

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 257/94      "Disappearance"/ Fear for Safety

4 July 1994

COLOMBIA      Martha Leticia GARCIA, aged 47, restaurant owner  
Arnulfo ATEHORTUA, her son

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Amnesty International has just learned of the abduction of Martha Leticia García on 16 April 1994 from her restaurant in the community of La Veta, Cocorná municipality, Antioquia department, and is concerned for her safety.

Witnesses report that four vehicles of armed men arrived at the bar, also called "La Veta", at 9 pm on 16 April. They threatened the occupants and forced them to lie on the bar floor, then took Martha Leticia García and forced her into one of their vehicles. The men asked for her son Arnulfo Atehortua and, on discovering that he was not there, stated that they would be back to look for him. They finally left, driving off with Martha Leticia García and another woman whom they believed to be her daughter and who was released when they realised their mistake. The whereabouts of Martha Leticia García remain unknown.

Later, the same armed men are reported to have ransacked Arnulfo Atehortua's house, leaving a slogan painted on the door saying "Go away, bastard guerrillas" "*A volar guerrilleros H.P.*". There is serious concern for the safety of Martha Leticia García and, in the context of his mother's "disappearance", of her son Arnulfo Atehortua.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions, "disappearance", torture and arbitrary arrest. Particular targets have been members of left-wing parties, community and trade union leaders. The majority of such abuses have been attributed by the Colombian forces to civilian "death squads" which it claims it is unable to control. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each "disappearance" as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, independent investigations have concluded that many such groups operate under the command or with the support of the Colombian armed and security forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Martha Leticia García, who has not been seen since she was abducted by armed men on 16 April 1994 and urging that there be an immediate inquiry into her whereabouts;

- urging that if she is in detention, that she be humanely treated and allowed access to relatives and to a lawyer;

- urging that if she is in detention, that she be immediately charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released;

- expressing concern for the safety of her son Arnulfo Atehortua, for whom the armed men who abducted Martha Leticia García appear to be searching and urging that all possible measures be taken to protect him.

**APPEALS TO**1) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

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

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

2) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472**

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

3) Advocate for the People:

Dr. Jaime Córdoba Triviño  
 Defensor del Pueblo  
 Defensoría del Pueblo  
 Calle 35 No. 7-25 piso 5  
 Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams:Defensor del Pueblo Trivino, Defensoria del Pueblo,  
 Bogota, Colombia**

**Faxes:+ 57 1 288 6683**

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

4) Attorney General

Dr. Gustavo de Greiff Restrepo  
 Fiscal General de la Nación  
 Fiscalía General de la Nación  
 Apartado Aéreo 29855  
 Santafé de Bogotá  
 Colombia

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

**Faxes:+ 57 1 287 0939**

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

**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 15 August 1994.