

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 123/91 Possible Extrajudicial Execution

8 April 1991

COLOMBIA: Santos MENDIVELSO, teacher and trade unionist

Amnesty International is concerned at the killing of Santos Mendivelso on 5 April 1991 in Turmeque, in the south of Boyacá department, in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution.

Santos Mendivelso was reportedly killed by at least two gunmen as he left his house in Turmeque. His wife was witness to the killing. He was a teacher at the Diego de Torres Institute, *Instituto Diego de Torres*, in Turmeque, a member of the Boyacá teachers' union, *Sindicato de Educadores de Boyacá*, and a political activist with a legal left-wing opposition movement. He was also a coordinator of human rights education work. Prior to his death he had reportedly received death threats from paramilitary groups active in the north of Boyacá and also from members of the armed forces and police which had led him to take refuge in the town of Turmeque. However, during the last few months he had also reportedly been subject to threats and harassment by members of the local police force, which he had denounced to the Colombian Intercongregational Commission of Justice and Peace, *Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz*.

People who witnessed the killing allege that the gunmen were later seen in the company of members of the National Police, and were present when the body of Santos Mendivelso was removed. The police apparently made no attempt to detain them.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including extrajudicial executions. Principal targets have been people associated with trade unions, civic community movements and legal left-wing parties. The majority of abuses have been attributed by Colombian authorities to civilian "death squads", which it claims it is unable to control. However, independent investigations, including judicial inquiries, have concluded that many such groups operate under the command or with the support of the Colombian security forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the killing of Santos Mendivelso in circumstances suggesting he may have been the victim of extrajudicial execution;
- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into his death, the results of which should be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the lives of teachers, trade unionists and political activists to ensure that they are able to carry out their lawful activities.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324; + 57 1 287 7937;

+ 57 1 283 3066

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

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Mayor General Miguel Antonio Gómez Padilla
Director General de la Policía Nacional
Tr. 45, No. 40-11
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Dir.-Gen. Policia Nacional, Bogota, Colombia

COPIES TO:

Señores
CINEP
AA 25916
Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 May 1991.