

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/81/00

Further information on UA 259/00 (AMR 23/64/00) - Fear for Safety/  
"Disappearance" 9 October 2000

COLOMBIA Rubén USUGA HIGUITA]  
Wilson USUGA HIGUITA] ASFADDES members  
Arvey POSO USUGA ]

Angel QUINTERO, human rights defender  
Other members of the Medellín branch of ASFADDES

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New name: Claudia Patricia MONSALVE PULGARÍN, human rights defender

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Two human rights defenders who are members of ASFADDES have reportedly been abducted in Antioquia department, barely a month after Amnesty International denounced death threats against them. Their whereabouts are unknown, and their lives are in grave danger.

When Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve finished work at the ASFADDES branch in Medellín on 6 October, they went out to a restaurant with five others from the office. They went on to a bar, and when Claudia left, Angel said he would walk to the bus stop with her. He never came back. Witnesses say they were abducted by two gunmen on a motorcycle and a group of men in a pick-up truck.

Angel Quintero has faced continuous threats and harassment as a result of his work with ASFADDES on the "disappearance" of three of his wife's relatives in August and previous disappearances of other members of his wife's family. An Amnesty International delegation met with him in Medellín in July and on 8 September to discuss the case of the "disappearance" of his relatives and his own security situation.

Claudia Monsalve has been working with ASFADDES to find out what happened to her brother, a university student who "disappeared" in 1995 (see report on Colombia AMR 23/18/98, March 1998). Judicial investigations have led to a number of police officers being implicated in his abduction.

The *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (ASFADDES), Association of Families of the Detained Disappeared, is a national non-governmental human rights organization made up of families of the "disappeared", who work to find out what has happened to their relatives and bring those responsible to justice.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights defenders and ASFADDES members have suffered continuous threats and harassment for carrying out their legitimate work to promote and protect internationally recognized human rights. In the past they have been suffered death threats, killings and disappearances at the hands of the security forces and their paramilitary allies. Many have been killed and others have been forced to leave the region in fear for their lives.

In recent months ASFADDES workers in Medellín have received death threats (See UA 91/00, AMR 23/24/00, 20 April 2000) and only last week Amnesty International denounced threats against the Barrancabermeja branch. Despite public and international denunciations authorities have taken no decisive action to find out who issued these threats.

The Colombian authorities have so far failed to take action against paramilitary groups operating in the region.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve, who have not been seen since 6 October, and urging the authorities to intensify the search for them;
- urging that full and impartial investigations are undertaken into their "disappearance", for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to protect human rights defenders in Medellín, as deemed appropriate by those at risk;
- urging the government to adhere to its obligations to protect human rights defenders, as set out by the United Nations and Organization of American States;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Medellín, and for members of the security forces responsible for cooperating and operating in unison with these groups to be brought to justice;
- calling for decisive action to combat and dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with repeated UN recommendations and government commitments.

**Please also raise these concerns with your own government. Urge your government to publicly condemn the reported abductions, and to call for them to be released immediately, and for those responsible brought to justice.**

**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

**Telegrams: President Pastrana, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939/284 2186/289 3377**

**Salutation: Dear President / Excmo. Sr Presidente**

Vice-President of the Republic

Señor Vicepresidente Gustavo Bell Lemus  
 Alto Consejero Presidencial para asuntos de Derechos Humanos y lucha Contra la Corrupción  
 Cra. 8 #7-26,  
 Palacio de Nariño,  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Faxes: + 57 1 337 1351**

**Salutation: Dear Vice-President / Excmo. Sr. Vicepresidente**

Governor of the Department of Antioquia

Dr. Alberto Builes Ortega, Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia  
 Gobernación de Antioquia, Calle 42B, # 52-106, Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Telegrams: Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia**

**Faxes: + 57 4 381 1342**

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

Medellín Metropolitan Police Commander

Brigadier General Luis Alfredo Rodríguez Pérez  
 Comandante de la Policía Metropolitana  
 Carrera 48, # 45-58

Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Faxes: + 57 4 251 8959-8732**

**Salutation: Dear Police Commander/ Sr. Comandante**

**COPIES TO:**

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

ASFADDES

AA 011446

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 20 November 2000.