

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/88/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 410/94 Possible Extrajudicial Execution/Fear for Safety 22 November 1994

COLOMBIA Rodrigo FLÓREZ, construction worker, trade unionist and political activist

Oscar CHAVARRIAGA, construction worker

Fears for the safety of members of opposition political parties in Colombia have been greatly heightened by the killing on 17 November 1994 of Rodrigo Flórez, member of the *Unión Patriótica (UP)*, Patriotic Union and the *Partido Comunista Colombiano (PCC)*, Colombian Communist Party.

According to reports, Rodrigo Flórez was killed when gunmen in a moving vehicle opened fire on the PCC/UP headquarters in Medellín, department of Antioquia.

The building had been under police guard until 30 October when the guard was withdrawn without explanation. Oscar Chavarriaga and another person who happened to be near the building, were seriously injured in the attack. UP and PCC members have been particular targets for human rights violations in the past, and the indiscriminate nature of this attack raises fears that more members of these parties will now be targeted.

The killing of Rodrigo Flórez follows that of Manuel Cepeda, the only UP/PCC Senator, who was killed on 9 August (see UA 295/94, AMR 23/62/94, 10 August and follow-up AMR 23/66/94, 26 August), and the killing of three trade unionists in Antioquia (see UA 299/94, AMR 23/63/94, 12 August). All four killings were claimed by the paramilitary group *Colombia sin Guerrilla (COLSINGUE)*, Colombia without Guerrillas. In July, COLSINGUE released a press communiqué in which it threatened members of opposition political parties, trade unionists and political activists. No one has claimed responsibility for the latest killing.

In early October 1992 the Advocate for the People, Dr Jaime Triviño Córdoba, published a report which concluded that the main perpetrators of violence against UP activists were paramilitary groups, members of the security forces and hired gunmen. According to the official report 717 members of the UP had been killed since the party's creation in 1985. Colombian human rights organizations presently place the figure at over 2,000 activists.

This latest attack illustrates the Colombian authorities' failure to stop the continuing killing, harassment and intimidation of political and popular activists, and to bring to justice members of the paramilitary groups and the security forces involved. Political and popular activists will continue to be in danger as long as this impunity is allowed to continue.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite repeated government pledges to protect human rights, members of the Colombian armed forces and security forces together with their paramilitary allies continue to commit serious human rights violations with virtual impunity. Perceived political opponents are frequently the target of human rights violations carried out by the security forces and their paramilitary allies. Opposition political activists and leaders are frequently labelled as subversives, accusations which are often followed by human rights violations. President Samper, who assumed office on 7 August 1994, made several promises, both during his election and subsequently to improve the human rights situation. President Samper's promises include a commitment to eradicate paramilitary

activity and stamp out the impunity which benefits members of the security and paramilitary forces responsible for human rights violations.

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Rodrigo Flórez on the 17 November 1994 in circumstances suggesting an extrajudicial execution, and at the injuring of Oscar Chavarriaga and one other person;
- urging full and impartial investigations into the attack, and for the results to be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and concrete measures to protect the lives of members of the *Unión Patriótica* and the *Partido Comunista Colombiano (PCC)*, and all other political and popular activists in the department of Antioquia;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to dismantle paramilitary forces operating in Medellín and throughout Colombia, in line with stated policy, and investigate possible links between such forces and the security forces.

APPEALS TO

President of Colombia:

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

Telegrams: President Samper, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7434/287 7939

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Samper

Minister of Defence

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

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Botero Zea, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Minister of the Interior

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

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes:45406 MINGO CO

Faxes57 1 281 5884

Salutation:Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

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

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

COPIES TO:

Human Rights and Educational Organization

Señores

CINEP

AA 25916, Santa Fé 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 1994.