

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 16/93 Death threats/fear of safety

21 January 1993

COLOMBIA: José del Carmen PEÑA
Leonardo PINEDA
Leonardo RANGEL
Rosendo FONESCA
Roque SANDOVAL
Alvaro QUIROGA

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the above-named men and their families from the Magdalena Medio region who are being threatened by a paramilitary group for refusing to participate in their counter-insurgency operations.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, on 12 December 1992, members of a paramilitary group arrived in the community of San Cristóbal, in the municipality of San Vicente de Chucurí, department of Santander, and rounded up all the inhabitants. They were threatened that they would be killed or would have to leave the region if they did not assist the paramilitary group with patrols and operations against guerrilla groups active in the region. A group of people were specifically threatened that they would be killed if they did not give their immediate assistance to the paramilitaries. As a result, the above-named men have left their village. However, they remain in the region and there are serious fears for their safety.

The community of San Cristóbal has been under threat by paramilitary groups and the Colombian army's Mobile Brigade No.1, Brigada Móvil N°1 since 1990.

José del Carmen Peña was detained in November 1990 by members of the Mobile Brigade No.1. During his unacknowledged detention he was subjected to torture, including beatings while tied to a tree, mock execution and burial. (Please see UA 453/90, AMR 23/58/90, 12 November 1990).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The largely rural area of the Magdalena Medio in central Colombia has been a focus of political violence for several years following the emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1960s and subsequent militarization of the region during the 1980s. Human rights abuses have escalated in the region, including enforced recruitment, torture, extrajudicial execution and "disappearance" committed by the Colombian army, police and paramilitary organizations working with them, against members of the civilian population perceived as potential guerrilla collaborators.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in Spanish, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of the above-named people and their families following threats by paramilitary group members believed to be working under

the authority of the Colombian armed forces;
- urging that the above-named people be given all the necessary guarantees to enable them to return to their homes and remain there in safety, and urging that the government take effective measures to disband paramilitary groups;
- urging for an immediate, independent inquiry into the threats against the above-named people and their families in order to bring all those responsible to justice, the results of which should be made public.

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APPEALS TO

1) Procurator General:

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

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

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

Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472

Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación / Dear Dr. Arrieta

2) Director General of the Police:

Mayor General Miguel Antonio Gómez Padilla
Director General de la Policía Nacional
Tr. 45 No. 40-11
Santa Fé de Bogotá

Telegrams: Director General Policía, Bogotá, Colombia

Salutation: Sr. Mayor General/Dear Major General

2) President of Colombia:

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 3066 /+ 57 1 286 7324 / + 57 1 287 7937

Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria

3) Minister of Defence

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52
Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams:Ministro de Defensa Pardo Rueda Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia

Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO

Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Director of Public Prosecutions:

Dr. Gustavo de Grieff

Fiscal General del Estado

Fiscalía General del Estado

Calle 35, No. 4-31

Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Fiscal General del Estado, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia

Faxes: + 57 1 287 0939

Salutation: Estimado Dr. de Grieff / Dr. Dr. Grieff

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz

A.A. 52332

Santa Fé 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 4 March 1993.