

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/117/2001

20 November 2001

Further information on UA 22/01 (AMR 23/008/01, 29 January 2001) and follow-ups (AMR 23/028/2001, 8 March; AMR 23/035/2001, 26 March; AMR 23/061/2001, 8 June; AMR 23/087/2001, 7 September; AMR 23/113/2001, 12 November) - Fear for safety

COLOMBIA Activists with the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, Popular Women's Organization in Santander department

New names: Dora Guzmán González (f)
Gloria Amparo Suárez (f)

Paramilitary gunmen have reportedly threatened OFP activists Dora Guzmán González and Gloria Amparo Suárez. The women are due to pick out the man in charge of the 10 November demolition of an OFP community centre at an identity parade that will take place in the near future. A paramilitary commander known as "el gato" ("the cat") has been detained in connection with the 10 November attack, and will appear in the identity parade.

Two gunmen reportedly came to Dora Guzmán's home on 19 November at 3.45pm. They said that they had come on behalf of the paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*, United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia. Dora Guzmán was out, but the men said they knew where to find her.

According to information received, fifteen minutes later, five gunmen went to an OFP women's centre, the *Casa de la Mujer del Nororiente*, looking for Dora Guzmán and Gloria Amparo Suárez. They reportedly said that the women needed to talk to the lawyer representing "el gato", before 5pm, and said that "if they pick him out in the identity parade they will find themselves in serious trouble, or more serious than they are in already" (*si hacen el reconocimiento se van a meter en serios problemas, o más de de los que tienen*)

As well as demolishing the OFP centre on 10 November, in the past few months paramilitaries have tried to make local people too frightened to support the OFP, by saying they are planning to attack the organization, and threatening to kill its members.

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

- urging the authorities to take appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of Dora Guzmán and Gloria Amparo Suárez, members of the *Organización Femenina Popular*, so they can continue their legitimate work for the defence and promotion of human rights;
- calling for an immediate, impartial and full investigation into the 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 Nation and Organization of American States declarations, and in line with repeated recommendations to them by the UN to 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 Barrancabermeja area, 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: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

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Minister of Defence

Dr. Gustavo Bell
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52, Oficina 217, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegram: Ministro de Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telex: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Fax: + 57 1 222 00 59

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro

Governor of Santander Department

Sr. Jorge Eliecer Gómez Villamizar, Gobernador del Departamento de Santander,
 Gobernación de Santander,
 Calle 37, No. 10-30,
 Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia

Telegram: Gobernador Santander, Bucaramanga, Colombia

Fax: +57 76 339889

Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador

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 20 71

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President

COPIES TO:Women's grassroots organization

Organización Femenina Popular
 Cra 22 No 52B - 36
 Barrancabermeja, Santander, 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 January 2001.