

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 23/006/2003

24 January 2003

UA 23/03      Fear for safety/Threats

COLOMBIA      **María Eugenia López (f),  
Other members of the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos desaparecidos de Colombia* (ASFADDES), Association of Families of the Detained-Disappeared in  
Medellín, Antioquia department**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of María Eugenia López, a member of the Medellín branch of the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos desaparecidos de Colombia* (ASFADDES), Association of Families of the Detained-Disappeared, following reports that army-backed paramilitaries have been looking for her. These reports also raise concerns for the safety of other ASFADDES members in Medellín.

According to local sources, relatives of María Eugenia López were informed that army-backed paramilitaries arrived in the neighbourhood of El Limonar 2, Medellín, Antioquia department on 24 December 2002. They reportedly received instructions from another paramilitary group operating in the area to search for the López family. On 31 December a man and a woman on a motorbike stopped at María Eugenia López' home and repeatedly knocked on the door. They allegedly had with them a photograph of María Eugenia López. No one answered the door and they left. On 9 January 2003, a young man was reportedly sent by the paramilitaries to inform María Eugenia López that Barny was waiting for her. Barny is the name of a known paramilitary who operates in the area. María Eugenia López answered that she didn't know anyone with that name. The young man reportedly asked her to come with him but she refused. Following this threatening incident María Eugenia López fled the area.

María Eugenia López has been a member of ASFADDES since the "disappearance" of two of her relatives, Olga Luz Echevarria Arreiza and Eliécer Pérez Morales, on 28 March 1990 in the municipality of Yarumal, Antioquia department. On 5 June 1990 another six of her relatives, Marta Maria López, Luis Gildardo López Gaviria, Ana Yoli Duque López, Marta Milena Duque López, Elvia Rosa Espinosa and Hernán Quintero, were reportedly killed during an attack by an army-backed paramilitary group known as *Los Doce Apóstoles*, The Twelve Apostles. Her partner, Cristobal Vargas, allegedly "disappeared" on 20 January 1991 in San Pablo Municipality, Department of Antioquia.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights defenders, including relatives of victims of human rights violations campaigning for justice, have frequently been victim of attack, "disappearance", harassment and other human rights violations. These are often committed by the security forces and their paramilitary allies seeking to protect the impunity they enjoy for their crimes.

Many members of ASFADDES have been among those targeted. ASFADDES is a non-governmental human rights organization made up of relatives of people who have "disappeared" during the conflict between the armed forces, their paramilitary allies and the armed opposition groups who control a large part of the country. It aims to discover what has happened to the "disappeared" and also to bring those responsible to justice.

Two members of the Medellín branch of ASFADDES, Angel Quintero and Claudia Monsalve, "disappeared" in October 2000 and their whereabouts remain unknown. (See UA 259/00, AMR 23/081/00, 9 October 2000). At the time of the "disappearances" it was found that ASFADDES' telephones were amongst several thousand which had been illegally tapped by the security forces. No one has been brought to justice for the "disappearance" of Claudia Monsalve and Angel Quintero.

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

- urging the Colombian authorities to take immediate and effective action to protect María Eugenia López and the other members of the the Medellín Branch of the *Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos desaparecidos de Colombia* (ASFADDES);
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the threats against María Eugenia López and for the results to be made public and for those responsible brought to justice;
- asking them also to take immediate and effective action to ensure that other members of ASFADDES can carry out their legitimate and important work for the defence of human rights in safety;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Organization of American States Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution and in repeated recommendations made to them by the UN;
- urging the authorities to take immediate action to dismantle paramilitary groups, in line with 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  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:** **Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia**

**Fax:** **+ 57 1 342 0592**

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

Minister of the Interior and Justice

Sr. Fernando Londoño Hoyos,  
Ministro del Interior y de Justicia  
Ministerio del Interior  
Palacio Echeverry, Carrera 8a, No.8-09, piso 2o.  
Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia

**Telegram:** **Ministro Interior, Bogota, Colombia**

**Fax:** **+ 57 1 566 4573**

**Salutation:** **Dear Sir / Sr. Ministro**

Governor of Antioquia Department

Sr. Eugenio Prieto Soto (e)  
Gobernador del Departamento de Antioquia, Gobernación de Antioquia  
Calle 42B, # 52-106,  
Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia

**Telegram:** **Gobernador de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia**

**Fax:** **+ 57 4 3811342**

**Salutation:** **Dear Governor / Sr. Gobernador**

**COPIES TO:**

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 / 2017 (if someone answers say "me da tono de fax por favor")**

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

Association for Relatives of the "Disappeared"

ASFADDES - Nacional  
AA 011446  
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 7 March 2003.