

PUBLIC

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25 May 2006

Further Information on UA 135/06 (AMR 23/023/2006, 16 May 2006) Fear for safety

COLOMBIA 15 students, teaching and other staff at the University of Antioquia

New names: eight more students and university staff
Diego Fernando Acosta Salinas (m), student activist at the Santander
Industrial University

The same paramilitary group has sent a further death threat to students and staff at the University of Antioquia, this time naming a further eight students and staff. A student activist at the Industrial University of Santander has also received a death threat, believed to have come from another paramilitary group operating under a new name.

On 19 May, a new death threat was sent to staff and students at the University of Antioquia. This time the group signed itself slightly differently, as *Autodefensas de la Universidad de Antioquia* (AUDEA), Self-Defence Group of the University of Antioquia, but it is believed to be the same paramilitary group that threatened 15 students, teaching and other staff by email on 10 May.

This death threat opened with the same words as the 10 May threat, but included a longer list of names. Among the eight new people there is one woman, María Yanet Cardona Ríos (a student of library sciences and member of a human rights organization). The seven men are: Oscar Rodas Villegas, Julio González Zapata, William Freddy Pérez Toro, Luis Armando Calle Calderón (university law professors) and three whose position within the university is not known: Carlos Mario Montoya Posada, Alberto Jaime and Wilmer Mejía. The law professors are also acting as defence attorneys for a group of 15 students arrested in May 2005 and charged with "subversion". Four of these students have been released and their names appear on the death list.

Diego Fernando Acosta Salinas, who is studying chemical engineering at the *Universidad Industrial de Santander* (Santander Industrial University), in Bucaramanga, department of Santander, received a written death threat on 18 May. He is a member of the *Asociación Colombiana de Estudiantes Universitarios* (ACEU), Colombian Association of University Students. This is a student union whose members have been subject to repeated paramilitary death threats in recent years. He found the written death threat under the door of his house. The letter was signed by an organisation calling itself the *Grupo Anticomunista Universitario* (University Anti-Communist Group).

The letter states: *Diego sabemos que usted es uno de los que han organizado todas esas protestas en la universidad y ya se la ha advertido que no debería estar metido en eso, ya estamos cansados de esa maricada que nos estén cerrando la universidad y si siguen haciendo eso vamos a tener que matarlo para ver si así cogen escarmiento y a ver si van a seguir haciendo lo mismo. Ya sabemos donde vive, que lugares frecuenta y lo tenemos bien ubicado o sea que no va a ser difícil hacerlo.... Lo vamos a matar como a un perro.* (Diego we know that you are one of the people organizing all these protests at the university and you have been warned before that you shouldn't get involved in that, we are tired of this stupidity of having the university closed down [an apparent reference to student demonstrations which have shut down the university] and if you continue doing this we are going to have to kill you to see if you lot learn your lesson and see if you keep doing the same thing. We know where you live, what places you frequent and we know exactly where to find you so it won't be difficult to do it... We are going to kill you like a dog.)

This threat comes after a series of student demonstrations held at the university. Diego Fernando Acosta has reportedly received several death threats since 26 November 2004. At least three of these death threats have apparently been made by telephone: on 4 May 2005, the caller reportedly identified himself as a member of the national paramilitary organization *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia. In response to these threats, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) reportedly called on the Colombian authorities to take action to guarantee Diego Fernando Acosta's security.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern that a paramilitary group has threatened to kill a further eight students and staff at the University of Antioquia (naming them);
- expressing concern for the safety of student Diego Fernando Acosta Salinas, who has received death threats from a paramilitary group;
- calling on the authorities to order full and impartial investigations into both these death threats, for the results to be made public and all those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take all measures necessary to guarantee their safety, in line with their own requests;
- calling on the authorities to take decisive action to confront and dismantle paramilitary groups still operating in Colombia and to break their links with the security forces, in line with repeated UN recommendations.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-26, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 337 5890

Salutation: Excmo. Sr. Presidente Uribe/ Dear President Uribe

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Sabas Pretelt de la Vega, Ministro del Interior y de Justicia, Ministerio del Interior, Av. Jiménez No 8-89, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 560 4630

Salutation: Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro

Attorney General

Dr. Mario Iguarán, Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación, Diagonal 22B 52-01, Edificio C Piso 4, Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 414 9108

Salutation: Dear Dr Iguarán / Estimado Dr. Iguarán

COPIES TO:

Human rights NGO

Corporación Jurídica Libertad
Carrera 47 N°53-45, oficina #801,
Edificio Vicente Villa, Medellín, COLOMBIA

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 July 2006.