

PRIORITY

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Fear of "Disappearance"/Torture

17 October 1991

COLOMBIA

Argemiro Quiroga, aged 36

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Argemiro Quiroga, who was last seen on 7 October 1991, when he was reportedly detained in Santa Fe de Bogotá by agents of National Police Intelligence, SIJIN, (Sección de Policía Judicial e Investigación).

Eye-witnesses report that Argemiro Quiroga was detained at about 11.30 am by two young men wearing civilian clothing, who identified themselves as SIJIN agents, as he arrived at his home in the El Socorro district of Santa Fe de Bogotá. He was allowed to make a brief visit to a nearby shop, where he left his house keys and his brother's telephone number, reportedly saying that he was being taken to the SIJIN base and that his relatives should go there to find him later. He was then forced to climb into a vehicle waiting in a nearby street where two other men, apparently detainees, were already being held.

The efforts of Argemiro Quiroga's friends and family to locate him have proved fruitless; his detention has not been acknowledged by any of the state security forces and his whereabouts remain unknown.

Argemiro Quiroga has lived in Santa Fe de Bogotá for two years, working as a street salesman. He had reportedly had previous links with the armed opposition group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, but had ceased his involvement about two years ago.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of human rights violations in Colombia, including "disappearance". 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 sympathisers 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 command.

In September 1991 the Procurator General's office produced an official report which stated that more than 2,300 complaints had been lodged against the army and police in the last two years for human rights violations. President César Gaviria Trujillo, on presenting the report, stated:

***"No puede el Gobierno desconocer la gravedad de las acusaciones que se hacen en forma reiterada y masiva contra sus agentes, ni ignorar***

*hasta que punto reina la impunidad por violación de derechos humanos."*

*"The government cannot fail to recognise the seriousness of the accusations made constantly and on a massive scale against its agents, nor ignore the extent of impunity in cases of human rights violations".*

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

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Argemiro Quiroga, following his alleged detention by agents of the SIJIN and requesting an immediate and effective investigation to establish his whereabouts;
- urging that if detained he be brought before a competent court or released;
- urging that whilst in detention he be humanely treated and provided with full access to lawyers and relatives.

**APPEALS TO**

1.

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo **Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente**  
Presidente de la República  
Palacio de Nariño  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 44281 PALP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 283 3066**

**+ 57 1 286 7324**

**+ 57 1 287 7937**

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

**Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogota, Colombia**

**Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO**

**Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472**

Coronel Luís Enrique Montenegro Rico **Sr Coronel**  
Comandante  
Dirección de Policía Judicial e Investigación (DIJIN)  
Carrera 15, No. 10-41  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegrams: Comandante DIJIN, Carrera 15, Bogota, Colombia**

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

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

**COPIES TO:**

Comisión Intercongresional de Justicia y Paz  
AA 52332  
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia      (Intercongressional Commission for  
Justice and Peace)

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 28 November 1991.