

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"/Torture

15 October 1990

COLOMBIA :

Gabriel Alberto OCHOA LOPEZ

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Gabriel Alberto Ochoa López who last seen on 30 September 1990 in Cali, capital of Valle del Cauca department.

According to reports, Gabriel Alberto Ochoa López, a driver, was seized from his home in La Floresta district of Cali on 30 September 1990 by several armed men in plain clothes, one of whom was identified as a police intelligence (F2) agent by Gabriel Ochoa's wife who was present. He was driven by car to an unknown destination. Military and police authorities have denied Gabriel Ochoa is in their custody.

Gabriel Ochoa had been involved in pressing for the release of his sister, Mercedes Ochoa, a former political prisoner. Mercedes Ochoa was detained in 1988 on charges of Rebellion, (Rebelión), and was recently released after acquittal.

Regional authorities, including the Procurator who has a human rights monitoring role, have been informed of the case of Gabriel Ochoa.

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 1,500 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 Colombia security forces or civilians working under their command. Cali has been particularly affected by "disappearances" in recent months.

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

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Gabriel Ochoa;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation to establish his whereabouts;
- urging that if in detention, his legal situation be clarified and he be immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and also allowed access to a lawyer and relatives;
- urging that he be humanely treated while in detention.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Bogotá
COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Presidente Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 44281 PALP CO
Faxes: + 57 1 286 7324

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

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 42411 INPRE CO or 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes: +57 1 222 1874

Dr. Alfonso Gómez Méndez
Procurador General de la Nación
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Bogotá
COLOMBIA

Telegrams: Procurador General Gómez, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO or 41213 PGNDP CO

COPIES TO:

Dra Zylia Márquez
Calle 2, 38 D, 37
Cali
Valle del Cauca
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 26 November 1990.