

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 23/63/96

22 November 1996

Further information on UA 74/96 (AMR 23/17/96, 19 March 1996) and follow-ups (AMR 23/26/96, 9 May; AMR 23/43/96, 23 July; AMR 23/45/96, 15 August; AMR 23/50/96, 1 October) - Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial executions / "Disappearance"

COLOMBIA Peasant farmer families living on, and forcibly displaced from, the Bellacruz Ranch, department of Cesar

Belén TORRES

new names: Adelmo Segundo RODRÍGUEZ
César QUINTERO
Brigadier ROPERO
Isai CAÑIZARES

Ciro BOTELLO

Reports of a paramilitary meeting said to have taken place on 15 November 1996 in the Bellacruz Ranch, department of Cesar, have heightened concern for the safety of the peasant farmers forcibly displaced from lands on the ranch and those trying to assist them (see original UA and updates for details).

The paramilitary group operating in the area allegedly met with business people and cattle ranchers from Pelaya in the main house of the ranch, which is reportedly being used as a base by the *Batallón 40 Héroes de Corea*, 40 Heroes from Korea Battalion, of the Colombian Army. Those present at the meeting are said to have discussed the possibility of assigning some paramilitary members to track the peasant farmers down to Bogotá, or wherever they could be found, and kill them. According to reports, it was agreed that the peasant farmers would be chased and killed wherever the *Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria* (INCORA), Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute, decided to relocate them, as a lesson for the denunciations brought by them at national and international level.

Posters reportedly displayed during the meeting showed the names of Adelmo Segundo Rodríguez, César Quintero, Brigadier Roperero, Isai Cañizares and Belén Torres announcing they had been sentenced to death. Rodríguez, Quintero, Roperero and Cañizares are peasant farmer leaders from the Bellacruz Ranch; Belén Torres is president of the *Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos - Unidad y Reconstrucción* (ANUC-UR), National Association of Peasant Farm Workers - Unity and Reconstruction (see previous update, AMR 23/43/96). Fear for their safety has increased after the killing of *Ciro Botello*, on 13 November, by the paramilitary group operating on the Bellacruz Ranch and neighbouring areas.

The Colombian authorities have still not taken any effective measures to dismantle paramilitary groups operating on the ranch and neighbouring communities. Amnesty International continues to receive information indicating that no attempt has been made to carry out the 28 arrest warrants issued against paramilitary leaders operating in the Bellacruz Ranch.

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

- expressing deep concern at the continuation of paramilitary violence in the Bellacruz Ranch and neighbouring areas, and at the killing of Ciro Botello on 13 November 1996;
- calling for immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Adelmo Segundo Rodríguez, César Quintero, Brigadier Ropero, Isai Cañizares and Belén Torres;
- expressing concern that, despite repeated denunciations by national and international human rights organizations about the abuses being committed against the Bellacruz peasant farmers and those trying to assist them, no effective measures have been taken to guarantee their safety, put an end to paramilitary violence against them, dismantle the paramilitary groups, and implement the 28 arrest warrants issued;
- calling for full and impartial investigations, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;

APPEALS TO:

President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente Ernesto Samper Pizano
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Carrera 8 No. 7-26
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Samper Pizano, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

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

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

Attorney General

Dr. Alfonso Valdivieso Sarmiento
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Fiscalía General de la Nación
 Calle 35 No. 4-31
 Apartado Aéreo 29855
 Santafé de Bogotá
 Colombia

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

Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939 or 288 2828

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Valdivieso/Dear Dr. Valdivieso

Minister of the Interior

Dr. Horacio Serpa Uribe
 Ministro del Interior
 Ministerio del Interior
 Carrera 8, No.8-09, Piso 2
 Santafé de Bogotá
 COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior Serpa, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Fax:+ 57 1 281 5884/286 0053

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of Defence

Dr. Juan Carlos Esguerra Portocarrero
 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

COPIES TO:

Alternative Legal Association - MINGA

Apartado aéreo 40303, Santafé de Bogotá

Colombia

Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos - Unidad y Reconstrucción (ANUC-UR)

Apartado aéreo 18534, 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 31 December 1996.