

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/83/00

UA 316/00

Fear for

COLOMBIA Angel SALAS FAJARDO, trade unionist

Trade unionist Angel Salas Fajardo has received a written death threat, and Amnesty International believes his life is in danger.

Angel Salas is a leading member of the health workers' union ANTHOC, based in the northern department of Atlántico. On 3 October a death threat was mailed to him in Barranquilla:

BARRANQUILLA SEPTEMBER 2000

MISTER WE KNOW YOUR WHEREABOUTS,

Your true identity as you direct groups like the trade union ... we know your whereabouts already and very soon you will know what we want with you and your family.

You know what this cross means.

BARRANQUILLA SEPTIEMBRE/2000

SENOR (sic) SABEMOS SU PARADERO,

Cual es su verdadera identidad ya que usted dirige grupos como es el sindicato ... ya sabemos cual es su paradero y muy pronto sabrán que lo que queremos con usted y su propia familia.

Sabe el significado de esta cruz.

A few days before he received this death threat, two men had apparently come looking for him at his office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The army and their paramilitary allies have long accused trade unionists of supporting or sympathising with the guerrilla organisations that they are fighting. The people they accuse have frequently been harassed, tortured and killed, often by paramilitaries. At least 69 trade unionists were murdered in Colombia in 1999, according to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Annual Survey for 2000.

Amnesty International has documented systematic persecution of trade unionists in Colombia. Seven trade union leaders were shot dead during the 1998 national strike, including the vice-president of the trade union umbrella organisation *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores*, Jorge Ortega Garcia (see UA 274/98, AMR 23/80/98, 21 October 1998, and follow up, AMR 23/90/98, 24 November 1998). None of these crimes has been resolved and those responsible have not been brought to justice.

Guerrilla forces and armed opposition groups have also committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, for example executing those they accuse of being security force or paramilitary collaborators and supporters.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Angel Salas, his family and other leaders of the trade union ANTHOC, and urging that everything they themselves think necessary be done to guarantee their safety;

- urging the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the death threat received by Angel Salas, to make the results public and bring those responsible 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

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

Salutation: Dear President Pastrana/ Excmo. Sr Presidente

Minister of Interior

Señor Humberto De La Calle
Ministro del Interior, Ministerio del Interior, Palacio Echeverry
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o., Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 286 8025

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez,
Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,
Diagonal 22B 5201, Apartado Aéreo 29855, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 571 570 2022 (If the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor" and wait for the signal.)

Salutation: Estimado Dr./Dear Dr. Gómez Méndez

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

CSPP
AA 22803
Bogota
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 28 November 2000.