

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/08/96

UA 32/96 Fear for Safety / Extrajudicial execution

9 February 1996

COLOMBIA Alfonso CASSIANI HERRERA, university student

Damaso SALGADO REYES

Alonso CORRALES HERNÁNDEZ, teacher - killed

Alfonso Cassiani Herrera is reported to have been receiving death threats since he denounced the "disappearance" of his friend, Alonso Corrales Hernández. Alfonso Cassiani's brother-in-law, Damaso Salgado Reyes, has also been threatened.

Alonso Corrales "disappeared" on 15 January 1996 after leaving his house in Cartagena, department of Bolívar, to go to the school where he worked as a teacher. He was a leader of the youth wing of the legal Colombian Communist Party. His body was found in the Caribbean Sea on 24 January showing signs of torture.

Since 26 January Alfonso Cassiani Herrera has received a series of anonymous telephone calls threatening him that "we're going to do the same to you as we did to Alonso, you're left now" ("*contigo vamos a hacer lo mismo que con Alonso, ahora falta tu*"). On 2 February an anonymous caller telephoned Alfonso Cassiani's home four times, until his brother-in-law, Damaso Salgado Reyes, answered the telephone and told the caller to stop molesting the family. The caller rang again two hours later and said to Alfonso's sister who answered the telephone: "tell Damaso that he is a dead man" ("*dígale a Damaso que es hombre muerto*").

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Alfonso Cassiani Herrera, who is at present in hiding, since he was a close friend and colleague of Alonso Corrales. Alfonso Cassiani Herrera is a student at the University of Cartagena and a student member of the *Proceso de Comunidades Negras*, Organization of Black Communities. In the past members of the security forces and their paramilitary allies have been responsible for human rights violations, including "disappearances", against student leaders, who they suspect of being guerrilla sympathizers. Moreover, in recent months Amnesty International has received reports that members of the *Proceso de Comunidades Negras*, have been accused by state officials of being guerrilla sympathizers. Members of the legal Communist Party and other opposition parties have frequently been the victims of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" committed by members of the security forces and their paramilitary allies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Student leaders, popular activists, human rights activists and peasant farmers are amongst those who have frequently been the victims of human rights violations. President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, has publicly stated that tackling the human rights situation will be a priority for his government. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces, together with their paramilitary allies, continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Only exceptionally are perpetrators brought to justice; the vast majority of members of the armed and security forces responsible for gross human rights violations remain in active service.

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

- calling for immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Alfonso Cassiani Herrera and Damaso Salgado Reyes;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the death threats against the two men and the apparent extrajudicial execution of Alonso Corrales Hernández on 15 January 1996, for the results to be made public and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1)President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

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

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

2)Procurator General:

Dr. Orlando Vásquez Velásquez
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Vásquez, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723/281 7531

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Vásquez

3)Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Carrera 8a, No.8-09, Piso 7
Santafé de Bogotá
COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior Serpa, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 286 65 24/ 286 00 53/ 286 04 85

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4)Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento
Fiscal General de la Nación
Fiscalia General de la Nación
Apartado Aéreo 29855
Santafé de Bogotá
Colombia

Telegrams:Fiscal General Valdivieso, Fiscalia General, Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes:+ 57 1 245 5292 or 287 0939 or 288 2828

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Valdivieso/Dear Dr. Valdivieso

COPIES TO:

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores

ASFADDES

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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 30 March 1996.