

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**Fear of "disappearance"**

**29 June 1995**

*Please limit appeals to 15 per section.*

**COLOMBIA**

**Olegario ROMERO RODRÍGUZ, aged 36, farmer**

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There is serious concern for the safety of Olegario Romero Rodríguez, whose whereabouts have been unknown since he was last seen on 6 June 1995 going to work on a neighbouring farm.

On 6 June 1995, at 6.50am Olegario Romero Rodríguez left his ranch in the area of Vereda Lagunitas, Corregimiento de San Juan de Sumapaz, Departament of Cundinamarca, to go to a neighbouring farm where he was working. After his "disappearance" on 6 June 1995, his family officially denounced it to the Colombian authorities.

The area near where Olegario Romero was last seen is known as a *Zona Roja* -Red Zone and is heavily militarized as a result of the activities of armed opposition groups operating in the area. There is a military base *Unidad Móvil N°1*, Mobile Unit Number 1, close to the place where Olegario Romero is reported to have disappeared. Neighbours report that soon after he was reported missing, a helicopter landed at the military base, which they said only happened very rarely. Although there is no evidence that Olegario Romero Rodríguez was detained by the security forces, in the past, in areas in which armed confrontations between the armed forces and guerrillas have taken place, members of the civilian population have often been the target of human rights violations, carried out by the security forces; these have included "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In recent years, widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. President Ernesto Samper Pizano, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, made several promises, both during his election campaign and subsequently, to improve the human rights situation. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces together with their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtually total impunity. Civilians in areas of conflict are amongst those who have been the target of human rights violations. President Samper's promises include a commitment to end the impunity which benefits members of the security and paramilitary forces responsible for human rights

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Olegario Romero Rodríguez and urging an immediate investigation to establish his whereabouts;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the "disappearance" of Olegario Romero Rodríguez, the results of which should be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- urging that, if he is in detention, he be treated humanely and allowed access to lawyers and relatives;
- asking that he be charged with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately released.

**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**

**Telex: 44281 PALP CO**

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

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

2) Minister of Defence

Dr. Fernando Botero Zea  
Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
Avenida Eldorado CAN - Carrera 52  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero, Bogota, Colombia**

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

**Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874 / 288 4906**

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

3) Minister of the Interior

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

**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno Serpa, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes:45406 MINGO CO**

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

**Faxes:+ 57 1 286 6524**

4) 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 Velásquez, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 342 9723 (may be taped office sounds, then engaged signal, then fax tone) / 284 0472 / 281 7531**

**Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación / Dear Dr. Velásquez**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

Señores  
ASFADDES  
AA 011446  
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 10 August 1995.