

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"/Health Concern

6 February 1991

COLOMBIA: John AGUDELO HURTADO, aged 20

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of John Agudelo Hurtado who was last seen wounded in Cali, Valle del Cauca department on 5 February 1991.

According to reports, John Agudelo Hurtado, a 20-year-old student and Christian worker, was last seen walking along the street in Agua Blanca district of Cali where he is involved in parish work. According to eye-witness reports, John Agudelo was driven away on a police motorcycle having been wounded in his leg in circumstances which remain unclear. According to the Police, however, John Agudelo was wounded in a "shoot-out" (enfrentamiento). People from the Agua Blanca district deny there was any enfrentamiento, and say there were no other injured persons.

Relatives and human rights activists have not been able to establish his whereabouts and the police and other security forces deny detaining John Agudelo.

John Agudelo had been involved with Christian community work in Agua Blanca district through the San Marcos parish for some time. According to reports, the San Marcos Parish Christian Group had received threats for several years, and the Parish priest, Father Ignacio ("Nacho") Salgado left the area two years ago following repeated threats.

Regional authorities have been informed of this possible "disappearance".

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 1,800 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 sympathisers 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 reports that John Agudelo Hurtado was seen being taken away by the police, who later denied his detention;
- expressing concern also that he was reportedly wounded and urging that he be provided all necessary medical attention;
- urging that there be an immediate investigation to establish his whereabouts;

- urging that 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,

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; + 57 1 287 7937;
+ 57 1 283 3066**

Dr. Gustavo Arrieta
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

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

Comandante de la Policía
Calle 21N, No. 1-25
Cali
Valle del Cauca
Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante Policia, Cali, Colombia

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 20 March 1991.