

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/"Disappearance"

21 June 1991

COLOMBIA: Ricaurte CASTRO CHAVEZ, aged 54
Mariela PULGARIN GRAJALES (f)

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of 54-year-old Ricaurte Castro Chávez, who was last seen on 17 June 1991, and Mariela Pulgarín Grajales, who was last seen on 19 June 1991, both in Cauca department.

According to reports, armed men in civilian clothes went to the home of Ricaurte Castro Chávez in the locality of El Palo, municipality of Caloto, Cauca department, at about 9pm on 17 June 1991. After searching the house, they took Ricaurte Castro Chávez away in one of the two vehicles they were travelling in. There has been no news of him since. Ricaurte Castro Chávez is a leader at departmental level of the legal left-wing coalition group, Unión Patriótica (UP), Patriotic Union, and a former town councillor (concejal) in the municipality of Caloto. He is also a leader at departmental level of the Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos (ANUC), National Peasants' Association.

On 19 June 1991, Mariela Pulgarín Grajales, the wife of UP councillor Joaquín Pérez was travelling in a truck from the municipality of Corinto to the community (vereda) of Jagual in Cauca department when twelve men, reportedly under the command of a man wearing a bullet-proof jacket, stopped the vehicle and asked her where her husband was. When she refused to answer, they took her away in the truck in which they were travelling. She has not been seen since.

Since its creation in 1985, the UP claims that over 1,500 of its members, including grassroots activists, local councillors, congress members and national leaders, have been the victims of politically-motivated "disappearance" and/or extrajudicial execution at the hands of the security forces or civilians working with them or under their authority. According to the UP, over 50 of its members have already been killed since the beginning of 1991 and 13 have "disappeared".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including "disappearances". Local human rights groups estimate that over 2,000 people have "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for since 1980. Principal targets have been people associated with trade unions, civic and community movements and legal left-wing parties, as well as alleged members of, or sympathizers with, armed opposition groups. Amnesty International is not always in a position to establish responsibility for each individual "disappearance", as perpetrators are often not fully identified. However, on the basis of available evidence, the organization concludes that many such abuses are carried out by members of the Colombian security forces or civilians working under their control.

page 2 of UA 215/91

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ricaurte Castro Chávez, who was last seen on 17 June 1991, and Mariela Pulgarín Grajales, who was last seen on 19 June 1991, in the department of Cauca;

- urging that there be an immediate, effective investigation to establish their whereabouts;

- urging that, if in detention, they be humanely treated and be provided full access to lawyers and relatives;

- urging that, if in detention, they be immediately brought before a competent court or released.

APPEALS TO

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Bogotá D.E., Colombia

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

**Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066; + 57 1 287 7937
 + 57 1 286 7324**

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

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia

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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; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: + 57 1 222 1874

COPIES TO:

Señores
 ASFADDES (Association of Relatives of the
 A.A. 011446 "Disappeared")
 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 2 August 1991.