

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Executions

23 May 1991

COLOMBIA: Luis Fernando VASQUEZ
Oscar MUÑOZ JIMENEZ

Amnesty International is concerned at the killings of Luis Fernando Vásquez and Oscar Muñoz Jiménez in the department of South Santander, in circumstances suggesting they may have been the victims of extrajudicial executions.

Luis Fernando Vásquez was reportedly arrested by soldiers on 6 May 1991 near Barrancabermeja on the road leading to the port of Casabe on the Magdalena River. He was last seen at 5pm that day in the custody of the army at La Condor production plant. When a friend who saw him there asked him if he was going to go home with him, he replied that he had to stay because the soldiers had taken his identity card (cédula de ciudadanía). The body of Luis Fernando Vásquez was found the next day.

Luis Fernando Vasquez was a farmworker and an active member of the legal left-wing coalition opposition group Patriotic Union, Unión Patriótica (UP).

On 6 May an army patrol went to the home of Oscar Muñoz Jiménez in the community (vereda) of El Porvenir, El Llanito, just north of Barrancabermeja, and carried out a search in which nothing was apparently found. Fifteen minutes after the patrol left, Oscar Muñoz Jiménez went out to buy milk, leaving his wife and children there. After he had left, another army patrol arrived at the house and proceeded to search the house again, this time allegedly finding a hunting rifle, an unusable revolver and a device used for fumigation (bomba de fumigación). At this the soldiers accused the family of aiding guerrilla groups and said that Oscar Muñoz was "a guerrilla who had got away" ("un guerrillero que se les había escapado"). He did not return to his home and next day his body was found nearby. A young boy is said to have witnessed him being detained by soldiers while on his way to get milk.

Oscar Muñoz Jiménez was a farmworker and the president of the Joint Communal Action Group (Junta de Acción Comunal) in the community of El Porvenir.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights violations are occurring on an increasing scale in Colombia against a background of escalating civil conflict and drugs-related violence. The local civilian population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential guerrilla collaborators and has, as a result, been

subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and civilians working for them. Principal victims have included civic and community leaders and members of legal left-wing parties. Since its creation in 1985 the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members (over 80 during 1990) have been victims of politically-motivated killings, including grassroots activists, local councillors, congress members and national leaders. Many others have "disappeared".

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

- expressing concern at the killings of Luis Fernando Vásquez and Oscar Muñoz Jiménez in circumstances suggesting they may have been the victims of extrajudicial execution;

- urging that there be an immediate and thorough inquiry into their deaths, the results of which should be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

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

General Oscar Botero Restrepo
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogota, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO or 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: + 57 1 222 2401

COPIES TO:

CREDHOS (Regional Committee for the Defence of
A.A. 505 Human Rights)
Barrancabermeja
Santander del Sur, 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 4 July 1991.