

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/010/2005

15 April 2005

UA 88/05 Fear for safety/Death threats

COLOMBIA **Alvaro Guisao Usuga (m)
and other members of his family**

Alvaro Guisao Usuga, a relative of "disappeared" human rights defender Angel Quintero, has been attacked and he and his family have received a death threat. Amnesty International believes that the lives of Alvaro Guisao Usuga and his family are in grave danger.

At 6am on 7 April, Alvaro Guisao Usuga was travelling to work on his motorbike in the city of Medellín, Antioquia department. When he reached a crossroads, two hooded men on a motorbike reportedly forced him to stop at the side of the road, and then struck him on the back with a revolver. One of the men jumped onto Alvaro Guisao Usuga's motorbike and ordered him to keep riding, but Alvaro Guisao Usuga managed to get off the motorbike and run away. The men escaped on his motorbike. Alvaro Guisao Usuga reported this attack to the police.

At 8.30pm on 8 April, Alvaro Guisao Usuga was approached by a boy on a street in Medellín. The boy gave him a sealed envelope which bore the logo of an undertaker's firm. Inside the envelope an anonymous message threatened that all members of his family would "disappear" and would be killed, in the same way as his uncles. The threat also stated that his relatives were being watched. It included the telephone number of a local undertaker.

One of Alvaro's uncles was the human rights activist Angel Quintero, a member of the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos* (ASFADDES), Association of Families of the Detained Disappeared. Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve, also an ASFADDES activist, were abducted by unidentified gunmen in Medellín on 6 October 2000 (see UA 259/00, AMR 23/64/00, 30 August 2000, and follow-ups). Their whereabouts are still unknown. Angel Quintero had faced continual threats and harassment as a result of his work with ASFADDES on the disappearance of three of his wife's relatives in August 2000 and previous "disappearances" of other members of his wife's family. Since 1995 seven family members have "disappeared" and two have been killed reportedly by army-backed paramilitaries.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Those campaigning for justice in cases of human rights violations committed by the security forces and their paramilitary allies have themselves frequently been the target of serious human rights abuses. Many ASFADDES members, and other human rights defenders and witnesses of human rights violations, have disappeared, been killed or threatened with death by the security forces and their paramilitary allies in order to preserve the impunity they enjoy for their crimes. The relatives of those who have suffered such human rights abuses are also sometimes threatened, abducted or killed.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Alvaro Guisao Usuga and his family, after he was attacked and he and his family received a death threat;

- urging the Colombian authorities to take immediate and effective measures, deemed appropriate by those under threat, to protect Alvaro Guisao Usuga and other members of his family;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the threats against Alvaro Guisao Usuga, with the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República, Palacio de Nariño, Carrera 8 No.7-2, 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. Luis Camilo Osorio

Fiscal General de la Nación, Fiscalía General de la Nación,

Diagonal 22B 52-01 (Ciudad Salite), Bogotá, Colombia

Fax: + 57 1 570 2000 (you will hear a message in Spanish asking you to enter extension 2017)

Salutation: Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Ombudsman

Sr. Volmar Antonio Pérez Ortiz, Defensor del Pueblo, Defensoría del Pueblo,

Calle 55, No. 10-32/46 oficina 301,

Bogotá, 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 27 May 2005.