

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death threats / Fear for Safety

2 February 1994

COLOMBIA Wilson MONSALVO NAVARRO

Elmer CHARRIS ALVAREZ

and several other members of peasant farmer's union

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of members of the *Sindicato de Campesinos y Agricultores de Guaimaro - Salamina - Magdalena* in the department of Magdalena (Peasant and Farmer's Union of Guaimaro - Salamina - Magdalena).

Wilson Monsalvo Navarro, vicepresident of the union, has received a series of verbal death threats over the past few weeks, and Elmer Charris Alvarez and other members of the union have been similarly threatened. Amnesty International's concern is heightened by the history of murder and harassment against members of this union.

The union is made up of around 50 families who occupied an area of land known as the Playones Baldíos de Laura y Castro at the beginning of 1990. Ownership of the land is claimed by a local landowner who according to reports has brought criminal charges against three members of the union for land invasion. Since the time of the occupation union members have faced death threats, harassment and accusations of being guerrillas from armed and security personnel, some of whom belong to the Army's Counterinsurgency Battalion No. 6. In 1991 Eudaldo Sierra Caballero, a union advisor, was tortured and murdered. On 15 October 1993 Jaime Rodríguez Fontalvo, an active member of the union involved in human rights work, was murdered by four armed individuals. Those responsible have not been brought to justice.

On 30 December 1993, Wilson Monsalvo Navarro received a telephone call in which he was warned that he would suffer the same fate as other union members who had backed the land invaders if he did not take care.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years widespread and systematic human rights violations have occurred in Colombia, including torture, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. President César Gaviria Trujillo has repeatedly pledged his government's commitment to protect human rights. However, members of the Colombian armed and security forces continue to commit serious abuses with virtual impunity. Civic leaders, trade unionists, human rights activists are amongst the groups frequently targeted by the security forces for arbitrary arrest and other forms of human rights abuse. Peasant farmers campaigning for access to land or who own land disputed by powerful interest groups, such as landowners, are also often targeted.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Elmer Charris Alvarez, Wilson Monsalvo

Navarro and the members of the Peasant and Farmer's Union of Guaimaro - Salamina - Magdalena who have been receiving death threats;
 - urging that there be full and impartial investigations into these threats, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
 - urging that there be full and impartial investigations into the apparent extrajudicial executions of Eudaldo Sierra Caballero and Jaime Rodríguez Fontalvo;
 - urging the authorities to take all the measures necessary to ensure that the union can pursue its legal activities without fear of intimidation and urging the *Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria (INCORA)*, the Colombian Land Reform Institute) to find a solution to this land conflict;

APPEALS TO

1 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 7324/7434; 287 7937
Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President Gaviria

2 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
Faxes:+ 57 1 284 0472
Salutation:Sr. Procurador de la Nación/Dear Dr. Arrieta

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, Bogotá, Colombia
Telexes:42411 INPRE CO; 44561 CFAC CO
Faxes:+ 57 1 222 1874
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4 Director of Colombian Land Reform Institute

Dr Luis Hernando Murcia
 Gerente General INCORA
 INCORA
 CAN
 Santa Fé de Bogotá
Telegrams: Gerente General INCORA, Bogotá, Colombia.
Salutation: Estimado Doctor / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1 Human Rights Organisations

Señores

CSPP

Carrera 6a

No. 14-98 Oficina 1102

Apartado Aéreo 22803

Santa Fé de Bogotá

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 16 March 1994.