga, Santander Department

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of members of several organizations in Bucaramanga, Santander Department, following paramilitary death threats against them.

On 30 April, the *Bloque Central Bolívar*, Bolívar Central Block, of the paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, reportedly sent a threatening letter to the headquarters of the non-governmental human rights organization *COMPROMISO*, in which it accused members of the organization of being collaborators of the *FARC*, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

The letter also reportedly threatened members of two other organizations in Piedecuesta municipality: *ASOJUNTAS*, a community action group located 18 kilometres from Bucaramanga and *PROMOPAZ*, a non-governmental human rights organization located in Bucaramanga.

Fears for members of these human rights organizations are heightened given recent paramilitary threats against other human rights defenders in Santander Department (see UA 144/02, AMR 23/055/02, 13 May 2002).

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The security forces and their paramilitary allies have a policy of labelling human rights organizations as guerrilla collaborators or supporters. This is done so they can be presented as legitimate targets in the counter-insurgency war. Such accusations are frequently followed by serious human rights violations such as abductions, murders or torture.

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

- urging the authorities to take appropriate action to protect members of the organizations named above, so they can continue their legitimate work for the defence and promotion of human rights without fear of attack or intimidation;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the reported threats against them, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders, as laid out in United Nations and Organization of American States declarations, and in line with the UN's repeated recommendations that they should take measures to guarantee the safety of human rights defenders;
- expressing concern that the government has taken no effective action against paramilitary groups in the department of Santander, despite their own commitments and UN recommendations to combat and dismantle these groups;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Santander, urging that the results are made public, and that those responsible for supporting and participating in such groups are brought to justice.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia

Sr. Presidente Andrés Pastrana, Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No. 7-26, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: President Pastrana, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**

**Fax: + 57 1 566 2071**

**Salutation: Dear President Pastrana / Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente Pastrana**

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**

Attorney General

Dr. Luis Camilo Osorio,

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,

Apartado Aéreo 29855, Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite),

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram: Fiscal General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 570 2022/2003 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")**

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

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization

Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos

AA 22803

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 25 June 2002.