

COLOMBIANéstor Sánchez, mayor of Cabrera, department of Cundinamarca
Joaquín Hernández, municipal human rights ombudsman
Other social and political leaders in Cabrera: Josué ANCIZAR CRUZ, Demetrio GUERRERO, Carlos IVÁN DIMATE, Luis EFRÉN SÁNCHEZ, Octavio PARDO, Humberto BENAVIDES, Jorge VILLALBA; Enrique HIGUERA, Armando DÍAZ, Enrique YACOPÍ, Blanca Nelly BARBOSA, Ana Cornelia VARELA, Manuel GUILLERMO F., Pancho RÍOS, Jesús Ricardo SÁNCHEZ, Antonio MORA, Luis Eduardo RIVEROS, Víctor VARGAS, Diego DIMATE, Flaminio SANABRIA, Héctor MIKAN, Henry ROBAYO, Oliver FERNÁNDEZ, Guillermo GARCÍA, Marceliano BELTRÁN

Paramilitaries have reportedly threatened to kill several people from the municipality of Cabrera, department of Cundinamarca. The mayor and municipal human rights ombudsman have also reportedly received death threats, and they and other political and social activists in the municipality are believed to be in danger.

A written death threat was apparently received on 7 December at the offices of the *Unidad Municipal de Asistencia Técnica Agropecuaria* (UMATA), Municipal Agro-Technical Support Unit, which works with local farmers. It was believed to be from the army-backed paramilitary group *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia:

"LAS AUTODEFENSAS UNIDAS DE COLOMBIA DETERMINAN QUE LAS PERSONAS QUE EN LA LISTA APARECEN DEBEN SALIR DEL MUNICIPIO PUESTO QUE HAN SIDO INVESTIGADOS Y DECLARADOS CULPABLES COMO TRAIADORES DE LA PATRIA, COMO COLABORADORES DE LA GUERRILLA Y HAN SIDO DECLARADOS OBJETIVO MILITAR, NO SEA QUE OCURRA OTRA VERSIÓN DE LOS SUCEDIDO EN LA CIÉNAGA GRANDE"

"THE UNITED SELF-DEFENCE FORCES OF COLOMBIA HAVE DECIDED THAT THE PEOPLE WHO APPEAR ON THIS LIST SHOULD LEAVE THE MUNICIPALITY SINCE THEY HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED AND DECLARED GUILTY OF BEING TRAITORS TO THE FATHERLAND, AS GUERRILLA COLLABORATORS, AND HAVE BEEN DECLARED A MILITARY TARGET. WE WOULDN'T WANT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE CIÉNAGA GRANDE TO HAPPEN AGAIN" [this refers to a recent paramilitary massacre in the north of the country].

The death threat then lists the people named above.

The mayor of Cabrera, Néstor Sánchez, and the municipal human rights ombudsman, Joaquín Hernández, have reportedly been receiving telephone death threats from a man who says he is a representative of the paramilitary commander of the Cundinamarca Self-Defence Groups ("del Aguila comandante de las Autodefensas de Cundinamarca").

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of the Colombian army and security forces, and their paramilitary allies, commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Over the past 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 in 1989 issued directives to the armed forces to combat and disband such groups, yet they continue to operate with the support of the security forces in many areas of the country. Popular activists, left-wing political activists, human rights ombudsmen and human rights defenders have frequently been victims of human rights violations carried

out by the security forces and their paramilitary allies, who have often accused them of being guerrilla collaborators or sympathizers.

Similarly, guerrilla forces and armed opposition groups have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, for example executing those they accuse of being security force or paramilitary collaborators and supporters. On occasion this has included members of forcibly displaced communities.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the civilian inhabitants of the municipality of Cabrera, department of Cundinamarca, named above, who are reported to have been threatened by paramilitary forces operating in the region;
- urging that full and impartial investigations into death threats against them are carried out, the results are made public and that all those responsible are brought to justice;
- urging that all measures, deemed appropriate to those under threat, are taken to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups operating in Cabrera, department of Cundinamarca, 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 1 286 7434 / 284 2186 / 337 1351/336 2109

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Pastrana

Minister of Defence

Dr. Luis Fernando Ramírez Acuña, Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Commander of the Armed Forces

General Fernando Tapias Stahelin
Comandante de las Fuerzas Militares
Avenida El Dorado - Carrera 52
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante Fuerzas Militares, Bogota, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 222 2096

Salutation: Sr. Comandante/Dear Commander

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 1 February 2001.