

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/33/99

15 April 1999

Further information on UA 70/99 (AMR 23/30/99, 8 April 1999) and follow-up (AMR 23/31/99, 9 April 1999) - Fear for safety / "disappearance"

COLOMBIA "Disappeared" Crecencio Mendoza, Edgardo Gómez (note new spelling),  
Joselito Gallego, Raúl Posada

New names: Benedicto Moreno, Eleuterio Lemos, Manuel Rivera

Killed - José Angel Cardenas, Jorge Enrique Murillo, Luis Felipe Lamberti,  
Jorge Ramos and his three-year-old son (not daughter as previously stated)

New names: Victor Jirón, Belarmino Salas, Macario Cordoba

Wounded: Oidel Mena

Fate unknown - Jesús Arias, Floriberto Hurtado, Jorge Correa

Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of the seven people listed above as "disappeared", who are reportedly still being held by paramilitary forces in Chocó department, in the region of Urabá.

On 7 April 1999 a paramilitary force reportedly attacked three settlements, El Arenal, Villahermosa and Caño Seco. In El Arenal they killed Jorge Ramos and his son and wounded Oidel Mena. In Caño Seco they killed Victor Jirón, Belarmino Salas and Macario Cordoba and abducted Benedicto Moreno and Eleuterio Lemos.

They abducted 12 people in Villahermosa, including community leaders, two of whom, Jerónimo Martínez and Miliciades Mena, reportedly managed to escape and raise the alarm. The bodies of José Angel Cárdenas, Jorge Enrique Murillo and Luis Felipe Lamberti were found the next day. The fate of Jesús Arias, Floriberto Hurtado and Jorge Correa, who were abducted from Villahermosa, remains unknown.

The settlements of Villahermosa, El Arenal, Caño Seco Clavellino and Domingodó, in the dense lowland jungle region of Chocó department, are part of the Peace Community of San Francisco de Asís, whose members have recently been attempting to establish communities closer to the lands they were forced to abandon in 1996 and 1997. The Peace Communities were set up in the northwestern region of Urabá to try and persuade the warring factions to respect the civilian population's neutrality and right to life. National and international non-governmental organizations, including the Catholic Church, have supported, through their presence, the efforts of these displaced communities. However, neither the military and their paramilitary allies, nor left-wing guerrilla groups, have shown any respect for their neutrality, and have repeatedly attempted to undermine the Peace Communities.

On 25 March, before the paramilitary attacks, local military commander General Orlando Carreño Sandoval, of the XVII Army Brigade, reportedly said that it would be better for the communities not to have representatives of national and international human rights organizations working with them. At the same time local business leaders accused the Peace Communities and their national and international supporters of serving the interests of guerrilla forces, in a public letter.

Church Organizations which support the communities have called for national and international condemnation of attempts by guerrillas of the *Fuerzas Armadas*

*Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) to infiltrate the communities, and of the attacks and mass killings of community members by paramilitary forces.

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

- expressing fear for the safety of Crecencio Mendoza, Edgardo Gómez, Joselito Gallego, Raúl Posada, Benedicto Moreno, Eleuterio Lemos and Manuel Rivera and calling for the authorities to secure their safe release;
- condemning paramilitary attacks on the civilian population of Urabá, including the killing of José Angel Cardenas, Jorge Enrique Murillo, Luis Felipe Lamberti, Jorge Ramos and his three-year-old son, Victor Jirón, Belarmino Salas and Macario Cordoba;
- calling on all parties to the conflict, the Colombian armed forces, paramilitary groups and guerrilla organizations, to respect the neutrality of the peace communities and not undermine their security and credibility through a policy of infiltration.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Andres 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**

**Fax: + 57 1 286 7434 / 284 2186 / 337 1351**

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

Minister of Defence

Dr. Rodrigo Lloreda

Ministro de Defensa Nacional

Ministerio de Defensa Nacional

Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

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

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

**Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874**

Regional Military Commander:

General Martín Orlando Carreño Sandoval,

Comandante XVII Brigada del Ejército, Carepá, Urabá, Antioquia, Colombia

**Tel/Fax: 5748 823 6601**

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

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights and Educational Organization

CINEP, AA 25916, 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 27 May 1999.