

UA 255/01

Fear for**COLOMBIA** Ricardo Conde Alarcón (m)**Four other villagers from Dolores, Tolima department  
José Ernesto Ricaurte (m), member of ANTHOC trade union****Mario Nel Mora Patiño (m), President of ANTHOC Tolima Section****Other ANTHOC members and their families**

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Paramilitary gunmen have reportedly abducted five men in a raid on a village in Tolima department. They have also threatened to kill members of the ANTHOC health workers' union in Tolima, and are believed to have abducted one member of the union.

A group of heavily armed men apparently entered the village of Dolores, in south-eastern Tolima Department, at 7:30am on 9 September. They said they were from the Tolima Bloc of the army-backed paramilitary organisation *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), Colombian United Self-Defence Forces. The paramilitaries gathered the villagers in the main park, read out a list of people they accused of collaborating with the guerrillas who operate in large parts of the country. They left at 1pm, taking Ricardo Conde Alarcón and four others with them.

The paramilitaries were reportedly seen taking the group to their base in Tortugas, which is only two kilometres from the police station in the municipality of Prado, along a highway heavily travelled by the army. The security forces have apparently since been harassing members of Ricardo Conde Alarcón's family, and have apparently killed his relative José Joaquín Conde Torro.

Trade unionist Mario Nel Mora Patiño, president of the Tolima branch of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Salud* (ANTHOC), Health Workers' Union, has reportedly received repeated death threats throughout this year. On 21 September an anonymous telephone caller to his home in Tolima told him he "should be ready because we are going to send you the body of your colleague (*"debían estar pendientes porque le iban a mandar el cadáver del compañero"*). AUC graffiti had reportedly been found on the first floor of his home in January. In February graffiti was found on the walls of ANTHOC and other trade union headquarters in Tolima saying "*Las AUC - Sindicalistas Muerte*", "The AUC - Dead Trade Unionists".

ANTHOC member José Ernesto Ricaurte, who worked at the San Vicente de Paul hospital in the municipality of Prado, department of Tolima, was last heard from at 9pm on 26 September. In the light of the threats received by his trade union (see UA 222/2001, AMR 23/086/2001, 5 September 2001), there is reason to believe he may have been abducted by paramilitaries.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The killings follow recent paramilitary incursions in Tolima department (see UA 176/01, AMR 23/070/01, 18 July 2001 and UA 244/01, AMR 23/099/01, 25 September 2001). On 15 July, paramilitaries reportedly entered the communities of Pantanilla, Villanueva and El Bledo in the municipality of El Libano, threatening and beating the inhabitants.

Members of the Colombian army and security forces and their paramilitary allies commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Those accused

of being guerrilla supporters by the security forces and their paramilitary allies are often the victims of serious human rights violations by the latter two groups. In the last five years several thousand civilians have been killed by paramilitary groups. The Colombian government suspended the constitutional legal base for the formation of paramilitary organizations and issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups in 1989, yet they continue to work with the support of the security forces - by action or omission - in many areas of the country. Guerrilla forces have also carried out numerous killings and other violations of international humanitarian law against members of peasant, black and indigenous communities, whom they accuse of collaborating with the security forces or paramilitary groups.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of ANTHOC president Mario Nel Mora Patiño, and other ANTHOC members, who have reportedly received death threats from paramilitaries, and urging the authorities to take action to protect them immediately;
- urging the authorities to do everything necessary to guarantee the safety of the civilian population in Tolima department;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the reported killing of José Joaquín Conde Torro, and the reported abduction of Ricardo Conde Alarcón, four other villagers from Dolores, and ANTHOC trade unionist José Ernesto Ricaurte;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in the department of Tolima, urging that the results 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 United Nations recommendations.

**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**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1566 2071**

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

Minister of Defence

Dr. Gustavo Bell, Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado, Carrera 52 OFI. 217  
CAN

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 0059**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Governor of Tolima Department

Sr. Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo Martínez  
Gobernación de Tolima  
Calle 10 y 11, Carrera 3  
Ibagué, Tolima, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Gobernador de Tolima, Tolima, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 82 638588**

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organization

Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (CSPP)

Apartado Aéreo 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 21 November 2001.