

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 23/55/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 326/92 Fear of "Disappearance"

21 October 1992

COLOMBIA: Eder Yofre MENDOZA VILLAMIZAR, artist

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Eder Yofre Mendoza Villamizar, who was last seen on 9 October 1992 in Bucaramanga, Santander department in Colombia's Magdalena Medio region.

According to reports, Eder Yofre Mendoza Villamizar left his home at 8am on 9 October 1992 to meet someone at the Cristo Rey park in Bucaramanga. He never arrived at his appointment. At about 5am the next day, 10 October, six uniformed members of the Colombian armed forces and another in civilian dress, all armed, arrived at the home of Eder Mendoza where he lives with his family. The soldiers presented a search warrant and asked about Eder Mendoza, including questions about his political affiliation. The search warrant was issued by the regional judge (**fiscalía regional**) in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander department, based on information provided by the army's V Brigade, V Brigada, based in Bucaramanga, that Eder Mendoza was a member of a guerrilla organization and an explosives instructor.

Eder Mendoza's detention has been denied by the V Brigade, and other regional police, military and judicial authorities. On 13 October 1992 Eder Mendoza's "disappearance" was denounced to the Bucaramanga human rights ombudsperson and a habeas corpus was presented on behalf of Eder Mendoza at the First Court, juzgado primero of Bucaramanga on 14 October 1992. His whereabouts remain unknown.

Eder Yofre Mendoza Villamizar, aged 32, is a craft artist and member of the M-19 Democratic alliance, Alianza Democrática M-19 (ADM-19), a legal left-wing opposition party. In 1990 the 19 April Movement, Movimiento 19 de Abril, (M-19), guerrilla group demobilized and formed ADM-19.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution.

Trade unionists, peasant and community leaders and members of legal left-wing parties have been particular targets. The majority of such abuses have been attributed by the Colombian authorities to armed opposition groups or to civilian "death squads", which it claims it is unable to control. 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:

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Eder Yofre Mendoza Villamizar and requesting a full investigation into his "disappearance" in order to identify and bring to justice those responsible;
- urging that his legal situation be clarified and that he be treated humanely and allowed full access to family and lawyers;
- urging that he be released unless charged with a recognizable criminal offence and brought before a competent court.

page 2 of UA 326/92...

APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia:

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

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 3066, 286 7324, 287 7937

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
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO, 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

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

3) V Brigade Commander

Brigadier General Roberto Cifuentes Ordóñez
Comandante de la V Brigada
Calle 14, Carrera 33
Bucaramanga
Santander
Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante V Brigada Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Señores
CSPP
AA 2348
Bucaramanga
Santander
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 2 December 1992.