

31 May 2001

Further information on UA 302/00 (AMR 23/79/00, 28 September 2000) - Fear for Safety/Extrajudicial Executions**COLOMBIA** **Leaders of SINTRAEMCALI and other trade unions in Valle del Cauca department****New names:** **Martín AGUDELO, President of SINALTRAINAL**
 Carlos ARBEY GONZÁLEZ, a leader with SINTRAUNICOL
 Other trade unionists**Killed:** **Henry Jiménez RODRÍGUEZ, trade unionist**
 Carlos Eliécer PRADO, trade unionist

Two members of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Empresas Municipales de Cali* (SINTRAEMCALI), Cali Trade Union of Municipal Service Workers, have been killed in Cali, Valle del Cauca department. Army-backed paramilitaries are increasingly targeting other trade unionists in the area, who have been declared military targets. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of all trade unionists in the area, including members of SINTRAEMCALI.

On the morning of 25 May, gunmen on a motorcycle reportedly shot dead Henry Jiménez Rodríguez, who was on his way to work in Cali. He died instantly. On 21 May, unidentified gunmen in a car killed Carlos Eliécer Prado in the La Base district of Cali. Both men were members of SINTRAEMCALI, whose members have faced a series of death threats and human rights violations as a result of the union's long campaign against the privatisation of Cali's electricity, water, sewage and telecommunications utilities (See original for more details).

On 24 May, unidentified gunmen reportedly tried to kill Martín Agudelo, the president of the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Industria de Alimentos - Seccional Bugalagrande* (SINALTRAINAL), National Union of Food Industry Workers - Bugalagrande Branch. Martín Agudelo has since fled the area for fear of safety. The attack came after the security forces reportedly labelled the leaders of SINALTRAINAL and other unions in the area "guerrillas" in an internal security force intelligence report. In the past, people who have been labelled guerillas have frequently suffered serious human rights violations at the hands of army-backed paramilitaries.

At a meeting in northern Valle del Cauca in March, paramilitaries reportedly declared Carlos Arbey González, one of the leaders of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores y Empleados Universitarios de Colombia* (SINTRAUNICOL), Colombian University Workers and Employees Union, a military target. Unidentified individuals have apparently been keeping him and his family under constant surveillance since early 2001. Another SINTRAUNICOL leader, Gilberto Agudelo, "disappeared" after he was reportedly abducted by paramilitaries in June 2000 (See UA 158/00, AMR 23/46/00, 13 June 2000). The army-backed paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, (AUC), United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia had declared the members of SINTRAUNICOL's executive board a military target in September 1999.

There is concern that although Carlos Arbey is at serious risk, the Ministry of Interior protection program has been slow to ensure that measures adopted for his safety are speedily executed. The Colombian Government will apparently provide two bodyguards for Carlos Arbey for a six-month period beginning on 1 June, but financial restrictions mean that medium to long-term measures cannot be adopted. The inadequate protection measures taken by the Ministry of the Interior have meant that the lives of trade unionists such as Carlos Arbey González have been unduly endangered.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of trade union leaders and activists in Valle del Cauca, including SINTRAEMCALI members, Martín Agudelo and Carlos Arbey González;
- 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 killings of Henry Jiménez Rodríguez and Carlos Eliécer Prado, and the attempted killing of Martín Agudelo, 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:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Andrés Pastrana Arango
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Carrera 8 No.7-26
 Santafé de Bogotá
 COLOMBIA

Fax: + 57 1 336 2109 / 337 1351 / 286 7434 / 286 6842 / 284 2186

Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr. Presidente

Minister of Interior

Sr. 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 1 341 9583 / 334 3960

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Governor of the Department of Valle del Cauca

Gobernador del Departamento de Valle del Cauca
 Sr. Germán Villegas Villegas
 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/Estimado sr. Gobernador

COPIES TO:

National Human Rights Ombudsman

Defensor del Pueblo
 Sr. Eduardo Cifuentes Muñoz
 Defensoría del Pueblo
 Calle 55, No. 10-32/46
 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 12 July 2001.