

3 November 1998

Further information on UA 176/98 (AMR 23/40/98, 12 June 1998) and follow-ups (AMR 23/49/98, 1 July 1998 and AMR 23/58/98, 7 August 1998) - Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial execution and new concern: Possible "disappearance"

**COLOMBIA** Civilian population of the municipality of San Pablo, and other communities in the south of Bolivar Department

**At least five "disappeared": believed to include Oscar Danilo Zais Peña and Martín Mejia**

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At least five leaders of forcibly displaced communities from the municipality of San Pablo, southern Bolivar Department, have been seized at a paramilitary road block, and their whereabouts remain unknown. This follows the extrajudicial execution of at least 11 civilians by paramilitaries in Pacha, southern Bolivar Department, five days earlier, and increases concern for the safety of the civilian population in the region.

According to reports the five men were seized at a road block set up near San Pablo, the municipal capital, on 30 October 1998 by 70 paramilitaries in regular army uniforms, three days after an army battalion withdrew from the area. The paramilitaries checked the identity papers of all who passed against a list of names, and announced their intention of killing all the leaders of the region's displaced communities.

Civilians from San Pablo, along with other communities in southern Bolivar Department, had taken temporary refuge in the nearby city of Barrancabermeja, Santander Department, after continued paramilitary incursions and threats. They had recently begun returning to their homes after the Colombian government signed undertakings with leaders of the displaced communities of southern Bolivar to combat paramilitary groups operating in the region and to ensure the safe return of the displaced communities.

Despite this agreement, an Amnesty International delegation visiting San Pablo and the surrounding area days before the abductions confirmed that paramilitaries were still operating in the area. In a subsequent meeting with the Colombian vice-president, the organization expressed its concern for the safety of the returning civilian communities.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the five individuals reportedly abducted by paramilitaries in the municipality of San Pablo, Bolivar Department, on 30 October 1998 and urging that their whereabouts be made known;
- expressing concern for the safety of the civilian population of south Bolivar, particularly those community leaders who participated in the negotiations with the government and who have subsequently received death threats;
- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the paramilitary incursions in the towns of San Pablo and Pacha, municipality of Barranco de Loba, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding Colombia's new government of the country's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

**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:+ 571 289 3377 / 284 2186 / 286 7434**

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

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Nestor Humberto Martínez, Ministro del Interior  
Ministerio del Interior, Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2  
Santafé de Bogotá, COLOMBIA

**Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes:45406 MINGO CO**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 341 9739**

**Salutation:Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

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**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

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, Fiscalía General, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 571 570 2000 (when ansaphone picks up dial 2022 for fax)**

**Salutation: Estimado Dr. / Dear Dr.**

**COPIES TO:**

Alternative Legal Association, MINGA, AA 40303

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 15 December 1998.