

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/ Death Threats

03 February 2004

COLOMBIA

Jaime Ernesto Carrillo (m)  
Francisco Rojas (m)  
Celedonio Jaimes Peñaloza (m)  
Marcos García (m)  
and other members of the *Asociación de Educadores de Arauca (ASEDAR)*,  
Teachers' Association of Arauca

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The trade unionists named above have received death threats, apparently from army-backed paramilitaries, and Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

Early in the morning of 28 January 2004 a death threat letter was pushed under the door of ASEDAR teachers' union president Jaime Carrillo's house, in Arauca municipality. The letter also named the union's Secretary General, Celedonio Jaimes Peñaloza, and former president, Francisco Rojas. The text said: "Rats should be killed" (*Las ratas se matan*).

At 11am the same day the ASEDAR central office received a phone call repeating the death threat against Jaime Carrillo and Celedonio Jaimes. The caller identified himself as a member of the paramilitary organization *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*, United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia.

Jaime Carrillo received a similar threatening letter at his home on 26 January, in which the AUC threatened to kill the same people named and also a teacher, Marcos García.

On 7 January Francisco Rojas received a call received on his mobile phone from a man who said: "Your father has been killed, your brother as well, what are you waiting for. You have eight hours to leave the city or it will smell of corpses..." (*a usted le han matado a su papa, su hermano que más espera, le damos ocho horas para salir de la ciudad o si no huelen a cadáver...*)

On 5 and 6 January graffiti appeared on the walls of Celedonio Jaimes Peñaloza's house and in the Camilo Torres School, in the municipality of Arauca. The first depicted three graves with a sign saying "Believe it" (*Créalo*). The second depicted a cross and the words "rats out of Arauca Pacho Rojas- Celedonio- Jaime Carrillo" (*ratas fuera de Arauca Pacho Rojas- Celedonio- Jaime Carrillo*).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members of trade union organizations have repeatedly been labelled as subversives by the security forces and their paramilitary allies, who have often then gone on to commit serious human rights violations against them.

In 2003, around 70 trade unionists were killed. In recent years army-backed paramilitaries have been responsible for the majority of killings of trade unionists. Guerrilla forces have also killed people they accuse of siding with their enemies.

In recent years ASEDAR members have been victims of serious human rights violations and death threats perpetrated by army-backed paramilitaries.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of those name above and other members of ASEDAR;
- asking the authorities what action they will take to guarantee the safety of those at risk;

- calling for the Ministry of Interior's protection program for trade unionists to be adequately resourced in order to provide more effective protection to trade unionists;
- calling for full and impartial investigations into the threats, with the results of the investigation made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into links between the security forces and paramilitary groups, for the results to be made public and those found responsible for supporting and participating in such groups to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with the recommendations made by the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic

Señor Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez

Presidente de la República

Palacio de Nariño

Carrera 8 No.7-26

Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Fax: + 57 1 342 0592 / 337 5890**

**Salutation: Dear President Uribe/ Excmo. Sr. Presidente 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 2022 / 2000 (you will hear a message in Spanish asking you to enter extension 2017)**

**Salutation: Dear Dr. Osorio / Estimado Dr. Osorio**

**COPIES TO:**

Trade Union Confederation

Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia

Calle 35 N1 7-25, Piso 9 Santafé de 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