

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats

22 July 1991

COLOMBIA:

Hugues LOPEZ, teacher

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Hugues López, a teacher, whose life has reportedly been threatened by members of the Colombian armed forces.

According to reports, Hugues López, who lives with his family in the town of Convención, Teorama municipality, Norte de Santander department, was at home on 13 July 1991 when three men, armed but wearing civilian clothing, arrived at his house and asked for him by name. When he came to the door, they asked if he was a teacher. Upon replying that he was, one of the men pulled a gun on him. Hugues López fled and managed to escape through his neighbour's house, pursued by the armed men, who then proceeded to search his house and that of his neighbour. The men did not identify themselves at any time, but were recognised by people from the town as soldiers from the nearby army base of the Rook Battalion, *Batallón Rook*.

Following these incidents, Hugues López has had to leave his job and his home and is currently in hiding. There is also concern for the safety of his family, still living in Convención.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (Notes to translators: please refer to UA 136/91 for similar background information)

In recent years, widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia. Counter-insurgency operations by the Armed Forces have been progressively intensified to combat the country's guerrilla groups. In areas where guerrilla forces are active, the local civilian population is often perceived by the armed forces as potential collaborators and has, as a result, been subjected to threats and harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by army personnel and civilians working for them. Civic leaders and community workers and people associated with legal left-wing parties have been particular targets.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Hugues López following the attack on his life, apparently by members of the Colombian armed forces;
- asking that an immediate investigation be initiated into this attack and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking that the necessary steps be taken to ensure his safety and urging the authorities to take measures to protect the lives of teachers to ensure that they can work without fear.

APPEALS TO:President of the Republic:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
(Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente)

Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Nariño
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Santa Fé de Bogota
 Colombia**

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

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

Minister of Defence:

General Oscar Botero Restrepo
(Salutation: Sr. General)

Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Santa Fé de Bogota
 Colombia**

Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes: +57 1 222 1874

Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
(Salutation: Sr. Procurador General de la Nación)

Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General
 Edificio Banco Ganadero
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80
 Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta
 Santa Fé de Bogota, Colombia**

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO; 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

COPIES TO:Teachers Union:

FECODE

Federación Colombiana de Educadores
 Carrera 13a, No. 34-36
 (Apartado Aéreo 14373)
 Santa Fé de 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 September 1991.